



Women's Federation for World Peace, USA

E-Newsletter

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Dear Friends of WFWP,

We hope you will enjoy the new WFWP E-Newsletter, revived this month after a half-year hiatus. A new look to the newsletter, a new editor - there are quite a few changes!

First of all, I have inherited the editorship of this newsletter from Laura Hornbeck. Many thanks to Laura for all your work and investment over the past few years!

The other development is that this newsletter will also be available in a plain text *and* html edition - which basically means it will have more design and easier navigation functions. I hope to share with you many other changes and improvements over the span of the next few newsletters.

In this issue, we are sharing with you the content from the WFWP International Fifth Leaders Workshop, which took place in Seebenstein, Austria last September. We have included key speeches from that conference, which we hope you will enjoy reading.

If you have any news, reports, or announcements for subsequent editions, please send them to me at the address below (preferably by email or on disk). Thank you!

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***WOMEN AS BRIDGE BUILDERS:
IMPLEMENTING THE CULTURE OF HEART AND PEACE***
Report on WFWP International Fifth Annual Leaders Workshop

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Synopsis

Dynamic Women ambassadors for peace from 5 continents, 7 regions and 33 nations met in the romantic country town of Seebenstein, from September 22-26, 2004 for the Women's Federation for World Peace International Fifth Annual Leaders Workshop. *Haus Regenbogen*, or "Rainbow House" (a former children's summer holiday camp), was the venue. At the Opening Ceremony, there were about 100 registered guests and speakers. Below are the transcripts from key speeches at that workshop.

H.E. Dr. Shpresa Kureta

Ambassador of the Republic of Albania to Germany

"Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

Thank you so much for your invitation. It is such a great pleasure to be with you tonight at this meaningful event. What you are doing is of great importance, especially now, when many people in the world are still enduring the consequences of armed conflict and suffering from hatred, poverty, disease, hunger, etc.

As if this is not enough, there is another evil that ignores the divinity of human life that threatens all of us; terrorism, by sowing fear, hate and fanaticism, disgraces the causes that it claims to serve. The scourge of terrorism has become more virulent in recent years and has produced brutal massacres which have in turn put even greater obstacles in the way of dialogue and negotiation, increasing tensions and aggravating problems.

Under these conditions every one of us can ask the most legitimate questions: Is this the only way for the world to be? Can we do something to ease the suffering of millions of people? Can we think and work for a better world? Can we believe in peace?

Before trying to answer these questions, I would like first of all to mention that, as citizens, we are jointly responsible for what I mentioned above, and together we can contribute by promoting a greater respect for life and by safeguarding the dignity of the human being. Accepting this responsibility as citizens, as women, as mothers and accepting the fact that positive answers are possible for the above questions, enormous opportunities for action lie ahead, on different levels and in different capacities.

Women know this; women feel this. They know that their role is indispensable because of the moral and spiritual strength that stems from their awareness that "God entrusts the human being to them in a special way". This special connection and relationship can be used in bridging differences and rounding corners. Within this special report and through their love, women can make a change toward protection of all human life, toward promoting the dignity of every person, toward reconciliation and peace.

Peace itself is such a nice word, but as just a word it does not make too much difference in the real world. It is our responsibility to build the conditions under

which peace can be reached and prevail. History and previous experience tells us that peace can be built and can prevail based only on certain values, such as truth, justice, love and freedom. These requirements are closely connected with the human spirit.

Truth will build peace, if every individual sincerely acknowledges not only his or her own rights, but also his or her duties towards others. Justice will build peace, if in practice everyone respects the rights of others and actually fulfills his or her duties towards them. Love will build peace, if people feel the needs of others as their own and share what they have with others, especially the values of mind and spirit which they possess. Freedom will build peace and make it thrive if, in the choice of the means to that end, people act according to reason and assume responsibility for their own actions.

Peace needs forgiveness. It is needed for solving the problems of individuals and peoples. There is no peace without forgiveness! I have in mind every personal life and relationship, all present conflicts, that of Iraq and the Middle East and can say that a solution to these grave problems, which for too long have caused suffering for people, will not be found until a decision is made to transcend the logic of simple justice and to be open also to the logic of forgiveness.

