



New quinquennium new beginnings

We are starting a new series in which each newsletter we will focus on one of our unions. We have asked all of you to participate and in this issue we are presenting the **Finland Union of Churches Conference**. We hope this will help you with new ideas and motivate you. We look forward to each issue.

Anne Vrcelj has been married for nearly 6 wonderful years with her husband Dragoslav. They do not have children.

She has been involved with Women's Ministries since February 2012, it has been a blessing. But her main work is the Secretariat of the Finland Union of Churches Conference as the Executive Secretary. Their wonderful ladies are already



so involved with their local churches and local events that they are not so active in national level in Women's Ministries. But she is happy that WM material for special days is regularly provided by the GC and it is in use in several local churches when it has been translated into Finnish.

Several small groups for women have been formed after Clair Sanches' and Raquel Arrais' visit to Finland on Spring 2013. For her this tells that women are serious about growing in their faith and being disciples of Jesus. Being in a small group is really close to her heart because she was able to grow in her own faith and in her own journey for finding God when she was young. They are thankful for the material that GC & TED have been producing.

There are several texts that are important to her. Currently it is 1 Peter 5:7. "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."



EndItNow

22nd of August, 2015

We gathered for our national meeting at Tervajoki last August, 2015, for EndItNow-theme day. We had a small group of women present, but the day was spiritually refreshing.

Our special day started with Bible Study and Worship together with the whole church family, and after that we had nice lunch. And for the afternoon men and children were getting lots of fresh air (they were outside on this sunny day) while us women continued to have our own meeting. We had a small group discussion about the Anger Management Seminar in the afternoon. While going through the material provided by the GC WM we had really touching conversations with each other while opening up with our own experiences and what we have seen.

On previous events we have been visiting some special places: nursing home, old people's home and SOS Children's Village (place where several families are living on the same campus. Also children who cannot live with their biological parents are located there for shorter or longer time in a regular family setting. They have good opportunities for hobbies, help for school work and responsible adults are present at all times) bringing women's greetings and gifts to the residents.

On our EndItNow -theme day we got familiar (only via material) with a special Shelter for mothers and children who have been experiencing domestic violence. We were not able to visit the Shelter, because residents could have been in really vulnerable state, but we compiled gift baskets for the mothers and children so that their time would be more enjoyable in the Shelter.

We also compiled gift basket for the workers and with it thanking them, that they are doing really important work with families. A couple of our local ladies took the gift baskets to the Shelter.



EndItNow

We closed our day together outside, men and children joined us, by having Selah worship (special prayer, singing and responsive reading) together. Closing thought was that "what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?" And when we looked around, we knew by experience that God is/was with us and we were able to thank God with words from Psalm 121. Before departing we had light supper together and reflected upon our day. We did have some tears. We did have joy and laughter. We did have encouraging fellowship. We had warm hugs. But most of all we rejoiced that we are sisters and our Father cares for us. God is good!

- Anne Vrcelj





Concert in the park

Nicosia, Cyprus

Municipality Park in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, became a venue for Voices United in Praise concert on 6 March 2016. The event was created as an outreach programme of the Women's International Day of Prayer. It united diverse singing and drama groups and Filipino solo singers from Nicosia and Limassol for two hours entertaining and inspiring the audience. The running theme based on Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 encouraged those present to remember God in every situation of life.

Around 300 people enjoyed the programme and were given bottles of water. For some, Vibrant Life magazines, religious books and CDs will be a lasting memory from the event given as prizes and freebies. A warm atmosphere created by beautiful music and drama, continued with a bring-and-share picnic.

New friendships were made in the beautiful surroundings on that sunny spring day in Cyprus. The following Sabbath several concert attendees joined us for the church service. On Sunday, a bible study group was formed to continue catering for the spiritual development of the Filipino ladies, who were guests of the concert.

Encouraged by the positive response of both the church community and visitors, plans are made to venture new, open-air community events.

-Marica Mirilov

