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World Council of Churches 10th Assembly—Korea

“God of Life, Lead us to Justice & Peace”



The Three Tikanga Anglican Church Contingent who represented our Province: From Left: Bardia Matiu, Revd Vicki Terrell, Emily Colgan, Revd Gillian Swift, Revd Chris Honore & Revd Brenda Sio (photo: Brenda Sio)

For nine days this past November, representatives from all around the globe gathered in Busan, Korea for the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The WCC is an inter-church organisation founded in 1948 and is based in Geneva, Switzerland. The assembly of WCC occurs every 7 years and is the highest governing body of the WCC. “The assembly has the mandate to review programmes, to issue public statements and determine the overall policies of the WCC, as well as to elect presidents and a Central Committee that oversees the Council’s work until the next assembly. Along with the WCC member churches, partner organisations and other churches have a strong presence at the event. This makes an assembly of the WCC the most diverse Christian gathering of its size in the world. It is a unique opportunity for the churches to deepen their commitment to visible unity and common witness so that the world may believe.” As with previous assemblies, the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia sent delegates to Busan to contribute to the shared conversations and workshop events within this worldwide fellowship and the following four reflections offer us an insight into each of their experiences and where they see the challenges ahead for us.

Religions Working Together for Peace & Freedom

By Emily Colgan



Recently, I had the privilege of attending the World Council of Churches 10th Assembly in Busan, South Korea.

During my time there I attended the Women's Pre-Assembly, caught a high-speed train to Seoul, participated in the Peace Pilgrimage to the demilitarised zone between North and South Korea, celebrated All Souls Day with 300 or so Anglicans from every corner of the globe, read the Bible alongside people from different cultural and theological perspectives, met more inspirational people than I can count, took part in the decision-making procedures of the assembly, shared worship with thousands of people from hundreds of Christian traditions from all over the world, experienced exquisite Korean cultural performances, visited the largest department store in the world (!), tasted wonderful Korean food, attended a Sunday service at the Anglican Cathedral in Seoul, drank a lot of coffee, and heard presentations from a wide range of perspectives on the Assembly theme: God of Life, lead us to justice and peace.



Prayer tree for Gender Justice
(photo: Emily Colgan)

The experience was profoundly inspiring, at times deeply challenging and utterly exhausting.

One of my roles as an Assembly delegate was to participate in an Ecumenical Conversation, and I was honoured to moderate the conversation entitled 'Religions Working Together for Peace and Freedom'. Over the course of four consecutive afternoons our conversation group met to explore and imagine contextually relevant models of interreligious engagement, which can lead to peace and freedom. We listened to Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Christian perspectives on peace and freedom, and a number of important points arose for me which I thought might be pertinent to interfaith engagement in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

- ⇒ Interfaith interaction needs to happen at the grassroots community level as well as the more formalised level of 'interfaith councils'
- ⇒ Interfaith initiatives work when people of different faith traditions work together towards common (tangible) goals of justice and peace

- ⇒ There is a need for the different faith traditions to identify and affirm common values and common ways of speaking about justice and peace
- ⇒ Hospitality, deep listening and taking time to really get to know the 'other' is important in interfaith engagement
- ⇒ Within Christianity, we talked about the need to challenge the exclusivist theologies which inhibit our willingness to work closely with religious 'others'
- ⇒ We discussed the possibility of re-evaluating our theology to allow our plurality to shape our identity in a way that recognised the 'other' as a co-traveller on the pilgrimage for peace



A presentation during the Peace Plenary
(photo: Emily Colgan)

- ⇒ We acknowledged that at times women and young people were excluded from interfaith engagement and affirmed the importance of the inclusion of these voices in future interfaith initiatives

In lots of ways, being part of this discussion made me incredibly grateful that New Zealand is my home. For the most part, religions don't struggle to co-exist here, nor do we experience the political instrumentalisation of religion. The flip side of this though, is that there doesn't seem to be any particular urgency or imperative for religions to work together on a day-to-day basis. In spite of this, there are significant issues of injustice that continue to characterise our society such as child poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. It seems to me that there is huge untapped potential in the area of interfaith collaboration on issues of justice and peace in Aotearoa, New Zealand. It is my hope and prayer that as Anglicans, we might begin to take this potential seriously.