Peace also requires that human rights be protected. That means that every human being enjoys them, not as a benefit given by a different social class or conceded by the State, but simply due because of our humanity. The idea of human rights is inspired by the conviction that every human being is equal in dignity. Implementing this idea when the world is threatened by armed conflict, war or terrorism seems too difficult!

So, we can agree on the fact that there exists serious disorder in world affairs. Thus the question to be faced remains: What kind of order can replace this disorder, so that men and women can live in freedom, justice, and security?

These far-reaching questions suggest that the problem of order in world affairs, which rightly understood is the problem of peace, cannot be separated from issues of moral principle. Human beings are created with the capacity for moral choice, so no human activity takes place outside the sphere of moral judgment. This is another way of saying that the question of peace cannot be separated from the question of human dignity and human rights.

On the other hand there is an unbreakable bond between the work of peace and the respect for truth. Honesty in the supply of information, equity in legal systems and openness in democratic procedures give citizens a sense of security, a readiness to

settle controversies by peaceful means, and a desire for genuine and constructive dialogue, all of which constitute the true premises for lasting peace.

The road to a world of peace, justice and freedom seemed blocked twenty years ago. Many believed that humanity was condemned to live indefinitely in that precarious condition of the "cold war". But it proved not to be true. The unexpected fall of the Berlin wall opened a new era in the history of mankind. This also describes the present situation of the world. Despite the dramatic situation of world affairs, the world is becoming increasingly conscious of certain values and increasingly open to their meaning. It is our duty to teach them to our children. These values will lay the groundwork for an everlasting peace. To make it happen, gestures of peace are needed. Gestures of peace spring from the lives of people who foster peace first of all in their own hearts.

Thank you!"

Dr. Lan Young Moon

President, WFWP International

The Opening Session began with Dr. Lan Young Moon Park expressing gratitude to WFWP Europe for hosting the meeting as well as to the WFWPI officers and members who had contributed to the events held during 2004:

"Looking back, I feel that with each meeting, we have gone "one step higher." I am, again, deeply grateful for all of your tireless efforts to develop this movement. The Fourth Workshop last year in New York, including the UN Forum on the Eradication of Poverty, was also such a memorable and inspiring experience. This year in May, we held another incredible Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East, at the UN in Geneva. WFWP did a tremendous job with the Middle East Peace Initiative in Jerusalem. The rallies held by women are most effective. Thank you!

In early September, there was a WFWP Midday Workshop held during the 58th Annual UN General Assembly and DPI NGO conference. Our chapters are doing a wonderful job, on each continent. Each time we receive a national or regional report from any of you, I feel convinced that your chapter has gone "one step higher." Your effort and initiative based on each local situation are definitely bearing fruit."

President Moon thanked everyone for the ongoing generous offering for the 1% Love Sharing Project. "We receive various donations, some with postcards and some with

photographs from far away lands. We are truly touched by these efforts of love. Following the disaster in Ryongchong, North Korea, this April, we held our Peace Walk and sent a donation through the Korean Council of Reconciliation and Cooperation. We will continue to raise funds until we reach a certain goal, then the funds will be delivered to the women and children of the North."

With words of encouragement, she emphasized the need to become good citizens, not only of WFWP, but individually, to constantly develop our character; to clean up our age-old habits, idiosyncrasies, and other baggage. "We should become new beings in new wineskins."

Thus members of WFWP could become the "image of a true mother with true love." To embody the heart, "the *shimjung*" of a true mother, we must be aware of God's will. If we can embody the mother's true heart, we can become the center of *shimjung* as a wife, a daughter, in the family, the nation and the world.

"A true mother leads an exemplary life of giving, a life lived for the sake of others. Not just in words, but through daily practice. Putting this principle into action gives us overwhelming inspiration and joy. Thus, we are moved to love more, as we are fulfilled and can experience complete freedom.

I believe that we all have true love in our hearts. It just takes a little practice to draw it out. Women's Federation leaders in particular need to exercise, drawing out this true heart. It is actually very challenging to humble ourselves, to serve and to give.

