

C R O S S R O A D S

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A Newsletter of The Grail International Leadership Team

December, 2009

O

Let me walk the fields of life as a sower.
I don't want to sow weeds, nor spiderwort,
but grain that satisfies people's deepest hunger.
Please give me the grain of love,
and show me the field where I may sow.

S

I will go and sow love
in the small furrows
of the human heart.

S

Let me return home every evening,
tired, empty handed maybe,
but with a deep-rooted trust
in the germination and ripening of the grain.

R

Please give me what a good sower needs:
a big faith, a quiet heart, endless patience
and an awful lot of generosity.

O

Jozef Delmotte

(poem read at "Meet the Grail Day", September 2009, The Netherlands)

A

Best wishes to everyone for a blessed and joyful Christmas season and a peaceful New Year!

D

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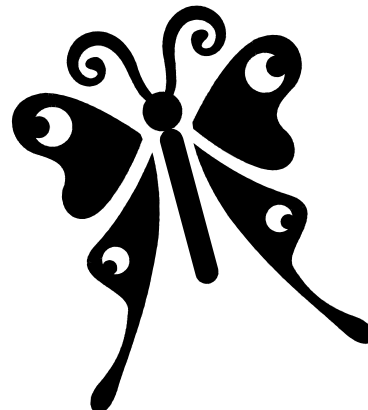
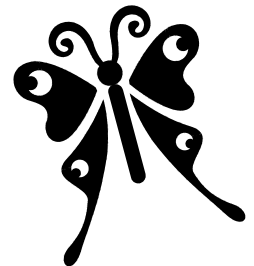


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Deadline for the next Crossroads - *May 15, 2010*.
Please send to International Secretariat at her address. Thank you.

ILT Contact Details:

International Secretariat
Hermien van Sloten
Nieuwegracht 51
3512 LE Utrecht
The Netherlands
Tel. 31-30-234 1894
Fax: 31-30-234 2960
iltsec@planet.nl
<http://www.thegrail.org>

Mieneke Hage has a new email address.
Please note: mieneke@mienekehage.nl



REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM, December 2009

The Grail is getting ready to move into the second decade of the 21st century under the newly elected International Leadership Team: Cristina dos Anjos, Carol Webb, and Christa Werner. We thank them for their willingness to take the leadership and pledge our support to them.

As we leave office, we three, Mary and Cristina who have served the International Grail over the past four years as part of the ILT, and Ruth who has served on both the current ILT and previous IPT, wish to say special thanks to Mieneke Hage who has been the International Financial Officer during our term of office. Mieneke has been a huge support to us and has helped us with good advice, regular briefings, transparency in all transactions, accurate information and meticulous keeping of accounts that pass both the Grail and the Dutch Government's standards with flying colors!! Fortunately, Mieneke will continue her roles and responsibilities with the new team.

We also sincerely thank Hermien van Sloten who agreed to take up the position of Administrative Assistant and help us set up the International Secretariat. Her support has been invaluable, especially through her work in distributing communications internationally. She compiled the monthly ILT Bulletin and sent it out. She took the database and website to new stages where they can be developed further by the new team and the International Council. Fortunately, Hermien will also continue in the Secretariat.

We thank the Dutch Grail for allowing us to take over one of the apartments in the Graalhuis in Utrecht, where we have had a comfortable place to meet and all the wonderful hospitality we have received over the past years.

We thank those Grail countries that hosted international meetings for us: Kenya (2006), USA (2006 IGA), Portugal (2007 Spirituality Forum), Brazil (2008 International Formation Program), and the Netherlands (2008) (IC/Network/International Formation meeting). We also thank the Grail Centers that welcomed ILT meetings: Bronx, Cornwall, Golega, Sydney, and Utrecht.

To those who have been International Council members, the Grail Global Network/Work Group Coordinators, members of the IAF Team, the International Formation Team, the Board of the Capital Foundation, contributors to and producers of *Crossroads* and *Age-wise*, the writers and producers of international reports, facilitators of various international meetings, including the 2006 IGA, the Spirituality Forum, and the IC/Network International Formation Meeting, we say a very big THANK YOU for your contributions.

To each and everyone of you—thank you for your support and cooperation over the years, for the hospitality and love you have given us when we visited your country, for the understanding when some things didn't go as we hoped, and for the great work you do to continue to respond to our calling to work with the Spirit 'to make all things new' in our times!

May that Spirit continue to guide the new team and to bless us all with wisdom and courage into the future.

Mary, in consultation with Cristina and Ruth, has prepared the following brief report on some aspects of the life and work of the International Grail for the years 2006-2009 when we have been the ILT. We started in 2006 as a 4-person team because Rosaurora Espinosa was finishing the last year of her term. Our principal task when we met for the first time in January 2006 was preparing the International General Assembly, which was held at Grailville in the USA in August 2006. We had input from the 2004 Network Forum and the 2005 International Council meeting, as well as answers to a questionnaire we sent to the 17 Grail countries to guide us.

The report shows how the Grail has worked within the framework of the Mission Goals and Recommendations adopted at the 2006 IGA with flexibility and creativity amid many changes and challenges locally, nationally and internationally.

Ruth Crowe, Cristina dos Anjos and Mary Gindhart

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATIONS OF THE IGA 2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

The IGA 2006 produced the following Mission Goals and Recommendations for the International Grail.

As the Grail in the 21st Century we:

Work for the transformation of the world by deepening as an international community, through focus on: Spirituality, Solidarity, Formation, and Culture and Language;

Work for the transformation of the world by choosing actions for justice and by continuing to challenge unjust structures, with focus on: Overcoming Poverty, Living in Harmony with the Earth, Justice for Women and Peace.

The IGA Recommendations were:

- I. Vision Statement Process
- II. Spirituality Forum
- III. Solidarity
- IV. Grail Formation
- V. Grail Centers
- VI. Grail Global Networks
 - A. Human Trafficking
 - B. International Grail Linkage to the UN, World Social Forum, and UFER
 - C. Earth, Ecology, and Biodiversity



This report is structured to show what has been done to implement these goals and recommendations.