For more information about the Assembly in Busan, visit <http://wcc2013.info/en>

Indigenous, Marginalized & Pasifika



Waiting for the conference bus outside the hotel, Revd Brenda Sio (centre) with Revd Supina Nakaisulan (left) delegate of the Indigenous people of Taiwan and Revd Lola Koloamatangi (right) from Diocese of Polynesia, Tonga and Vice-President of PCC. (photo: Brenda Sio)

The World Conference of Churches 10th Assembly in Busan, South Korea was like a kaleidoscopic experience that thrilled all the senses. The sights, sounds, tastes of exotic food, the smells, feelings and emotions were all stirred up in one way or another as we worshipped, listened, participated, discussed and joined with three thousand other Christians from every part of the world and from all walks of life, to pray to God and seek his wisdom and guidance as we pondered and dialogued on different aspects of the Assembly theme, "God of life, Lead us to Justice and Peace."

Today I look back on the experience as though it was a dream but three words stand out for me as lasting memories of Busan: Indigenous, Marginalized and Pasifika. I was enlightened and introduced to the lives of the Indigenous and the Marginalized outside of my "Pacific" box. I attended my first meeting or gathering of Indigenous people at the Pre-assembly for Indigenous Peoples with the theme "God of Life, renew the people of the Land." Although Pacific Islanders are indigenous people according to the broad dictionary definition of the term – that is "*originating in and characteristic of a particular region or country; native*", we often do not identify ourselves as such because these peoples are defined more as; **Indigenous peoples** - *peoples defined in international or national legislation as having a set of specific rights based on their historical ties to a particular territory, and their cultural or historical distinctiveness from other populations that are often politically dominant. The concept of indigenous peoples defines these groups as particularly vulnerable to exploitation, marginalization and oppression by nation states that may still be formed from the colonizing populations, or by politically dominant ethnic groups.* (Wikipedia)

It was humbling to hear their stories and struggles, especially the West Papua's plight of oppression from Indonesia's Military rule. The women delegates were bold and vocal and it was heartening to see these women rise up and speak out. I was one of the Leaders (facilitator) for the Ecumenical conversation on "Bonding with the Marginalized for a just and inclusive church" and I learnt even more of the plight of the disadvantaged and the margins of our

By Revd Brenda Sio

societies. I found myself wondering - what the Lord was trying to tell me?

I cheered and cried as I watched the Pacific Oikoumene, a specially formed group of young People nominated from their churches representing ten Island nations. They performed dances and spoke out about the plight of the Atolls and low lying Islands that were drowning and being lost due to climate change and Sea level rising and other Pacific issues like nuclear testing. It was unbelievable that the Lord had provided space for these shy young men and women to give voice to their fears and concerns.

I felt I had been strategically placed as a member of the Programs Guideline's Committee (PGC) to ensure the voices of the Indige-



In front of the West Papua stall with two fellow delegates. Brenda was impressed by Fransina Yoteni (left) who was very vocal for their cause. (photo: Brenda Sio)

nous, the marginalized and Pacific peoples became known in the world forum and this was achieved through the following and other PGC's recommendations which were adopted by the Assembly as follows: "*The PGC also reflected on the outcomes of the Women and Men, Youth, Ecumenical Disabilities Advocacy Network (EDAN), and Indigenous Peoples pre-assemblies. The PGC appreciated the important work that these pre-assemblies have done, and their results will be important for programmatic work. As there is no formal link between pre-assemblies and the assembly itself, the PGC considers it necessary for the work of the pre-assemblies to be formally reported to future assemblies*".

