

Keeping the Link

Web extra for Continuing the Journey:
2007 Fellowship of the Least Coin



The Asian Women's Church Conference (ACWC) was founded in 1958 by a group of Asian women planning an event that would bring together women of the Reformed and United Asian churches. Presbyterian woman Dorothy Wagner hosted the group at Stony Point Conference Center, New York, as they did their planning.

Because of PW's historic relationship with ACWC and FLC, Catrelia Hunter, churchwide moderator of Presbyterian Women, was invited to attend the 50th anniversary celebration for both in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, October 2006—Celebrating the Legacy, Visioning the Future, Living the Jubilee (see *Horizons*, January/February 2007). Annam Arumanayagam of Malaysia was president of ACWC at the time of the celebration. As part of her responsibilities during her four-year term as president, Annam served on the International Committee of the Fellowship of the Least Coin. Annam took a few moments after the celebration to talk about her work with Asian Women's Church Conference and the Least Coin, and the ongoing relationship with Presbyterian Women.

Horizons: Tell us about your work with the Asian Women's Church Conference.

Annam: The ACWC gave me a new awareness of Asian women: their plights, struggles, tragedies, achievements and joys. Living in Malaysia where poverty is not such a major issue and, besides small floods, we do not have major natural disasters, my knowledge of such realities came from newspaper articles and television news reports. When I became the president of ACWC, suddenly, all this was a reality. I actually knew women who were in such situations. Being directly informed, I could pray and talk about these things meaningfully. I had to be on alert to all that is happening in Asia. For example, on December 26, 2004, when the tsunami hit, as soon as I heard the news, Shu-Wen (ACWC executive secretary) and I emailed the national representatives of the various countries to get updates. In

Indonesia we found our national representative could not reply to our email as she was working around the clock giving aid to the victims.

Horizons: What are some of the highlights of your term as president of ACWC?

Annam: I loved visiting and meeting the women of the Asian countries, but probably, the highlights would be visiting Myanmar and Mongolia. They are such diverse countries. Myanmar has a rich history in ACWC whereas Mongolia knew nothing about the organization. It was a joy that our General Committee could meet in Myanmar in 2004. It was the first time that an ecumenical meeting at such a level was held in the country. I was privileged to meet and to hear the sharing by some gracious ladies in their seventies and eighties who were pioneer members of ACWC and FLC. Another joy was to see

the women of Mongolia get excited about the ACWC. At the recent assembly, Mongolia was received as the newest member of ACWC. When I traveled to Mongolia in 2005 for a workshop to introduce ACWC, my family and friends thought I was crazy for going to this “remote” land. It was such an unforgettable experience. I left Malaysia in temperatures of 32 degrees centigrade and landed in Ulaanbaatar at minus 35 degrees. I still marvel at the gorgeous snow (alien to me) and how, by God’s grace, I survived the freezing cold.

Horizons: What legacy do you leave ACWC?

Annam: I have been busy working and praying for the ACWC, not thinking of what I can leave behind. But I have introduced something that I hope will continue. During General Assembly sessions where country reports are shared, I felt that something more than listening and commenting should take place after hearing the reports. So, after the national representative has given her report, I suggested that we spend a moment of silence to reflect and pray for the country. During the assembly, we asked the country’s prayer partner to pray. Some of the reports are so heartbreaking and some cannot put certain items in black and white, so reports have to be verbal. We certainly need to pray about such matters. I hope I have left a legacy of prayer and joy.

Horizons: What are your hopes for the future of ACWC?

Annam: I do not think of changes as ACWC is already doing such good work. I hope that the conference will continue to

reach and to help the grassroots women of Asia. Also, that the wonderful Fellowship of the Least Coin prayer movement will continue to be the major project of the conference. As Asia develops and times and generations change, I pray that ACWC will always be relevant to the generation but not miss out on the marginalized.

Horizons: Is there anything more you would like to say to Presbyterian Women?

Annam: I was a new kid on the block when I was elected president in 2002. It was the first time I attended an ACWC Assembly. But as soon as I was elected, I diligently read the history of ACWC and was immediately so thankful to Presbyterian Women for helping to birth ACWC. At that time, and until I traveled to an FLC meeting in New York, I did not know any Presbyterian Women of the U.S.A. and, as I am an Anglican, I had no international link either. I had never been to the United States, but I did wish for the opportunity (and I do have it now) to tell the women personally thank you. Thank you for the way in which you helped us to begin and then stepped aside to let us to grow on our own. Thank you for your prayers for me and for women you have never seen—and are likely to never meet. Thank you that your love for Jesus made you reach out across the oceans to support and stand by us.

Nearly 50 years ago, your women (PWUSA) did something for us in Asia. Today, the ACWC women and I are the harvest of those prayers and efforts. Keep the link. We are one family in Christ. Let us continue to share and uphold each other in our joys and struggles.