Recommendation I: Revise/Review/Renew International Grail Vision Statement Process (IGA 2006 Report, p. 12) ❀

2006–2007 A Vision Statement Work Group was created which *defined* the process, attended the Spirituality Forum in July 2007, and met with the ILT and Spirituality and Theology Network Coordinators after the Forum to plan the next steps of the Vision Statement process.

2007–2008 At the International Work Group Meeting held in Utrecht, the Netherlands in November 2008, representatives of the Vision Statement Work Group reported on their work. Participants at the Forum worked in groups to brainstorm words and phrases for the Vision Statement that expressed their perspectives on the contemporary world, what the Grail is called to do in this world, and our vision of the future.

2008–2009 In September 2009 the Vision Statement Working Group sent two drafts of a revised Vision Statement to all Grail members and asked each Grail group to decide when and how they will work together on the drafts. They are to send replies to the Vision Statement Working Group by March 31, 2010.

Recommendation II: International Grail Spirituality and Theology Forum 2007 (IGA 2006 Report, p.13) ❀

The Spirituality Forum was held at Palmela, Portugal in August 2007. Two representatives attended from each Grail country, the ILT, Vision Statement Group members, the Spirituality and Theology Network Coordinators, an International Formation Team member, resource persons, and a facilitator. A report was written that included summaries of all the papers presented at the Forum, reflections, prayers, and some themes and questions for further reflection. A website was created specifically for the Forum materials and some follow-up. The information on this site will be transferred to the new international Grail website.

2007–2008 The ILT made the following statement after the Spirituality Forum: *“The task ahead is to honor and deepen our foundational Christian roots and at the same time to nurture the new openness to the diversity of spiritual paths and different discernments of the Mystery present within the International Grail.”*

Early in 2008 the ILT asked countries to respond to 3 questions: 1) what themes is your country working on since the 2007 Spirituality Forum; 2) what would your country like to see go forward internationally; 3) what common knowledge is needed now. In November 2008, a summary of these responses was presented at the International Work Group Meeting and the **Txintxa** process was created.

2009 In the first step of the **Txintxa** process, facilitated by the ILT and members of the Theological Resources Work Group, Grail women reflected on the “Origins of Christianity” using a text prepared by the Milan Grail Group and a text *Grail Dynamism* by Rachel Donders. As of November 1, 2009, over 40 groups and six individuals from 16 countries had sent in responses. All the responses are being distributed, either electronically or hard copy, to each country. Grail members are encouraged to study them and make them part of our developing dialogue with each other. The responses will be posted on the members’ section of the International Grail website.

An ‘Overview’ of important points arising from the responses is being distributed to Contact Persons in each country with a request that all Grail women receive a copy.

2010 A second set of papers, *Understanding Culture and Spiritual Challenges*, is being prepared by the Theological Resources Work Group which will be distributed internationally in March 2010.

Recommendation III: Solidarity (IGA 2006 Report, p. 14) ❀

The goals of this recommendation were taken up by Grail members, National Leadership Teams, and the International Leadership Team. We work to share human resources and financial resources more equitably in the Grail.

2007–2008 Personnel exchanges were arranged between Australia and Uganda, Papua New Guinea and Uganda, Portugal and South Africa, and South Africa and the United States. Papua New Guinea and Uganda is a South-South exchange.

2007–2009 The International Assistance Fund has provided funds to National Leadership Teams in the Global South to assist these countries towards more self reliance with regard to helping long serving Grail members who need assistance to receive it.

2009 A Higher Education Fund will be established through the generosity of the Dutch Grail to fund tertiary education for committed Grail members seeking professional upgrading or studies in the field of their Grail involvement.

2007–2009 The International Solidarity Fund (ISF) has subsidized National Leadership Team meetings, as needed.

The ISF also funded meetings, programs and activities of the International Formation Team, Women of the Americas’ activities in Honduras, National and Regional Formation programs, and small projects.

Money was also allocated to fund outreach to new women and to support young women to attend the Commission on the Status of Women to speak for the ‘Girl Child’.

2006–2009 Information is available to all Grail members about the purposes, criteria, and ways to access International Grail funds from the International Secretariat.

Recommendation IV: Grail Formation (IGA 2006 Report, p.15) ❀

The International Formation Team (IFT) is Rosaurora Espinosa, Mary Kay Louchart, and Maria Goretti Semvua.

2007–2008 Formation programs happened, one was the work of the IFT while others were carried out by people working together regionally or nationally. They included the following:

- Portuguese/Spanish program in Brazil, 2008 (international)
- East African Program for Young Professional Women in Kenya, 2007 (regional)
- Women’s Leadership Program in Papua New Guinea, 2006–2008 (regional)

2008–2009 At the International Work Group Meeting in November 2008, the International Council (IC) affirmed the desirability of having a set of ‘Guiding Elements for Grail formation’ for the International Grail. A revised draft of the *Guiding Elements for Grail Formation* prepared by the ILT has been sent to IC members to discuss with their NLT and the people doing formation in their countries.

2009 Planning is underway for a meeting of persons from national formation teams in 2010. At the meeting, participants will discuss their understanding of the world, the political economy, and the big changes happening everywhere that should be shaping Grail formation work.

Recommendation V: Grail Centers/Centros (IGA 2006 Report, p.17) ✿

Grail Centers are in: **Sydney**, Australia; **Belo Horizonte**, Brazil; **Mulheim** and **Ingolstadt**, Germany; **Darajmbili**, Kenya; **Maputo**, Mozambique; **Utrecht**, Netherlands; **Wewak**, Papua New Guinea; **Lisbon** and **Golega**, Portugal; **Johannesburg** and **Kleinmond**, South Africa; **Kisekibaha**, **Rau** and **Morogoro**, Tanzania; **Rubaga**, **Kitovu**, and **Mushanga**, Uganda; and **Grailville**, **Cornwall**, and the **Bronx**, United States.