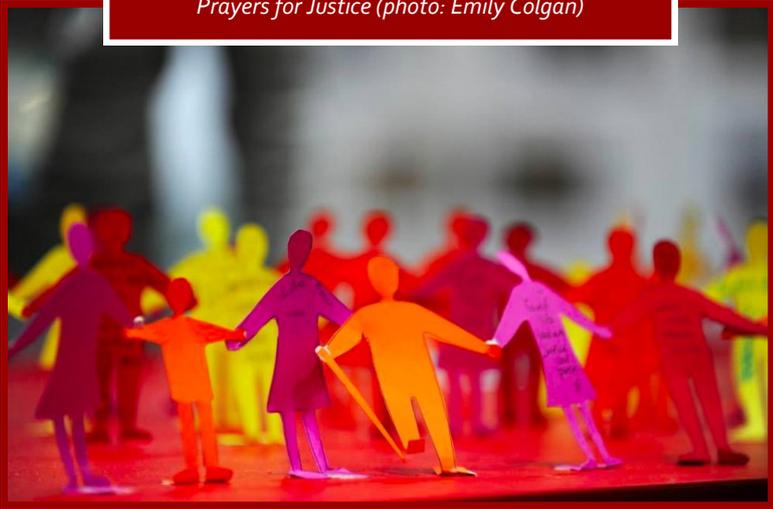
The stories of the indigenous and marginalized are not all gloom and doom. One lady from the EDAN group said many of them were empowered but were not being recognized and utilized in their churches. An amazing example of this was a blind woman from the Methodist Church in Samoa who attended the EDAN pre-Assembly – she travelled by herself all the way to Busan via Fiji and Seoul without any difficulties. Nothing is impossible with the Lord!



"Pacific Oikoumene" a specially formed group of young people nominated from their churches representing 10 island nations and performing at Bexco the conference centre. (photo: Brenda Sio)



Prayers for Justice (photo: Emily Colgan)



Gillian Mary Swift with Bishop Yona Katoneene from West Ankole (photo: Gillian Mary Swift)



Bexco the WCC conference centre in Busan, Korea (photo: Brenda Sio)



Participants of the Women & Men's Pre-Assembly Gatherings (photo: Emily Colgan)



Ecumenical Disability Advocate Network

By Revd Vicki Terrell

I was invited to attend WCC assembly in Busan as part of the Ecumenical Disability Advocate Network (EDAN) with Chris Honore as my support person. This was my second assembly as I also attended Porto Alegre, Brazil in

2006, which was an amazing experience particularly at the beginning of my training at St Johns College.

EDAN is the disability network of the WCC and I am the representative for New Zealand. It combines the two main strands and passions of my life, disability and Christian faith. There is a strong liberatory theological stance within EDAN challenging the church and society to become more inclusive of people with disabilities, both in attitudes and the physical environment.

EDAN works with the WCC to encourage the full participation of disabled people at all levels of the church and society as well as doing theology around disability. Ten years ago EDAN put out a comprehensive theological statement on disability which is currently being reviewed. EDAN has developed some courses around disability for theological institutions. EDAN was very involved in the drafting and ratifying of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities in 2006.

The EDAN pre Assembly meeting was a chance for the network to get together and review and plan further work as well as to prepare for the assembly. We had morning and evening worship together.

Here are some word weavings around the bible readings.

Bible Study: Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7

*Exile seeking peace and justice
Uniquely different
Social exile
Social inaccessibility
Encouragement
Practise social inclusion*

Bible study: Isaiah 35:1-7

*God's grace disrupts unjust structures
Our voices heard in the church
When our needs are not met
Do not want to make a fuss,
We deny the liberating grace of God
That brings justice
In the church and society*

Also we had presentations on the status of Disabled People in Korea particularly in the church and a report on the EDAN Women's meeting in South Africa.

Korean Church is the liberating forces that challenges society of its treatment of the disabled. They seem to be further along the road to inclusion and participation of people with disabilities than in some western countries.

The first EDAN women's meeting was held earlier this year. While the theme of this gathering was specifically focused on violence it was an opportunity to ask questions about the status of Disabled women in the church. The report was depressingly familiar of



Revd Vicki Terrell blessing the hospitality space 'Emmaus' at the WCC conference Centre (photo: Vicki Terrell)



abuse of disabled

women and children in many countries.

As they reported I was thinking of the situation in NZ, working with the domestic violence and disability (DVD) group. From this work I know that 90-95% of people with learning/intellectual disabilities are abuse at

sometime in their lives and this figure was confirmed.