I have often wondered, what is the specific purpose of WFWP? Our Founders look for the heart of God that a person has experienced. In the spirit world, it is that depth of heart we have shared with God that is valued most, rather than what position or title we have held on earth.

Let us be builders of the *shimjung* culture, the culture of true heart and true peace through our WFWP activities. As women are to be the embodiment of heart in the Global Family, not just in our own families, Heaven is expecting women to lead the way in this field. We can work together, not by ourselves, in spreading this culture globally.

Recently I became a grandmother. I feel unconditionally towards my first granddaughter, and my sons pale before her. Embodying the four realms of heart, God is in the grandparents' position, which, along with the positions of parents and children, represents three generations. Today, we can experience God's heart through three generations. This realm of unconditional love must be spread, not only

to our own family, but to all humankind. I believe this is how a culture of heart can be built, going higher, deeper and closer to the ideal of perfection.

Externally, we already have a Global Village. And yet, human beings are still far from being one Family. We have the outer shell of a Global Village, but we don't have the citizens for it. Spreading a culture of heart, based on true love, is our task of utmost importance that is to be practiced by everyone.

We have heard about the reflective idea of a "serving leadership" in organizations that succeed. Leaders should not always wait to be served, but must serve and attend those under them and take initiative. If we have this attitude, we should easily be able to find and raise up our "second selves." Let us as the leaders of WFWP be the first to do this, this year. Let us find more people with like minds, to strengthen our network for our Global Village of real peace!"

¹ The English equivalent of the Korean word *shimjung* is roughly "heart".

Ms. Alexa Fish Ward

President, WFWP USA

Vice President, WFWP International

Keynote Address

"I am so pleased to find myself in Austria, dear to us all because of the Alps, the famed Lippazan horses, the lederhosen, home of the beloved Sound of Music, the Vienna Boys Choir, just to name a few, as well as our warm-hearted brothers and sisters.

When I drove up here two days ago I could feel my European roots stirring. My background is primarily English, Dutch, and German. I come alive in places of simple natural beauty. I spent my summers in a town in Canada, along the Saint Lawrence river, with a similar feeling to Seebenstein. A town where the church is the tallest building, where the roads curve along hilly terrain, where houses speak of extended families who have shared their lives together over many generations. We are grateful to be able to spend a few days in this lovely part of the world.

I would like to reflect with you on the role of the mother's heart as the foundation of our work with WFWP. The mother's heart has such depth and breadth that it can continuously take us to new levels of understanding as well as of experience.

I had the opportunity to co-chair the organizing effort of the Women of Peace Program, held in Israel in May of this year, along with Karen Smith, the Director of UN Relations for IIFWP. After I was given this responsibility, I spent a great deal of time reflecting on the nature and purpose of the ongoing pilgrimages to Israel, as well as on the unique contribution we could make to this part of the world as women. The focus of the ongoing pilgrimages has been the coming together of the three Abrahamic faiths; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as the basis for building peace. I reflected on what it took, or might take, for these three brothers of faith to unite.

It gradually became clear to me that the mother's heart played a central role in bringing about this unity. I realized that the mother's heart was above religion. How can the mother's heart bring about unity? Scold them into uniting? Tell them they have to unite? I can tell you from my experience as a mother that neither of these approaches will work. Somehow we have to contribute to creating an environment that allows for, or leads to, unity. In the case of the Middle East, the views held by any one side have become hardened so that there is little room to deeply receive or consider any other view. It is the role of the mother's heart to soften the environment, to open the hearts, to move people, so that they can go beyond their hardened views.

In organizing the Women of Peace Program, it was the insight of our Founders that offered the opportunity to most deeply express the mother's heart. Go door to door throughout Jerusalem and comfort those who have lost loved ones. So simple and so profound. We walked through the neighborhoods in teams and in pairs. Women in the pairs often spoke different languages, with neither speaking Hebrew or Arabic. Yet pair after pair met families who had lost loved ones. These families were moved by the language of the heart. We did not take sides. We simply extended a loving heart.