The goals for Grail Centers are to:

- promote sustainability regarding program, staff, finances, and maintenance,
- promote the vision and mission of the Grail,
- develop awareness that Grail Centers are part of their bioregion,
- use Grail Centers whenever possible for Grail programs and Grail meetings.



Promote sustainability:

Programs are planned to meet local, regional, national, and international needs.

Staff members develop budgets, plan programs, provide program support, provide hospitality, and work with local communities in consultation with Grail members and their national leadership teams.

Maintenance, housekeeping, improvements, and renovations are done using ecologically sound methods.

Finances are a challenge in many Grail Centers. The staff and local Grail members, national treasurers and finance officers, and sometimes international leadership and finance personnel work together to meet needs.

Promote the vision and mission of the Grail:

Grail members gather at Grail Centers regularly to pray, celebrate liturgical seasons, create rituals, share their spiritualities, and get to know each other better. Some Grail Centers have residential communities.

Grail Centers provide venues: for discussion and action on local, regional, national and international concerns; for Grail formation programs and activities; for Grail projects; and for Grail outreach.

Develop awareness that Grail Centers are part of their bioregion:

With the increasing awareness of global warming/climate change, desertification/water shortages, corporate privatization of water and seeds, destruction of native species, effects of pollution, and waste of resources, every Grail Center has heightened awareness of its role in its environment. Each one works out its plan that can include recycling, composting, organic gardening and farming, energy conservation, locally grown food, composting toilets, waste water systems, and handicapped accessibility.

Use of Grail Centers whenever possible for Grail programs and Grail meetings:

Where a Grail Center exists it is almost always used by local Grail members for prayer times and retreats, meetings, and programs. If it is large enough, it is also used for Grail regional, national and international gatherings. When extra space is needed, overnight accommodation can frequently be arranged in the surrounding area with Grail members and friends. International Grail meetings were held in Grail Centers: ILT meeting 2006 in **Avila, Sydney**; IGA 2006 in **Grailville**; ILT meetings 2007 and 2008 and All Saints Day celebration 2008 in **Graalhuis, Utrecht**; ILT meeting 2007 in **Golega**; International Formation Program (2008) in **Belo Horizonte**; and ILT meetings 2009 in **Cornwall** and **Bronx**.

Recommendation VI: Grail Global Networks/Work Groups ✿

The Grail Global Networks work for the transformation of the world by choosing actions for justice and by continuing to challenge unjust structures. **Earth, Ecology and Biodiversity Network**, **Grail Link to the United Nations Network**, **LIEN Listening to Young Women Network**, and **Women of the Americas Network** are **Grail Global Networks**. "Global Justice Overcoming Poverty" is the context and goal of two networks and two developing initiatives: **Justice and Trade Agreements Network**, **Human Trafficking Network**, **Sustainable Livelihood Initiative**, and **Popular Education Initiative**.

The **Theological Resources Work Group** is providing resources to Grail countries for the two-year study and reflection **Txintxa** program. The **Brussels Group** is organizing the 2010 European Grail meeting.

The Networks and Work Groups provide resources, training, and consciousness raising materials to Grail groups and individual members, and give opportunities for sharing best practices and challenges. They also promote partnerships with other organizations and participate in United Nations Conferences and the World Social Forum.

Justice and Trade Agreements Network:

We produce and distribute a monthly Bulletin to the members which reports on issues of justice as they arise, especially those pertaining to trade agreements and poverty, and always includes an article on Human Trafficking by Ton Brouwer. Alison edits and sends the bulletins out to 130 people in 19 countries. We hope to increase the use of the Internet and other electronic technologies.

We have done some thinking and reading for research papers on theological/spiritual/ethical grounding for work for poverty eradication and justice. We draw from missiology, prophetic church social teaching, and the charism of the Grail. This is an important work to be completed.

Human Trafficking Network:

Ton Brouwer and Elly König are the coordinators of the Human Trafficking Network. They work in collaboration with the Dutch Foundation of Religious Against Trafficking of Women (SRTV). The Grail brings to SRTV its network of 17 Grail countries.

Since the IGA in 2006, there is at least one contact person in each Grail country who is asked to find out if trafficking of women and girls is taking place in her country and if her country is a country of destination and/or transit.

12 Grail members have been active by sending their findings to Ton who publishes it in the monthly "GJOP Bulletin" (Global Justice Overcoming Poverty) and in Crossroads to inform the whole Grail.

Prevention is very important. Information leaflets are available in 49 different languages and a pictorial versions for non-readers. Twice a year all the contact persons, ILT members, and Network coordinators receive a copy of *TRANSactions*, a newsletter of the SRTV, free of charge.

The book and DVD, *Elena: a Reflection on Trafficking in Women*, are available. Mieke Borgdorff of the Grail created paintings for it. Elena is a young woman who is a victim of trafficking. The story of her suffering is recounted in fifteen stations—moments to be still. Her passion, her way of the cross, concludes finally with a positive outcome. All those present were moved by the beautiful texts and paintings. Ton sent 30 copies of the DVD to the contact persons in the Human Trafficking Network, the ILT, the coordinators of the Networks, and the Grail in England.

We are working to enlarge the Human Trafficking Network to stimulate awareness of human trafficking and prevention. In the future we hope to help victims of trafficking to repatriate to their home country through the mediation of the Grail.

Elly König who is now coordinator of the Network with Ton Brouwer is a lawyer and chairman of UFER (Union Fraternelle Entre les Races et les Peuples), which is an NGO to which the Grail belongs. Her special interest is human rights, an important point for the trafficking in women. She will provide good input for the SRTV and the Grail Human Trafficking Network.

Sustainable Livelihoods and Popular Education Initiatives:

At the Network meeting in November 2008, Carol Webb agreed to follow-up on discussions that we had concerning the possibilities of beginning networks related to popular education (as a follow-on from the Training for Transformation Network) and sustainable livelihoods (as a follow-on from the Overcoming Poverty and Global Justice Network).

This is what has happened so far regarding Sustainable Livelihoods: A questionnaire was sent to the contact people in each country. To date 3 countries reported on 8 projects. A few countries that said there are no such projects currently. Outreach will continue to get a better understanding of what work is going on so that we can find ways for deeper sharing of experiences, of fund-raising opportunities, etc.

