



# The Grail Link To The UN Network

Update on GRAIL and UFER Activities

Newsletter 4, April 27, 2011

"Women working together to bring about a world of peace, justice, equity and renewal of the earth"



## United Methodist Clergywomen and New York Grail members retreat at Cornwall Lucy Jones

On February 15 and 16, the Cornwall Grail offered a mid-week retreat for women committed to working on issues that affect women and girls in our churches, in our society and in the world. The retreat was especially designed mid-week to invite clergywomen who work on weekends. Four Grail women were part of the gathering. Using the story of the bent-over woman whom Jesus healed on the Sabbath in contradistinction to expected behavior (Luke 13:11-14), the group explored their own lived experience of rejecting the status quo and making changes for the good of women and girls. This retreat represents a wonderful partnership because the Grail's commitment to women's empowerment is matched by a long history of commitment to women's issues by the United Methodist Church.

The group had a hands-on project to pack up "birthing kits" that go to women with the most limited of resources. They prepared nine kits, one from each person present at the retreat. The kits are composed of the simplest materials, but they can save the lives of women giving birth in dire circumstances. Each kit contains a square yard of plastic sheeting to provide a clean surface to deliver the newborn on, three pieces of household string to tie the umbilical cord, a razor blade for cutting the cord, two pieces of flannel fabric to use to clean the newborn and as a receiving blanket, a small bar of soap and one pair of medical gloves. All of this is put into a zip lock bag that is later used to hold the placenta for safe disposal. (Lucy's complete article is in the March, 2011 issue of GUMBO.)

## Reflections on the CSW 55 AND THE GRAIL Lucy Jones

This is my second year to participate in part of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations. It is an information-rich experience and there is much that would be of interest and concern for Grail women. I'll share about two of the sessions I attended. One session was sponsored by Religions for Peace. It is an international organization that builds, equips and networks the Global Women of Faith Network, Inter-religious Councils and the Global Youth Network to harness the largely untapped power of multi-religious cooperation to stop war, end poverty and protect the earth. Several publications are available to aid women of faith in making changes in their communities and in working together to transform conflict. A Multi-Religious Training Manual on "Women of Faith Transforming Conflict" is available, as well as "A Guide for Building Women of Faith Networks" and "Mosaic: The Women of Faith Newsletter." These can be accessed on-line at [www.religionsforpeace.org](http://www.religionsforpeace.org) or requested from the Religions for Peace Secretariat.

There are Women of Faith networks in many of the countries where the Grail has a presence, including Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, The Philippines, Papua New Guinea and the United States. There is one network for the whole of Europe. I hope we can explore this inter-religious organization where our interests and purposes coincide. Every minute that passes, a woman or adolescent girl dies in pregnancy and childbirth, while many others suffer from obstetric or traumatic fistulas and are hidden away and forgotten. Communities can be influenced by women of faith to prevent these tragic events. Through public education, awareness and advocacy, religious communities can transform these disturbing statistics.

Another issue was sex trafficking. The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) explained why the term “sex work” is problematic in referring to prostitution. Prostitution is not “work,” but rather violence against women and girls and a human rights violation. There are local, national and international campaigns to “Stop the Demand.” UNANIMA International has very helpful materials, including prayer resources, theological reflection papers, informative brochures, a CD-Rom with powerpoints, and action plans. Their website is [www.unanima-international.org](http://www.unanima-international.org) and their street address is 211 East 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, Room 1207; NY, NY 10017.

The Grail at the UN is also an opportunity for Grail members and friends to connect with each other and work together on the various projects we are involved in at the UN and rippling outward. Living together for a few days-sharing meals, rooms and travel to meetings-strengthens the sense of the Grail as a community.

## UN WOMEN—A New Venue for Action at the UN Mary E. Gindhart

On September 14, 2010, Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile, was named as the first head of **UN Women**, the new agency created to raise the profile of gender and women's issues. She was appointed as Under Secretary General of the UN and Executive Director. She said: *"I accepted because I understood that this task is along the same lines of what my personal history has always been: working for equality, in this case gender equality, for the rights of persons, for social protection, and fighting violence and discrimination."*

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said "Ms. Bachelet brings to this critical position a history of dynamic global leadership, highly honed political skills and uncommon ability to create consensus and focus among UN agencies and many partners in both the public and private sector."

*"An effective leader of great integrity, Bachelet has demonstrated strong commitment to women's empowerment and the ability to shape gender equality policies in a variety of areas. She also has the stature to mobilise the resources crucial to make UN Women a success,"* said Charlotte Bunch, the founder of the Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

**UN Women is the new entity at the United Nations** dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. Michelle Bachelet has stated the following priorities:

- 1) *Expanding women's voice, leadership and participation*
- 2) *Ending violence against women*
- 3) *Strengthening implementation of the women, peace and security agenda*
- 4) *Enhancing women's economic empowerment*
- 5) *Making gender equality priorities central to national, local and sectoral planning and budgeting*
- 6) *Implementing the Millennium Development Goals*

During the 2 weeks of CSW, Ms. Bachelet listened to reports from the member states and spoke in response at a session of the Commission on the Status of Women. She did the same at parallel events: the Girls Speak UP, the Grassroots Speak out on UN Women, and the Women's Learning Partnership Day. She met with women from civil society from Latin America and the Caribbean who are members of the GEAR (gender/equality/architecture/reform) Campaign. She spoke of creating advisory groups to get input from women and girls groups, of leveraging support for NGOs within the UN, and strengthening national machineries to work more effectively for gender mainstreaming.

