

NEWS

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Editor:
Anne Lagerstedt

Women Needed Urgently for Peace Work

On October 31st, 2000, the UN Security Council adopted a historic and unique resolution UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security.

The goals of the EFECW conference "Women, Peace and Security – A Roadmap to UN Resolution 1325", on 23rd to 27th September 2009 in Sigtuna, Sweden, were to raise awareness and discuss the role of women in peace building in Europe and internationally. Other goals were to introduce the 53 participants from 26 countries to the UNSCR 1325 at an overall level as well as at the local level, to strengthen women's leadership in church and society, to introduce the Swedish model of training in three steps to be a peace agent, to give training and tools to handle conflict, and to create a network of peace agents within EFECW.

The methods to reach these goals were active rehearsals conducted by young women

Margareta Andermo, Emilia Anner and Kerstin Berge from Swedish Women's Ecumenical Council. We experienced how the words "Truth", "Mercy" and "Justice" can mean different things after a conflict, depending on the culture. To put these in order of importance was a surprisingly challenging task.

Also we learned how to listen properly to another person and wondered how to speak effectively about peace, when the greatest cause of death of 14 to 40 years old women is violence.

Viola Raheb from the World Council of Churches (WCC) from Austria said that Women must claim their place in the field of peace research field. "Women have no time to read piles of paper. They want to take action. It is most sensible to use existing channels for peace making", she urged.

Former MEP Maj-Britt Theorin spoke about male dominance in peace work. It is essential to have many more women in peace keeping and peace talks at all levels of decision making.

UN Resolution 1325 is binding to all participants and it is the best weapon in pressuring politicians. "But nothing happens if women stay silent", Theorin warned. In addition a larger number of women are needed in peace organisations: one (token) woman is too weak in male oriented organisations.

Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, from Scotland who is Co-Chair of

Religions for Peace, European Women of Faith Network urged women to have sturdy identity in one's own faith and act for peace together with women of all religions.

Plenary Theme Bible study by Sister Madeleine Fredell OP was very touching. She brought some eschatology together with reflections of Theological Anthropology for Peace and Reconciliation. The basis is Jesus' empty tomb and lost body. We are the body of Jesus Christ and as such, representation for now and future new life in eternity. We all have an individual vocation to be fulfilled with Christ.

Katarina Kruhonja from Centre for Peace in Osijek, Croatia, gave a personal story of the Balkan war from her perspective. She started a peace centre in Osijek where everybody was listened to and they helped people in many ways. Now the organisation is recognised by Pax Christi.

The closing celebration was Scandinavian folk dancing, ending with an invitation for all to dance with the performing group.

Marina Treima has resigned from the committee. We thank her for her service and hold her in the Light of God's love. Sonja Aldea was unanimously confirmed as a member of CC to August 2010.

Anne Lagerstedt



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The Nordic atmosphere was sunny and rather warm in Sigtuna, Sweden, where the NCs of the Forum gathered to learn how to perform peace work with the help of the UN Resolution 1325.

Fifth Ecological Summer School

Thirteen women and two accompanying husbands from Belarus, Norway, England, Croatia and Germany participated in the Fifth Ecological Summer School in Berlin 23rd to 29th September 2009. The subject "From Talking to Action" expressed the urgency of the need to rethink, on a wide social basis, whether we are able to face effectively the challenge of climate change and the problem of energy supply.

Antje Broock from the BUND Association, which is responsible for international politics on climate, gave a competent and comprehensive report on past international agreements and on those planned, leading up to the conference in Copenhagen. A walking tour from a global point of view, in Central Berlin, organised by younger members of BUND, gave us older citizens insights into global connections and unfair trading. We were particularly struck by the profit made through the production of a pair of trainers compared to the minimal wages paid to the workers. Jutta Blysen gave a detailed lecture on the connections between energy and agriculture, using the example of agrifuel, often confusingly known as biofuel. The growing of energy-producing plants is frequently done at the cost of using land which is needed for food for the local people.

As a result of these experiences we thought about guidelines on our responsibility to the created world. The German Forum had asked the Summer School to consider this with the hope that women in the rest of Europe would consider their own guidelines.

Beate Junke

Religion – Liberation or Oppression for Women?

In Vilnius, Lithuania, July 2009 the Baltic Neighbour's Meeting was held on the theme: Religion – Liberation or Oppression for Women?

During the exchange of ideas we (twenty five participants) had the opportunity to remind ourselves of some cases showing oppression of religious women.

Christianity is no exception. The Bible includes the core message that should direct us to a more mature perception of the relationship between the sexes. The Old Testament and the New Testament convey the message of God who entrusted every person with equal dignity and diverse gifts. Human beings cannot be viewed as members of two separate categories with exclusive social roles.

In church life, more and more denominations have introduced women into leadership positions, including the ordained ministry. This is as a result of recognising that Jesus Christ's approach is to affirm every human being, in spite of her or his background.

Małgorzata Zielińska



CEC Assembly in Lyon

On CEC's fiftieth birthday, three hundred and six Protestants, Orthodox and Anglicans came together from 120 member Churches to work and to celebrate in Lyon, France. The theme Called to One Hope in Christ [Ephesians 4] was introduced by a variety of people including the head of the Orthodox Church in Romania, the Lutheran Bishop of Jerusalem, Bishop Julio Murray of Panama and Angela Cox, Methodist lay preacher and England Forum National Coordinator.

As delegate of an Associate body I was entitled to speak at the business sessions though not to vote. Sessions started early and ended late. For five days of business meetings my neighbours were Katherine from Germany representing Youth organisations and Gunnell Borgegård, representing the Churches of Sweden. I met many people whom I knew from emails, some interested in 'our' topics and projects, some keen to know more about the Forum in their country.