Women of the Americas Network:

Since 2008, Women of the Americas Network has been working on a 2-stage strategic visioning process with our member countries: Mexico, Brazil, United States, and Canada. We had a 3-day Network Coordinating Committee meeting in New York in April 2009. Each country will develop and engage in a common visioning process. They will send ideas back to all in the Network team and a 3-year plan will be made. The content and process for the international gathering in July 2010 in Brazil will be prepared. Other activities we discussed at the meeting were finding shared study material; doing some training if possibilities and needs arise; having an exchange program between Bronx, Canada, and, perhaps, Mexico in Canada; using better practices for communication when different languages are used; sharing information about our young women's program with the Popular Education Initiative. Our network can support some of this work and we will seek other funding.



LIEN:

What has been done in the last months?

In June 2008, LIEN celebrated 50 years of the Grail in Portugal. Some of the participating women were part of LIEN from the beginning; some of them came for the first time. Theme of the day was *Transition*. Everyone told about transitions in her life and her connections with LIEN.

In July 2009, the European LIEN program, *Peaceful Communication*, took place in Golegã, Portugal. Six Dutch women and one Portuguese woman ranging in age from 24 to 62 attended. We had an inspiring experience of community, of learning to be who you are in this world, of shared leadership, of mutual inspiration and of spiritual deepening, and of a widening circle around us. This meeting made us especially aware of the empowerment in encounters between generations. We asked each other:

1. What should the Grail do for the young women of today?
2. What did we learn in the *Peaceful Communication* workshop about working across generations and leadership development?

In 2010 a LIEN Newsletter on the theme of *Learning in Circles* is planned and we will invite LIEN women worldwide to participate in the research process that Marijke de Koning and Ine van Emmerik are conducting for a publication about the LIEN network 1989-2009. The project will give recommendations for the Grail movement and the possible reshaping of the LIEN network. This publication will include a proposal to the next IGA about the future of the LIEN Network.

GRAIL INTERNATIONAL FORMATION

Rosaurora Espinosa, Grail International Formation Team

When I received the special invitation to the meeting **“ThinkWell” on the Global Economic Meltdown: How will it affect our work with marginalized communities? October 9–16, 2009, Grail Center, Kleinmond, South Africa**, from Sally Timmel and Anne Hope, I felt a particular challenge as a part of Grail International Formation Team to attend that program.

During the program, I reflected on how difficult is to understand what is happening in our own societies and on the global level, and to find the best ways to do our work and to participate in political life under current conditions. Nowadays it is very difficult to know who the “good guys” and who the “bad guys” are in and for our societies. For instance, guys from apparently popular political parties support laws against poor indigenous sectors; banks support campaigns to fund education of poor children; GMO companies are promoting “organic food production”; and femicide and pedophilia seem not to be important matters for governments and church hierarchies. AT THE END IT SEEMS THAT THE WORST IS HAPPENING DAY BY DAY.

The **“ThinkWell”** was not a Grail encounter; however the spirit of the Grail was present. The Training for Transformation Program, Catholic Welfare and Development and The Social Transformation Institute had invited key directors and training coordinators of key organizations. The 23 women and 14 men participants came from Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Madagascar, India, Ireland, Mexico, and

South Africa. We had rituals, sharing, solidarity, songs, dramas, and presentations of ideas on justice. Mass almost every day was inspiring, with the two participating priests and the marvelous singing of the African brothers and sisters. About a third of participants were Grail members.

Most of the others knew the Grail well and seemed to like working with Grail people. For example, we wrote strong phrases related to the economic-political situations discussed. Some of these phrases were developed into stories for an imaginary newspaper, "The Grail Times," October 2009 and the news story "Economy of Death," explained what is happening in the global economy.

The "ThinkWell" was a tremendous effort by the Grail that brought together leaders from many organizations searching for justice and peace, and working to overcome poverty and transform the world.

A THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS was achieved by all, because the resource people paid attention to our visions and interpretations coming from our work and our own analysis in our countries and regions. The resource people helped us to deepen our visions. They listened and learned together with us:

- **Thelma Awori**, a Grail member, was co-facilitator of the "ThinkWell" and one of the founding members of the Training for Transformation (TfT) Program started in Kenya in 1975. She brought many alternatives to share with us. She once worked as the Deputy Secretary to Kofi Annan in the United Nations. She presented the history and current situation of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The war does not seem to matter to the rest of the world, except for those rich beneficiary companies and countries. As a result of that cruel war, new generations of the population seem to be used to murder, mutilation, and death.
- **Dot Keet** is a guiding light for activists and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the field of economics. She gave us a picture of the global institutions and globalization processes that created the current crisis through the media, opinion leaders, governments, controls and restrictions over governments, banks, and global trade organizations.
- **Filip Fanchette**, an economist from Mauritius, has been part of the Training for Transformation program since 1976 and held the Paulo Freire chair at the World Council of Churches after Paulo left in the 1980. He gave us a sense of hope. We felt together in the search to know and support the people's movements, in groups, associations, pro-people NGOs, community-based organizations, alliances, and coalitions with alternative political parties and civil society.
- **Zunaid Moolla** is an economist who assisted the South African Government in the 1990's to develop its economic policy and has a creative approach to economic sustainability and policy formation.
- **Derrick Naidoo** has been a consultant to the TfT program over the years. He assisted in the facilitation of the "ThinkWell".
- **Anne Hope**, founder of the Cape Town Grail and the TfT program, was there as an inspiration, centering our spirit in search of hope.
- A special welcome was also given to **Enda Byrne** who was the Director of the Development, Department of the Kenyan Catholic Bishops Conference Secretariat. She assisted in developing the framework of the TfT Program with Anne and Sally in the 1970's and is now adapting this work in the Balkans (Eastern Europe). Another special welcome was given to **Micheline Ravalolonarisoa**, UNIFEM Africa Desk director from the New York office.