Violence against disabled people, especially of women and children sits under the radar. Stories of abuse often just disappear.

The church needs to take this issue seriously and seek to create an environment of justice where abuse does not happen. We need to raise our voices about this abuse and encourage disabled people and others communicate when abuse is happening. The church needs to take this issue of this abuse seriously and help in breaking the silence around this.

On 12 December a report came out around the care of disabled people in residential settings in New Zealand saying the model of

care needs to a complete overhaul in order for safety of and proper support for disabled people. How will the church respond to this report?

The pre assembly was a great time to connect with people and prepare for the assembly.



During the assembly we had a hospitality space "Emmaus" in the Madang (meeting place). This

Attaching our prayers for peace on the barbed wire at the border between North & South Korea (photo: Emily Colgan)

worked well as a home base where we could connect with each other amidst the busyness. I was privileged to bless the space.

The Assembly proper was an exhilarating, exhausting and encouraging experience. It was 10 days of living and breathing in an international community, the days were extremely long and incredibly rich. Eight work days at Bexco (the conference venue) were living and breathing the world wide church with all its internal joys and tensions and wider concerns of being the body of Christ in a dysfunctional world. The work day consisted of Morning Worship, Bible Study, Plenary session, workshops, ecumenical conversations and evening activities. Some days after the plenary sessions I wanted to stop and take stock because it had been so rich!

The ecumenical conversations were an opportunity to do some in depth work over four days on a topic to feed into the work programme of the WCC over the next few years. We attended the same conversation as Brenda.

Evening activities included worship; Anglican gathering; EDAN Dinner with church leaders and Asia regional gathering. The first gathering of Anglican was in the evening of All Saints Day. Eucharist and dinner were hosted by the Diocese of Busan and it was a grand affair in a hotel banquet hall.

The weekend programme was an opportunity to immerse ourselves in Korean culture. On Saturday we went up to Andong 200kms north of Busan. We visited a traditional Korean village, heard how the gospel lives alongside Confucianism and contributes to community life and seeing the bullet holes from the Korean War in the Presbyterian Church. On Sunday we attended

an Anglican Eucharist in Daeju returned to Bexco for a traditional Tea ceremony and cultural Evening.

The theme of peace and justice invited the church into grappling with communities who finds themselves on the margins of society. This was a constant challenge throughout the assembly. In some part of the world where the church is on the margins it had the strongest witness to the power of the gospel through prophetic action and pastoral care for the nobodies of society. In parts of the world where the church is not particularly under threat, economic constraints and ecological concerns seem to push the social justice agenda to the margins of its consciousness. Maybe the call of the church from the margins can revitalise the church at the centre by its prophetic words and actions. The gospel calls us to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable in ourselves, in the church and in society.

I felt that the "holy-than-thou" paradigm of the social justice activist was challenged. Along with the emphasis on being prophetic, people need to find the right words to speak truth to power rather than using violence to achieve justice. The workshops I attended reinforce the importance of freeing ourselves for telling and listening to stories and finding ways to dialogue with people we disagree with. The last plenary session ended with this quote "Jesus said love your enemies I believe he meant don't kill them"!

The overall feeling having been to the Assembly is one of extreme gratitude for the experience. Many memories of conversations, connections made and challenges, much food for thought. Thanks be to God for this incredible blessing. Truly I



Delegates show their approval by raising their orange cards (photo: Emily Colgan)

have experienced days of Pentecost! The Spirit came and overflowed!

My sincere thanks go to EDAN, the General Synod and CBM who through their financial generosity enabled us to participate in the WCC 10th Assembly.

Community Soundings & Rural Ministry

By Revd Gillian-Mary Swift



I was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time when the Trans-Tasman Rural Conference last year decided to put in a bid to conduct a workshop at the WCC. Our bid was successful and my offer to go with them was accepted. Little did I know then, that I was in for a life changing event!

This was the first time I had seen Christianity on a world scene. As we gathered for the opening ceremony I had the feeling that I was part of something much bigger than my local church. The Holy Spirit of God was moving to stir Christians to pray and work for peace and justice. As the week progressed I saw and heard about actions that individuals and groups are involved with to progress this vision, about politics and world powers that work against,

We gathered in the biggest auditorium at BEXCO in Busan. Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican, Roman Catholic observers. I felt like the only blonde there!