We, EFECW at Lyon, had responsibilities for a Hearing on Gender Stereotypes and a Gender Mapping Exercise. The Gender Advisory Group of CEC, which Elena Timofticiuc and I belong to, asked Anthea Cox to moderate the Hearing.

In 2010 we should continue to support European Churches responding to migration. The Forum in Greece focused on this theme in March 2009. The England Forum invite you to a Day Conference led by Co President Elena Timofticiuc at Holland House near Evesham, Worcestershire, UK on Wednesday March 17th 2010.

Dorothy Knights



Ruth Epting was pleasantly surprised on her 90th birthday on June 5th 2009 by the Swiss Forum and her other friends. They organised a full day symposium on her honour in Basel, her hometown.



Ruth Epting Symposium

Thanks for your kindness to celebrate my 90th birthday on 5th June 2009 with me. It was a big surprise and an enormous joy for me. The Swiss Forum invited women who had working contacts with me in the Swiss churches and those of the Forum from Germany, Austria and Switzerland to celebrate with me my 90th birthday. They gave a symposium "I want to give you future and hope" (Jeremiah 29,11).

Our former Co-president Katerina Karkala-Zorba, from Greece, was showing us what Orthodox women can contribute to an ecumenical women's movement and what she experienced as a delegate in different European Church organisations such as CEC and its commission Church and Society.

Martina Heinrichs, as one of the present Co presidents, showed us how the writer of the song Sister dream your dreams! and Sister carry on!

Carolyn Mc Dade was marked by World War II. The conflicts between the black and white in the South of U.S.A. and the big gaps between the rich and poor have influenced the women's movements. Similar was the gap between East and West in Europe at the beginning of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties and we had to find a way to live with differences.

Here the word "Oekumene" was a clear guide that we had to accept each other and had to share our different education and personal history, language and life of faith and spirituality.

After 1989 the iron curtain was there no more. The Forum had to weave nets of reconciliation and to begin a dialogue with women of other religions in our own countries.

The third speaker Dr, Veronika Prüller-Jagenteufel showed that our search for the right future depends on how we lis-

ten and experience in our personal and in our common life the deep wells of the gospel. She had us look at the story of the Samaritan woman (John 4) and how it relates to the Forum activity.

The three speeches are available in French and English.

In the evening there was a presentation of the new book Weaving dreams- Träume weben. It has English and German contributions from women theologians of the Forum. They met in Madrid and in St. Petersburg to give a special approach to the feminist way of dealing with Bible texts.

The book has other contributions from Switzerland, Korea, Africa and Latin America.

It is edited by Meehyun Chung and Elisabeth C. Miescher.

Many thanks to all of you who wrote to me or came to Basel on June 5th.

Yours,

Ruth Epting

Photos: **Waltraud Liekefett**

Ecumenical Forum
of European
Christian Women

Forum Oecuménique
de Femmes
Chrésiennes d'Europe

Oekumenisches
Forum Christlicher
Frauen in Europa

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Efecw Programme 2010

1. England Forum Day, Evesham, UK March 17th, also overnight if required 16th &/or 17th
2. FC Meeting, Hannover, Germany March 22nd to 24th
3. CC Meeting, Hannover, Germany March 24th to 28th
4. II Ecumenical German Kirchentag, Munich, May 12th to 16th
5. Young Women's Conference in Svaty Jur, Slovakia, June
6. VIII General Assembly. Loccum, Germany, Aug. 23rd to 29th

Jacqui Stuyt Legacy

For details see website: www.efecw.net/announcements

Or email [giselahoewe@xs4all.nl](mailto:giselahoeve@xs4all.nl)

Closing date for 2010 applications March 1st

In Memoriam

Marcella Maria Althaus Reid

Theology lost an original voice on 20th February 2009, when Professor Marcella Althaus-Reid died at Marie Curie Hospice in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Marcella was Argentinean by birth with a deep commitment to liberation theology. She studied at ISEDET, the Protestant theological faculty in Buenos Aires, and received her doctorate at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. She held the Chair of Contextual Theology in the School of Divinity, at the University of Edinburgh. In addition she worked with deprived communities in both Argentina and Scotland.

You will all be familiar with Marcella's prolific academic output but perhaps like me you will be most affected by the passion with which she engaged with her subject and the profound insights she conveyed through lively wit and creative theological thinking. Marcella Althaus-Reid's work will echo for generations to come.

Lisa Isherwood

Professor of Feminist Liberation Theologies
University of Winchester, UK

Mary Salas Larrzabal

Mary Salas Larrzabal (1922-2008) died on Nov. 15th, 2008. With her a strong woman disappeared, a woman of deep faith who with great clearness could perceive the changes and the necessities of the time in which she was to live.

For 20 years Maria Salas acted as director for the "Catholic Action" in Spain" and through this work she got into contact with women of the international Catholicism, she shared the fears of the women of the rest of the world, traveled to Latin America and Africa.

Yet she had experienced a great sisterly love among the women who had attended the Council, the Catholics as delegates and those from other denominations as observers. From this group emerged an organization which enabled personal relations between women of different denominations and promoted a new spirituality with the aim to develop and spread the ecumenical spirit: The Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women. Mary participated actively in the Spanish Forum, in the FEM Foro de Estudios de la Mujer (Forum of Women's Studies) where ecumenical texts were edited, courses and meetings took place propagating the knowledge about and the respect for other denominations in a society, like the Spanish, which was not accustomed to religious pluralism.

Those who knew her remember her always as an example of work, faith and peace.

Teresa Rodriguez de Lecea

Transl. **Catherine Gyarmathy**

Both articles in full can be found on our website.