At the end my feeling was that we Grail women are not naïve, but we need TO IMPROVE OUR LEADERSHIP FOR TRANSFORMATION. We know we need to be thinking and acting locally and nationally, but thinking globally as well. It is easy to say, but our challenge is to connect that knowledge and information on global issues to our meetings and campaigns, as well as in our daily actions. And yes, to encourage more people to join us. I thank the Grail women who support us in improving our understanding of crucial issues on political economy in the world. One example, among many others, is the monthly *Bulletin* edited by Alison Healey, with its invaluable information.

During the “ThinkWell”, we could see how many similar things are happening in our own countries, costing the lives of many people: the Democratic Republic of Congo is a microcosm of our world, therefore we could affirm how important is to act together to face the tremendous power of “the other side”.

One of the great achievements of the “ThinkWell” is to show us creative ways to realize that we have opportunities in our search for transformation, if we are aware **whenever there is weakness in the cracks; no matter how great is the power of the world’s most powerful.**

Grail Network/WorkGroup Reports

HUMAN TRAFFICKING NETWORK

Ton Brouwer and Elly König, Coordinators

Due to health problems of Mieke Borgdorff, Elly König has now taken over the task of Mieke as coordinator of the Human Trafficking Network together with Ton Brouwer.

Elly is jurist and chairman of UFER (Union Fraternelle Entre les Races et les Peuples). Her special interest is human rights, an important point for the trafficking in women.

Cristina dos Anjos Conceição asked the coordinators of the Grail Networks what happened in our Networks after the IC/Network meeting in the Netherlands in Oct/Nov. 2008. The evaluation was made with the help of Mieke Borgdorff and Elly König and sent to Cristina, the ILT members, to all the coordinators of the different Networks, and to the contact persons of Human Trafficking in the different Grail countries.

We received the following information from our contact persons:

Canada – Olga Kolisnyk wrote in October: “I found your evaluation very thorough... Claire Richard and I attended a good forum planned by the Religious superiors, who are financing full time personnel to do training on how to do this very complex work. It is still very much in the beginning...”

Claire Richards wrote in September: “Thanks for all your work in the Network. Anti-traffickers are gearing up to oppose trafficking at the Winter Olympics here in Canada January/February 2010”.

The Netherlands – Ivonne van de Kar, staff member of the SRTV (Dutch Foundation of Religious against Trafficking in Women) wrote on the occasion of the European Day Against Human Trafficking, October 18, 2009 that the SRTV worked together with two other Catholic organizations, Cordaid and “Mensen met een Missie.” We produced a poster and a prayer and sent them to over 7000 churches and church groups, including Protestant churches and Migrant churches. We asked them to display the poster and recite the prayer on the October 18th. We have

received many reactions and heard that the prayer was used in churches all over the country. Both the letter and the poster were published in our magazines and publications. We sent a press release to all media.

We have had a massive positive response. Thousands of people used the prayer and the topic of trafficking was highlighted in churches all over the Netherlands on that day.

South Africa – Loek Goemans wrote in August 2009 to the staff of the SRTV: “Many thanks for sending us a copy of the 2008 annual report. It was fascinating reading and wonderful to know that caring for vulnerable and trafficked people in such diverse ways continues to spread internationally. No doubt you have heard about our own efforts here in SA where the religious orders together with the bishops’ conference set up a desk in January 2008. Much has been achieved already in the way of awareness raising. When young women (or men) in the black communities tell of a ‘wonderful opportunity’ more people are asking important questions. They now know that opportunity may, in fact, be trafficking, the modern form of slavery...”

Thanks for the leadership you folk have taken in showing us ways of countering human trafficking. God bless and may many younger people follow you in this important ministry”.

Uganda – Josephine Nakagolo writes in June, “Thank you for all the work you are doing, especially the coordination of the Network. Back home here in Uganda trafficking of people young and old continues to eat up the society. The weak legal system continues to perpetuate the vice. We are still awaiting a law to curb this vice. Uganda is a source, transit country, and a destination for trafficking.”

The US Ambassador, Steven Browning, at the hand over of equipment worth \$15,000 to the Ugandan Police to combat trafficking, said trafficking could only be tackled through concerted effort and lauded Uganda for the measures already in place. He said “human trafficking is a global human rights issue and an international crime that can only be truly eradicated through cooperative efforts.”

United States – Marian Schwab sent the following article:

IRELAND: European Religious Urge Anti-Human Trade Prayer.

Dublin, September 29 (CISA) – An organization of Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation (RENATE) has written to Pope Benedict XVI requesting him to pray and draw world attention to the problem of human trafficking. It regards the work of counter-trafficking as the cutting edge of the Church's mission day. This year World Mission, Sunday, October 18 coincides with the day designated by the EU as European Day against Human Trafficking.

“We know your Holiness shares our deep concern for the suffering and humiliation endured by millions of people, including men, women, and young children who, in our times, are tricked into emigration in the hope of getting lucrative employment in another country, only to find themselves trapped against their will in work situations of slave labour, or worse still, in the commercial sex industry.”

GRAIL LINK TO THE UNITED NATIONS NETWORK

Grail Members, Elly König (Netherlands) and Monica Maher (EEUU) participated in the annual board meeting of the International Movement for Fraternal Union Among Races and Peoples (UFER), (www.ufer-international.org) December 4 and 5, 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland. Seven other board members were present representing Ethiopia, Burundi, Rwanda, Canada, Belgium, and Kashmir.

UFER, a non-governmental organization since 1951, comprises two funding members, the Intercultural Association (AFI/ICA) and the Grail, as well as individual members in thirty countries on five continents. Based in Brussels, UFER has NGO consultative status with the United Nations in both Geneva and New York. The Grail began its work with the United Nations through UFER and continues this collaboration to date, in addition to having its own consultative status to the UN today.