Three things stand out for me. Before the assembly started I had the privilege of being involved in the last day of the Peace train Project. This was specifically targeted to finish in Busan at the beginning of the WCC Assembly to show sup-



Catherine Christie & Gillian Mary with their Presbyterian host family for a weekend, 3 hours north of Busan (photo: Gillian Swift)

port for the re unification of the Korean Peninsula. The train had travelled from Berlin through Moscow, Irkutsk and Beijing. Communal actions, such as our own Hikoi of Hope does raise aware-

ness.

A retired Presbyterian minister from Fielding New Zealand, Rilma Sands was also on board. I was surprised that I had heard nothing about the Project. The greeting of participants at Busan station was overwhelming. My room-mate for WCC, a Canadian who lives in Seoul as a missionary, was part of the organising committee. What an amazing way to make a statement about ending war. The next day I joined in the Peace train Thanksgiving Worship and was invited to lunch after the service. My heart was overjoyed at meeting people who thought action and prayer were a good marriage for peace to be enacted. Hope for a treaty to be signed in the near future was running high. Unfortunately the WCC organising committee were luke warm in its support of this project.

The second thing that stood out for me was meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Anglican confessional meeting on All Saint's Day. We met in the Novotel hotel dining room and had a social hour, then around the tables we joined for Eucharist. Justin Welby preached about Christ being our centre of unity. No matter



Gillian Mary & fellow WCC participants who took part in the Community Soundings workshop (photo: Gillian Swift)

what our belief or liturgical practise it was Christ who unifies us. He then invited the Orthodox Archbishop to join us at table but he couldn't, so Justin knelt before him in all humility and asked for his blessing.

The third event that really got me thinking was a meeting with Women leaders in the WCC. Dame Mary Tanner who was just coming to the end of her time as WCC president England and Moderator of the WCC Faith and Order Commission 1991-1998. She was named a Dame Commander in 2008 for her contribution to the ecumenical movement. She shared with us her journey as an academic to this post and the realisation that women had the amazing ability to network, share and listen to life stories that

Book Review:

Moments of Grace— Reflections on Meeting with God

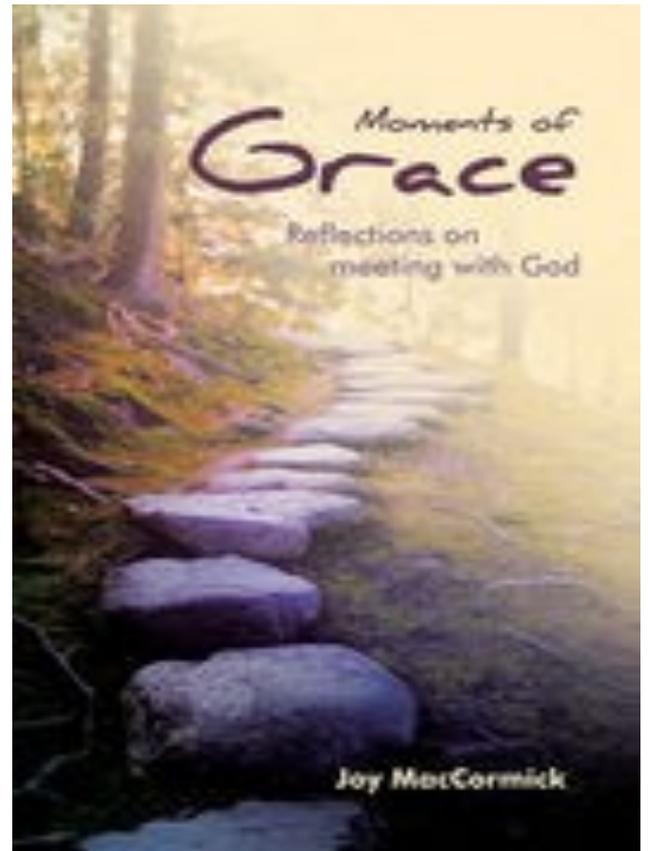
by Joy MacCormick

For personal prayer, or for use with small groups, *Moments of Grace* offers opportunities to encounter God in every moment of life. It explores theological images that are diverse, inspiring and challenging. This delightful book is divided into five sections; 'Exploration and Discovery', 'Struggle', 'Celebration', 'Gospel Moments', and 'Pondering'. Each section has various meditations that relate to the title. Joy has written some beautiful poems. Each meditation includes a poem, a theological reflection, Scriptural references and ends with very poignant, thought provoking questions. It leaves the reader feeling inspired, challenged and enriched in their relationship with God and with others.

In my experience of using various meditations from this book at the beginning of meetings, it has set the tone for in-depth, reflective and rich discussions. The book offers a broad range of reflections, and so there is something in there for everyone. Whether one is celebrating or struggling there are signs of hope and gems to be discovered in this book. Joy's words offer grace-filled, honest, hopeful, earthed meditations on real life experiences. If you want to be deeply blessed, this is the book for you!

By *The Ven Carole Hughes*

Convenor of the Council for the Anglican Women's Studies Centre



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brought about transformation in Church and community. She reminded us that women have a long way to go to attain equality in the Church and told us to keep drumming (a Korean image for being a prophet), that we had to keep on telling our stories and connecting with women of faith as they struggle to understand their place in Biblical tradition and church. I remembered my own formation in New Zealand during the 80's and early 90's when I was introduced to women's theology through Spiritual Growth Ministries and WEFT, part of the former DEFT network in New Zealand and the Women's Resource Centre. How great a debt of gratitude I owe to those wonderful women who told me stories and supported me. I have enjoyed connecting with the Women's Studies Centre but wonder how we stay connected and supportive to those in small communities struggling to make sense of their calling to ministry, lay and ordained. Maybe we need at least two regional support people so they don't have to work in isolation.

The workshop I was involved with, Community Soundings, drew people from all over the world telling their stories. The Interna-

tional Rural Churches Association aims to bring rural communities together in a supportive network, sharing best practises to sustain healthy rural lives. Across the globe, rural communities face many challenges (exploitive government/business practices, unfair resource extraction. We heard stories of prime farm land being used for holiday homes thus changing land use and the social make up of rural communities; fertiliser being used to force more production from land and polluting rivers; our monetary system that makes small farming uneconomical. We could have got quite despondent but sharing stories showed an emerging resilience through the power of the Holy Spirit that guides us through to transformative actions that can bring peace and hope to suffering communities.

There is so much more to tell, the wonderful hospitality of the Korean Presbyterian Church, my adopted Korean Grandsons, but that will have to wait for another time. I came away with my faith in Jesus Christ simplified. My mantra is from Michah, "God requires us to seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly in partnership with God."

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The Centre for Anglican Women's Studies, commonly known as the **Women's Studies Centre** was set up to serve and to advance the interests and needs of the women of this Church particularly those undertaking Theological training.

The Link Representatives from each Diocese and Hui Amorangi have been chosen for their leadership ability to identify, gather, facilitate, resource and encourage women in their educational preparation for ministry whether lay or ordained. It is hoped that the Women's Studies Centre can continue to enjoy the support of each Diocese and Hui Amorangi in this endeavour.

The issue of increasing numbers of women in representative positions across the councils and committees of the Church is seen as a high priority and the practice of intentional mentoring by those already in national and international representative roles is seen as a good way to expose women of this church to fulfill their potential as leaders.

Ensuring that women's voices and stories are heard now and in the future is also one of our continued aims whether it be by traditional methods of publication or using more contemporary technologies like website publication. We remain optimistic that through continued support, the needs of women throughout this Province will be valued and recognized.



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EDITORIAL DISCLAIMER: The Women's Studies Centre is committed to encouraging and enabling women's voices and perspectives from across the diversity of the Church to be shared more widely. We acknowledge that women's experiences of church differ considerably and that resultant theological perspectives also differ considerably. In general the WSC does not exercise editorial control, rather we welcome as many voices as are willing to contribute.