**The Grail is one of the 320 GEAR Campaign signatories.** Moving forward, the GEAR Campaign calls for the systematic and meaningful participation of civil society, particularly women's groups, in UN Women through:

1. Dedicated UN Women staff/units to liaise with civil society at all levels—global, regional, national
2. Creation of civil society advisory councils at the country, regional and global levels
3. The establishment of thematic working groups

4. The appointment of independent thematic experts from civil society to act as advisors in examining specific issues and situations pertaining to women's rights
5. Hearings for UN Women to listen to and exchange with NGOs from around the world during CSW and at key regional UN events
6. Full participation on the Executive Board governing UN Women

Michele Bachelet has called women's groups, like the Grail to mobilize support for UN Women, to get ideas from grassroots women to UN Women and to urge governments and other funders to give core, predictable and multiyear funding for UN Women. The Grail Link to the UN Network encourages Grail women around the world to follow the work of UN Women. Websites include: [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org) and [www.gearcampaign.org](http://www.gearcampaign.org).

## Girls at CSW 55 Mary Kay Louchart

Our group (Grail) at the Youth Orientation: left to right across the front (facing you) Belkis Martinez and Maelene Andujar from The Bronx, Sara Colace and Alice Ferro From Italy, Maddie Delgado from Loveland, Ohio, Lena Cheyne from Washingtonville, New York; Heyji(Shelby) Shim and AhRam Lee from South Korea. Behind the podium: Leonor Vicente and Mayte Vidal from Mexico, Timeika Mucambe, Abida Jamal Muhimua and Isabel Naisse Miranda from Mozambique



Following are photos of some of the 'younger' CSW-55 participants, a few words about them and an idea about what they presented during CSW. We are assembling all of their presentations along with photos. If you would like to receive a copy when it's finished, contact Mary Kay ([Grail-IPT@juno.com](mailto:Grail-IPT@juno.com))



Mayte Vidal moderated a parallel event at the UN that was organized by the Man Up Campaign and the newly formed UN-Women. There were panel presentations and then a town hall forum on youth leadership and empowerment via new technologies and innovations.

Mayte Vidal is a 24 years old Mexican woman.

She attends UNAM University. Her major is in Political Science. She is writing her final thesis. Her thesis is about female legislative representation in Mexico. In this research she's trying to find if there is a correlation among the female political experience and their legislative productivity in contrast with those of males.



Timeika Mucambe is 18 doing her first year as a Law student at Isctem (Instituto Superior de Ciência de Tecnologia de Mozambique). She joined the Grail youth group in 2007 upon an invitation made by Denise (founder of the group—CSW-51 participant). During the 4 years she has had visited the Orphanage Madre Teresa de Calcutá to work with the children; was the main character in a play about domestic violence against women and girls; took part in activities related to biodiversity (questionnaires to citizens about their knowledge of plants and animals) and in waste collection at Catembe Beach.



HyeJi Shim (Shelby) In the 6th grade, I ran for the election of the school president. I wasn't elected for the school captain, but I became the manager of a wasn't elected for the school president, with this student council. Even though I chance, I earned a big self-confidence for me. However, when she entered middle school, she became the class president. An excerpt from HyeJi's presentation at the CSW-51 Review: Today, the world is called as "global village" by the development of communication, and Internet. The cellular phone and Internet became one of the necessities in our lives. As the IT develops it gives us more benefits but in the other hand, it also has lots of faults, and one of the them is cyber sexual violence against women.



Gina Ribustello (St. Catharine's Academy in the Bronx) and Lena Cheyne (Washingtonville, NY) had the opportunity to introduce Dr. Sharon Hrynkow at the meeting at the US Mission. Dr. Hrynkow currently serves as Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science (OES), where her expertise informs a range of health and science diplomacy matters. She leads the OES effort to advance a women-in-science agenda through diplomatic channels.

### **COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

We will continue with more sharing from CSW-55 in the next issue of the Grail Link to the UN Network. In the meantime, start thinking about whether or not you are able to be part of CSW-56. The theme is: "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication development and current challenge." The review theme is the agreed conclusions from the 2008 session on "Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women." CSW-55 was one week earlier this year than usual. We aren't as yet sure of the starting date in 2012 but it will be the end of February/beginning of March. Even though all are welcome, we especially hope that women from the rural areas of our countries will be able to attend. Start planning now.

And looking even further ahead at the themes for the CSW... **MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK**

- **2013 - Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls**
- **2014 - Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls**

- Upcoming events that will be taking place in the coming months at United Nations headquarters in New York.
- 19th session, Commission on Sustainable Development, 2-13 May 2011 , CSD-19 will produce policy decisions

on the following thematic areas: Transport, Chemicals, Waste Management (hazardous and solid waste), Mining, a 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.

Joy Garland, Kate Twohy, Sharon Joslyn, Mary Kay Louchart, Trina Paulus and a friend of Trina have been registered. We can still register interested persons. Contact Mary Kay immediately [Grail-IPT@juno.com](mailto:Grail-IPT@juno.com)

- » 10th session, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 16-27 May 2011 Joy Garland and Sharon Joslyn will be attending. Contact Sharon Joslyn if you are interested [BronxGrail@juno.com](mailto:BronxGrail@juno.com).

The Grail and UFER both have ECOSOC status at the UN. There are different categories. We have Special Consultative Status. **What is ECOSOC Consultative Status?**

The first venue by which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) took a role in formal UN deliberations was through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). 41 NGOs were granted consultative status by the council in 1946; by 1992 more than 700 NGOs had attained consultative status and the number has been steadily increasing ever since to 3,400 organizations today. UFER was granted consultative status in 1953. The Grail was granted consultative status in 1998.

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