The UFER Board has begun to prepare UFER'S General Assembly scheduled for September 18-23, 2010 in Brussels, Belgium on the topic of “Immigration and Human Rights.” Workshops will address cultural relativism and the universality of human rights, the international trafficking of women, and practical approaches to advancing human rights within the UN system. In addition, there will be a day-long awareness training on

cultural diversity and anti-discrimination. The General Assembly will be open to all Grail members to participate and will be a good opportunity to learn more about how to have an impact at the UN. Anyone who has a particular interest or experience in the area of immigration is especially encouraged to attend. For more information, please contact: Elly König (ellykon@gmail.com) or Monica Maher (monicam675@aol.com), or visit www.ufer-international.org.

Elly König and Monica Maher

EARTH, ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY NETWORK

The big news is the **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 15th Conference of Parties (COP 15) in Copenhagen from December 7–18, 2009**. Annelies Henstra, from the Netherlands, and Sibongile Qwabe from South Africa are in Copenhagen representing us. The Dutch Grail is sponsoring Annelies, an environmental lawyer who has received a grant from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to pursue her work to have the “Right to Nature” included in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Sibongile has been involved in the KwaZulu Natal (KZN) Grail project for the past 10 years. She is a recent graduate who will be travelling to many parts of Africa in 2010 doing financial training for a retail firm. The Earth Network is contributing to some of Sibongile's costs.

The Grail group in KZN has had a major drive to educate the 205 girls and young women in its program about climate change. The educational materials have been distributed widely in the Grail internationally. Three teenage girls, Anelisa Shamase, Nontuthuko Xaba, and Yenziwe Masuku, are also in Copenhagen with their chaperone, Sibongile. Three other girls travelled to a Department of Environmental Affairs consultation in Boksburg and presented an Open Letter to the Cabinet Minister, Buyelwa Sonjica, outlining their concerns as girls and young women for the future of the Planet.

These are some excerpts: “We know that the Kyoto Protocol Annexe 1 Countries (European Union, Canada, Australia — the USA has still not signed) have been polluting the air and seas since the Industrial Revolution and must reduce their carbon emissions drastically. They also need to pay for Non-Annexe 1 countries to install technology to reduce their emissions. But when we look at Africa's carbon footprint we see the global situation in microcosm. South Africa is the leading polluter in Africa and

South Africans per capita pollute more than the Americans and Chinese. South Africa has to take the lead in Africa to reduce its carbon emissions to stop destroying the earth."

The Open Letter called for the investment of huge amounts of money in renewable solar and wind energy, and the promotion of organic agriculture in South Africa. "Africans produced crops before fertilizer and tractor companies from the Annexe 1 Countries told them that their methods were wrong. 17% of Global Warming is caused by chemical fertilizers, diesel, herbicides and pesticides all made from oil. Zambia has 9,524 certified organic farmers, Uganda 86,952, but SA has fewer than 500!"

They also called for support for the plans to preserve the rainforests by compensating the respective governments for stopping logging and other destruction of the forests. They asked Minister Sonjica to work hard to make sure that the Kyoto Protocol remains and that Annexe 1 countries commit themselves to reducing their emissions to 350 ppm (parts per million) by 2020.

The initiative of Beverley Scorrano, Canada, and Marina Kryvanick, Brazil

Beverley and Marina wrote, "We are coming to South Africa with an expert on eco-spirituality, Marianne Karsh. Marianne, a Canadian, is the Ecology Project Coordinator at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre, Guelph, Ontario. She founded *Arbor Vitae*, and is a research scientist for Environment Canada in the field of biodiversity and climate change. You can "Google" these on the Internet. Can you organize some workshops for her to pay for our board and accommodation expenses?"

Ines Ceruti and Emilia Charbonneau organized 3 workshops in Johannesburg and arranged for Marianne to be interviewed by Catholic Radio. In KZN, Sibongile Mtungwa, Marilyn Aitken, Jane Ngobese, Julia Khanyile, and Thoko Makhanya organized two workshops and took the visitors to see the wonderful biodiversity in the province and Lesotho, including a trip into the Hluhluwe/Imfolozi Game Reserve. Ina Conradie, Anne Hope, and Ginoca Carvalho Neto organized meetings in the Western Cape. Marianne's topics include Eco-theology in the Judaeo-Christian Scriptures and Religious Thought, Eco-Spirituality and Climate Change and rituals of different cultures. We have recruited Marianne to the Earth Network.

One of the messages Marianne left with us is that the most effective way to reduce our Carbon Footprints on the Earth is to increase our Spiritual Footprints.

The Earth Network will address this in its next project. We would love to hear how Grail members are going about this challenge.

Sibongile Mtungwa and Marilyn Aitken
Coordinators

Country Reports

CANADA

On Sunday, Oct. 18, 2009, Canadian Grail members stood with millions of people around the world as part of "Stand Up and Take Action to End Poverty Now" to show their commitment to the fight against extreme poverty and inequality. We only have six years left before the 2015 deadline to realize the Millennium Development Goals. Beverley Scorrano took the pledge to Brazil where the Grail was gathered for its 60th anniversary celebration.



Claire Richard

IRELAND

The Irish Grail Explorers Group met in Dublin to celebrate Samhain/All Saints Day on November 1 in a ritual of "Gathering, Remembering and Birthing." Samhain is the festival of the Celtic New Year when old fires are extinguished and new sacred fire lit, at the beginning of the darkest time in the northern hemisphere. The Christian feasts of All Saints and All Souls follow the Celtic pattern of awareness of the "thin veil" between time and eternity at this time of the year, part of the cycle of birth/life/death/re-birth familiar to many spiritual paths.

During the ritual, members of the group and guests kindled a fire in the hearth in Carol White's house and lit individual candles from that fire. They made the connection with Grail women the world over, and shared their experiences of life and death during the past year in poems and stories. Bulbs that will flower in the spring were planted, with blessings and intentions in mind for the coming year. They brought their celebration to a close with music, apple cake, and toasting the New Life that grows in the darkness of winter.

Mary Gene Devlin

THE NETHERLANDS

Those who wanted to come to the 'Meet the Grail Day' on September 2009 in the Grail house in Utrecht had some homework to do. First, they were asked to bring seeds they normally throw away from

honeydew melons, water melons, pumpkins, bell peppers, avocados, papayas, or eggplants. Second, they were invited to bring a text about seeds or sowing.