I realized that we had to maintain and express the mother's heart throughout the planning and organizing period, as well as during the actual events; that the means and the end had to be treated the same way. I understood that this was an important condition to allow God to work, to move people beyond their current situation. This was a big challenge. Many things came up throughout the organizing period that were difficult to deal with. In Israel Karen and I spent most of our time in meetings. Each day decisions were made, revised, changed. It was a careful and thoughtful process of considering suggestions from quite a few individuals, finding a way to include what was most important for all the stakeholders involved, and helping each person to feel that his or her contribution was valuable. This project

and the many that we work on each year is real life training to be leaders within our nations as well as on the world level.

As the week unfolded, with the Bridge of Peace Ceremony, home visits, visits to Hadassah Hospital as well as Yad be Yad Bilingual School, culminating in the march and rally, we felt that the mother's heart had stayed the course. It was a valuable lesson for me. Ever since our founders introduced the concept of going "one step higher" in our planning process, I spend a lot of time reflecting on what the next step might be. It is rewarding to come together each year and see the growth in so many areas.

I strongly believe that the "uniqueness" of WFWP does not lie primarily in what we do, but it can be found in the kind of women we are striving to become. After I was appointed to this position, I had the opportunity to spend some time with our founders. They shared deeply with me about the importance of the mother's heart as the foundation for WFWP's work. I have come to understand that what I make of myself is the condition to bring result in my work with WFWP.

What I make of myself includes the vertical aspect, my relationship with God as well as with my leaders; and the horizontal side, how I relate to and care for, others. Our founders have often spoken of the need to "check" ourselves on a daily basis, to measure ourselves with a universal standard of goodness and maturity. They also speak of maturity in the context of unity of mind and body, which I have come to understand refers to my ability to do what I say I am going to do, based on a universal standard of goodness.

What I strive to make of myself includes: Coming from a place of deep heart in all that I do and all that I say. Putting the greater public good before the private good. Supporting others, for their sake, without benefit to myself. Loving the children of other cultures, races, and nations, as much as my own. Becoming a woman who can forgive others for their wrongdoings, especially those that have hurt me. Cultivating a peaceful mind and heart in myself, so that I can contribute to building peace in the world. This is serious homework.

In the spirit of going "one step higher", I believe it is time to focus more on "impact and influence". As women leaders "in training" we have built a supportive network, acquired skills and gained confidence in our ability to "meet, involve, and educate" women leaders in the work of WFWP.

In WFWP, USA we have a national advisor. Her name is Norma Foster. She has had decades of experience with the United Nations and the NGO community. One year ago I took Norma to the IIFWP Assembly and the World Culture and Sports Festival in Seoul, South Korea. At the conclusion of all the activities, I took Norma out to lunch and asked her if there was anything she would like to share with me. She looked at me with her big soft eyes and, in her quiet voice, said, "shame on you for not sharing WFWP with the world". I was stunned.

What Norma understood is that women all over the world are waiting for what WFWP has to offer. She understood WFWP's value so clearly and only felt frustration that it was not shared more broadly. It is time for us to inherit that sense of urgency. It is time to focus on those activities that will result in the greatest impact and broadest influence. You can convey your message to a group of women; or you can convey your message to leaders who have the foundation to influence many women. "Impact and influence" requires careful, strategic planning. Who do we want to meet, what do we want to say, and what do we want to accomplish. From my observation, in WFWP, we often develop a short term plan that can be delivered quickly, with little follow-up later. That will not result in a strong, lasting foundation, that will grow over time.

This workshop is a good place to begin to consider how to plan for greater "impact and influence". We can listen carefully to all the reports and presentations with an ear for what can help us move in the direction of "impact and influence".

In closing I hope each one of you has a wonderful and enriching experience here in lovely Seebenstein. Let us work together and support each other in our efforts to embody and express the mother's heart, in our efforts to deepen our character to become women of peace, as well as move toward greater impact and influence in all levels of our work.

Thank you."

Ms. Martina Coombs

Vice President and European Chair, WFWP International

"Seebenstein is named after the castle built on top of the nearby mountain in 1092. Vienna, the capital of Austria, has UNOV and is an important cultural and historical center.