Eighteen people gathered on this day, two of them visiting the Grail house for the first time. After coffee/tea and lighting the candles the group met in twos, each couple talking about the questions: Which woman inspires you most? Which talents do you have yourself?

Anne van den Berg gave a talk about how she became involved in the Grail when her friend Mienke Hage asked her to come to Cornwall to cook for 3 months in a international formation program with people from different food cultures and with a variety of diets. This experience made her aware of the spiritual aspects of eating. In trios, we then talked about how the Grail relates to our own life and what we had to offer the Grail.



The lunch consisted of bread with sesame, poppy, and pumpkin seed, goat cheese and honey, sprouts, and vegetarian spreads. After lunch and a walk to one or several of the interesting places in the neighborhood (I went to the University botanical garden), we listened to H el ene Leijendekkers, a theologian and university professor who gave a very interesting analysis of the Grail from what she had observed in the two years of offering programs about mysticism in the Grail house. One of the questions she raised was: what is the procedure to join the movement. The Dutch Grail has no written instructions about this maybe because it doesn't happen much any more.

Joke Poot guided a drawing session in couples while tea was served. The day ended with a celebration, during which everyone read their text and offered their seeds, which will be sent to the retired botany professor Willem van Cotthem. In one of his projects, he helped refugees in the Sahara to start family gardens and school gardens. For information on his projects, see his website, <http://www.seedsforfood.org/>.

Hermien van Sloten

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Our Grail National General Assembly was held from September 21 – 25 in the House of Prayer in Wewak Boys Town. Alison Healey and Kay Hunt came from Australia as observers and gave much assistance.

The International Grail sponsored Albina Namuesh to attend the *Asia Pacific NGO Forum On Beijing + 15* in Manila, the Philippines from October 22 – 24, 2009. Sheila Hawthorn and Mary Robertson from the Grail in Australia also attended the Forum. Of the 640 women attending the forum, only 12 women were from the Pacific: Papua New Guinea (PNG) (1), Australia (6), Tonga (2), and Fiji (3). The women discussed: discrimination and violence against women and children, trafficking and prostitution, war and conflict, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS.

After the Forum, we accompanied Mae Bonafae of the Grail back to Eastern Samar to meet the Grail women of Samar. For me it was a good experience to see that province with people living a similar life to my village people. Their main income is from growing rice. We spent the afternoon with women, they welcomed us and we shared our experiences with them. The next day, we were entertained by the pre-school children. The International Grail helps to fund the school. The children learn to speak English so they can communicate with the outside world. We realized when the girls can speak English they can better defend themselves against traffickers.

On October 29, we returned to Manila and met with Baidi Mendoza who came from Labrador which was affected by cyclone in September 2009. During the cyclone she lost her house and her sister almost got killed by household items falling on top of her. Baidi took Sheila Hawthorn from the Grail in Australia and Albina to meet Ching-ching, an artist who prepared a delicious dinner for us, while Maria accompanied Mary Robertson to the airport for departure. Sheila and Albina returned on October 31 to Port Moresby. Sheila Hawthorn took a connecting flight to Brisbane, Australia.

On December 5, Port Moresby Grail women welcomed two new members who made commitments: Lydia Soweni and Rosemary Kramer. These women will help Theresia Soweni and Elizabeth Waken to conduct elections for our National Leadership Team.

We, the PNG Grail, congratulate our sisters in Tanzania with nine new members and Kenya with four new members. We welcome you in the family of Grail sisters. Let's hold hands and extend wider the GRAIL CIRCLE of LOVE. We wish everyone in this circle of LOVE and your families A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR 2010.

On December 10, Angela Bukatar organized a march in Madang to protest lawlessness and the rape of an elderly expatriate woman. Angela said they will

not stop protesting until the Government fixes the problem.

Also in PNG, the people have been forced to sign for the Liquefied Natural Gas pipeline from PNG to Australia, and they were promised millions of Kina.

Albina Namuesh and Rosemary Kramer

PHILIPPINES

On October 22-24, 2009, women from 60 plus countries in *Asia and the Pacific gathered at the Asia Pacific NGO Forum on Beijing plus 15* at Miriam College, Philippines to formulate action strategies and prepare a regional set of resolutions to follow up on the “Beijing Platform of Action” crafted in 1995. Through the initiative of Mary Gindhart and Ruth Crowe, ILT team members, a regional Grail team was formed to participate. Albina Namuesh from Papua New Guinea, and Mary Robertson and Sheila Hawthorn from Australia came. Mae Bonafe from Eastern Samar, as well as Monica de Leon and Jeanette Loanzon from Manila comprised the Philippine team.

The themes of the conference “Weaving Wisdom, Confronting Crises, Forging the Future” found echoes in my heart. Becky Nebrida from the Philippines organized the Grail team here and, indeed, it is an act of weaving wisdom that she pulled strands from her training at Grailville and wove it sensitively within the Filipino culture. It is a tribute to her wise leadership that sixteen women from Western and Northern Mindanao as well as Eastern Samar made their formal commitment in the Grail in the last nine years.

Mary Robertson has taken on the work of updating her Grail team on human trafficking. She is confronting a crisis that has afflicted women in the region, pushed mainly by poverty.

Mae Bonafe is a twenty plus Filipina, elected twice as a local government unit legislator in San Policarpio, Eastern Samar, one of its poorest municipalities. She is a college graduate of a course in fisheries and serves the Grail team as a resource person on the environment. A volunteer catechist, she is currently the teacher in the preschool parish, originally organized by Rebecca. With the support of the local Eastern Samar team and the national Grail team, she is indeed helping in “forging the future” of the Grail in the Philippines and hopefully, the Asia Pacific region.

While at the conference, we were confronted with crises at many levels: illiteracy in India, human

trafficking in South Korea, and political repression in Pacific island states and Southeast Asia. Confronting crises, women are weaving wisdom in their strategies and actions, thereby forging a better future for themselves, their children, and next generations.