The European heritage is very complex. First of all, as a representative of Europe, I would like to repent for the suffering that was brought to this world as a result of the crusades, conquests, colonization, communism and the world wars. But I do not want to forget to mention those Europeans who have contributed to worldwide development in various fields: Heraklit, Pythagoras, Adam Riese, Albert Einstein, Martin Luther, Mozart, Beethoven, Johann Sebastian Bach, Emil von Behring, Niels Bohr, Celsius Anders, Thomas Hobbes, Emmanuel Swedenborg, Sören Kirkegaard, Henry Dunant, the Grimm Brothers and many others.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan mentioned just last week "how important women are for world peace".

France: Theresia of Lisieux, born in 1873, a known mystic and a woman of Christian faith.

Italy: Maria Montessori. Born in 1870, the first woman in Italy, who became a medical doctor and founder of the world-famous Montessori Pedagogy.

Spain: Theresia of Avila, born in 1515, a Christian mystic.

Greece: Theano, wife of Pythagoras, about 550 BC. She wrote about the essence of virtue as the Happy Medium and many letters about the psychology of children and the best way to educate the family.

England: Marjorie Stephenson, born in 1843. As a biochemist she made revolutionary experiments in the field of metabolism of bacteria.

Austria: Bertha von Suttner, born in 1843. As a pacifist she is the author of the anti-war novel "Die Waffen nieder!" (Arms down!), which was translated into 16 languages. To honor her, Alfred Nobel donated the Nobel Peace Prize, which she was the first to be awarded with in 1905.

Latvia: Zenta Maurina, born 1897, a famous author and the first woman who lectured as doctor of philosophy at the University of Riga.

Sweden: Selma Lagerlöf, born in 1858, Nobel Prize winner of literature and a passionate advocate for peace and unity of the Christian denominations.

Poland: Marie Curie, born in 1867, a chemist and a physicist. She was the only one to receive the Nobel Prize twice.

Germany: Hildegard von Bingen, born in 1098. She was a visionary, a talented woman, a significant mystic and wrote revolutionary medical and scientific works, which are even to this day outstanding in their meaning.

Hungary: Elisabeth of Thüringen, a great saint of the Middle Ages, born in 1207. She led a very holy life and is known to have always given food to the poor despite the opposition of the Court.

Switzerland: Maria-Sybilla Merian, a brave woman who collected scientific studies on long journeys, which she put together in books with her own illustrations.

Albania: Our most beloved Mother Theresa.

Out of this heritage have come the ideals that are anchored in the hearts of women today. No matter if they were saints, pacifists, benefactors or scientists, they all have shaped our view of the world. When we look back at this history, we cannot but realize and carry out our duties.

Why are women so important for world peace? The pacifist Klara Maria Fassbender was convinced that women have the special task to stand up for a peaceful coexistence of nations. At a conference of the 5th anniversary of the West German women's peace movement in 1956, she said: "There is no way to keep peace and to create a new world without a new spirit within the world's inhabitants. To unfold this spirit within us is the task we have taken upon us. This new spirit is not only needed within us, but also in the world of men. Male politics need this new spirit, in order to be able to get away from the old political concept of "friend or enemy" thinking and to embrace thoughts that it should be possible to try to solve all their opposing interests on a higher level."

The complexity of our history determines the necessity of our work as WFWP in Europe. We focus on three aspects: peacebuilding, education and social aid projects. The educational work includes projects for cultural understanding and education of awareness. We put a major emphasis on restoring the dignity of women in society, the necessity for self-determination, as well as the realization of the values, mentioned above, these women have shown us with their lives and which are a part of the philosophy of the WFWP.

At the heart of our peace work is the Bridge of Peace Ceremony, a social technology for the healing of inner wounds of the wars and clashes in the course of European history. Through this technology, we offer help and education for conflict resolution in all areas of life. Each one of us can be a bridge to reconnect everything which has been separated. Hence, our conference motto "WOMEN AS BRIDGE BUILDERS: IMPLEMENTING THE CULTURE OF HEART AND PEACE."

"We as women have the task to mold our hearts, to keep it open to all those things", Klara Maria Fassbender said, referring to a new way of thinking in dealing with each other. A culture of heart and peace is the only practical way for the future and the heritage, which we as women of our century can and want to leave behind for the generations to come.

We commend our Women's Federation founders and pioneers, who have paved this way with true love!"