“Livelihoods are every woman’s human right” headlined a postcard distributed during the conference. Organized for the first time by women, more than 600 Japanese women ranging from professionals to ordinary housewives got together on September 10, 1982 to hold a symposium on the problems of the elderly. After the symposium, the Women’s Association for the Better Aging Society (WABAS) was founded in March, 1983. In the Philippines, the Mindanao Commission on Women was established in 2001 by Muslim, Christian, and indigenous women leaders as a “vehicle to influence public policy and public opinion about peace and development.” Upon further reflection, they organized ‘Mothers for Peace’ to reach out to the grassroots. Integral to the conference was a photo exhibit on Cory Aquino, former President of the Philippines and a woman who began steps in forging a better future in the Asia Pacific by restoring democracy in the Philippines.

Jeanette V. Loanzon

UNITED STATES

In August, the U.S. Grail elected a 2010 Council and completed the hiring of a National Director. Both the incoming and the outgoing Councils met together before the start of the U.S. National Retreat held at Grailville at the end of October for orientation and to choose the new National Leadership Team. Also present was Noreen Whilhelm, our new National Director, who began work in September.

The 2010 Council members are Judith Blackburn from Colorado, Lucy Jones from New York, Elizabeth Robinson from Ohio, Marian Schwab from Louisiana, and Carol Siemering, Kate Devlin, and Mary Farrell from Massachusetts.

The National Leadership Team for 2010 is Judith Blackburn and Mary Farrell. The Treasurer is Kate Devlin. Marian Schwab remains as the International Council representative. The U.S. Communication person is Noreen Whilhelm at the National Office at Grailville in Loveland, Ohio (office@grail-us.org).

The 2009 Council and NLT welcome our new 2010 Council and look forward to the new energy and enthusiasm that they bring to our movement.

Beth Wasmer

In Loving Memory

Käthe Fiebach (Germany)

1920-2009

Käthe was born near Breslau in Silesia on November 23, 1920. As a young woman she trained as a kindergarten teacher and, later, as a social worker. After World War II, Käthe came as a refugee to Northern Germany. She worked with Caritas for refugee children and Catholic refugees in the "diaspora". She first heard of the Grail from a publication edited by Alberta Lückner and participated in an international program "Love doesn't know boundaries" at the Tiltenberg, Netherlands in 1953. Fifty years ago, Pentecost 1959 Käthe made her dedication in the nucleus of the Grail at the International Center De Tiltenberg.

From 1964–1968 her main responsibility was the management of the domestic affairs in Rubaga Hospital in Uganda. Encountering African people and their culture shaped her life. After she returned to Germany, Käthe took up employment as social worker with the city of Siegburg, near Bonn. She was particularly concerned for young women and families in precarious situations and worked to stabilize them by personal commitment and professional competence. At that time when we discussed how to combine professional work and Grail involvement, Käthe lived it and shared in the reflection. She belonged to the Grail group in Bonn and often helped in the Grail Center in Mülheim with programs. For 19 years she was part of the editorial team of the German Grail publication "ANTENNE".

Käthe enjoyed long years of retirement, living in a senior residence in Cologne. During her later years, her health declined and managing her own life became more and more difficult. Käthe died in a hospital September 17, 2009 of heart failure following an operation she needed because of a fall. Grail women from Mülheim and the area, together with women from the senior residence, accompanied her on her last path, praying that her desire will be fulfilled, which she expressed in her last letter to her Grail sisters with the words of St. Augustine: "You have created me and restless is my heart until it rests in you."

--Marita Estor

Ans Gelens (Netherlands)

1920-2009

On September 16, 2009, at the age of 89, Ans Gelens died peacefully. She had joined the Grail in 1950 and made her dedication in the Nucleus in 1953. People will mostly remember her as the quiet and incon-



spicuous leader at "Drie Koningen", a center for girls with educational difficulties run by the Grail. She had a genuine interest in the girls and followed many of them after they had long since left the house. It resulted in many lasting friendships until her death. After several years at "Drie Koningen," Ans became a staff member at the Tiltenberg. In those mostly busy and hectic days, visitors and guests would always find in her a welcoming hostess and attentive listener. She loved children and showed them the secrets of herbs and animals on the grounds.

After having cared for several years for her sick sister, Ans still remained for some years in the South of the Netherlands, until living by herself was no longer possible. She enjoyed a number of years at the house for the aged in Warmond until infirmity made it necessary to be cared for in the nursing department of the center. Those last years must have been a real trial for Ans who was hardly ever able to speak or express her ideas and thoughts, while we think that many ideas and memories kept occupying her mind! But she would never complain. We trust that now she is meeting her Lord and all those dear friends who she so faithfully kept in her heart.

--Josette Kersters

Announcements

■ Europeans, mark your diaries!

We are happy to announce the theme of the 2010 European Grail Meeting : "**Spirituality in Action: Grail women facing challenges in Europe.**" We will meet in north-east Brussels, with arrivals and a welcome session on Sunday August 15, continuing to the closing session and departures on Sunday, August 22.

We hope to create together a programme that nourishes mind, body, and spirit, so please save those dates and join us. An invitation letter with more detailed information will appear in January 2010. *From the Planning Team of Carol White, Claudia Poggi, Didine Petit, Elly König, Patricia Camisao, Robin Sclafani, Rosaria Campos and Traude Rebmann.*

Didine Petit

■ UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Meeting

The CSW will meet March 1 – 12, 2010 at the UN headquarters in New York. The two thematic issues are:

- Review of the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd

special session of the General Assembly, with an emphasis on the sharing of experiences and good practices with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges;

- Review of its contribution to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

If you are thinking about attending this year's meeting of the CSW, please be in contact with Mary Kay Louchart (grail-ipt@juno.com).

Marian Schwab and Mary Kay Louchart

■ UFER Board Plans 2010 General Assembly On Immigration And Human Rights

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on five continents. Based in Brussels, UFER has NGO consultative status with the United Nations in both Geneva and New York. The Grail began its work with the United Nations through UFER and continues this collaboration to date, in addition to having its own consultative status to the UN today.

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Elly Koenig and Monica Maher

