

# Around the Table

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By Rosângela S. Oliveira

We missed two of our sisters at the table set for the World Day of Prayer International Executive Committee (WDPIC – EC). They were unable to obtain a visa to the USA, despite their compliance with the requirements. They did not refuse the invitation, like the guests in the text of Luke 14:15-24; but the door was closed on them. We were made aware of the impact of political tensions in our world at our table, and we strongly re-affirm our hope in prayers: “Come - Everything Is Ready”.

After being elected at the International Meeting in Brazil in 2017, the members of WDPIC Executive Committee met in Ossining, New York from July 28<sup>th</sup> to August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019. This is the only face-to-face meeting until they reunite a few days before the International Meeting in 2022. However, a series of web conferences were held since January to engage the committee members in knowing each other and preparing the meeting.

The responsibilities of the Executive Committee members include calling for the next meeting of the International Committee, ensure the production of WDP materials, budget revision, implementation of recommendations and to be in communication with the National/Regional Committees (WDPIC Constitution). All those aspects were explored at the NY meeting.

The morning prayers contemplated the WDP Zimbabwe theme “Rise! Take your mat and walk”. On each day, one perspective, one emphasis, or one experience was shared towards the complete overview of the Bible story, and the celebration of the worship service. The offering collected at the Executive Committee service was dedicated to the Zimbabwe committee.



2019 WDP Executive Committee Meeting

## Mapping out WDP

The week started with mapping out the concerns and dreams perceived in the World Day of Prayer (WDP) movement. Laurence Gangloff, Chairperson, lifted up

the concern for WDP focus countries living under political tension. She dreams of WDP preparing peacemakers for those communities, and of the worship service bringing hope into the world.

On behalf of the Africa region, Joyce Larko spoke about the context of civil unrest and natural disasters, migration and human trafficking, health crisis and poverty. She said, “Leadership is the key to changing this context. A good leader prepares new leadership to take on the challenges.”

Africa dreams of building a strong generation of young women to hold up the mantel of WDP. Moumita Biswas and Vito Schubert shared concerns for some WDP Committees in Asia that are dysfunctional. The political context of the region has increased violence against women and created obstacles to access information. They dream of facilitating access to WDP materials, promoting campaigns like Thursday in Black and nurturing children and youth into the future of WDP.

From the Caribbean and North America region, Ruth Phillips and Lauren Wilks were concerned about the aging WDP leadership and the perspective that limits the WDP program to one single worship service. They dream of new intergenerational initiatives like prayer walks, social justice actions and connecting with the writer countries’ context. In Europe, Emmanuelle Bauer and Senka Sestak Peterlin talked about how to engage WDP groups in a yearlong program for prayer. It would involve promoting prayer partnerships, and expanding the use of social media to educate and campaign on WDP’s themes.



SNC 2017 workshop, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador

From Latin America, Rebeca Cascante and Susana Renner commented on the context of social violence and climate change. However, there was an increase of understanding and participation in WDP after the Strengthening National Committees Workshops in Central America. They dream of initiatives that create cultural exchange and capacity building of WDP leaders. On behalf of the Middle East, Maral Haidostian reflected on the situation of the region

where political conflict turns women and children into the most vulnerable. They dream that WDP can contribute prayerfully and creatively to make a positive difference in the world. For the Pacific region, Vicki Marney and Henrica Marona were concerned about the aging committees and dream of WDP being led ecumenically by young women in advocating through prayer and action on social and environmental issues.

By mapping out WDP in the regions, we pointed out some critical issues in the movement like dysfunctional leadership, fixed ideas and rigid practices, lack of intergenerational leadership, difficulties accessing new technologies, a decrease in financial resources, repetitive worship service styles and an imbalance between prayer and action initiatives. Those points were taken into consideration in the planning conversation. However, it was also recognized that WDP brings to the world a space for intergenerational participation, prayer as an exercise of listening and acting, awareness on social issues and advocacy for peace, environmental care, women's rights and a life free of violence.

#### Contributing to the International Coordination



WDP International Committee

The functions of the International Committee are carried out by the Executive Director, Rosângela Oliveira, who reports to the Executive Committee (WDPIC Constitution). A report was introduced with a review of the WDPIC Constitution to highlight the purpose and structure of WDP, and laying out responsibilities. Also discussed was the administration of the international coordination based on the relationship with the worldwide network and the management of the financial resources. The program activities were described based on the cycle of the writer committees which implies capacity building and theme preparation for the written resources.

The treasurer, Susan Jackson-Dowd, presented the Financial Statement and Accountant's Report. The revenue and expenses were revised and accepted by the members. The revenue of \$239,534 represented the total received as Annual Contribution, Grant and Funds Contribution, and Investment Income from March 2018 to February 2019. The actual expenses for this period were \$246,937. The expenses are classified in program and supporting services. The program expenses represented \$188,592 while the

supporting services were \$58,345. In response to the service and as a gesture of "Prayerful Action", some WDP committees sent their offering to the writer country through World Day of Prayer International Committee (WDPIC). The offering for the Suriname program totaled \$17,223, which was donated to WDP Suriname, to support the local partnership developed.

In the analysis of the Annual Contribution received, it was pointed out that there is a decrease in the amount of funds and National Committees that contributed. We recognized the meaningful effort of those who give in the midst of their harsh life conditions like war or poverty. However, there is also concern about the lack of understanding of the purpose of the offering in WDP. In the spirit of the Guiding Principle that says "Sharing acknowledges that all have something to give and receive", WDPIC encourages the National/Regional committees to participate at the international coordination through the giving of its Annual Contribution. Since the 2003 Quadrennial Meeting the Annual Contribution recommended is 5% or beyond of the offering collected. Additional to the Annual Contribution, any committee is invited to contribute to the Personnel and Office Fund, Strengthening National Committee Fund, Travel Fund, and Writer Country Fund.

#### Let's Meet Again in 2022

Introducing the plans for the next International Committee Meeting in 2022, Laurence Gangloff presented a historical retrospective, starting with the roots of the movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and concluding with the 2017 meeting in Brazil. After refreshing the memories and experiences in Brazil, the planning started with small group conversations to define the theme. Then, a review of the elements of the program that account for the responsibility of the International Committee and capacity building of the movement.

The Executive Committee confirmed the invitation of WDP Scotland to hold the International Meeting on June 12 to 19, 2022, in Edinburgh. The theme chosen comes from Ephesians, which is the book suggested for the themes for the Taiwan (2023) and Palestine (2024) services. The theme of the International Meeting is "New Heart, New Mind. Called to Hope", (Ephesians 1, 18). A logo to promote the event was created as a gift from the Presbyterian Women (PC-USA) to WDPIC.

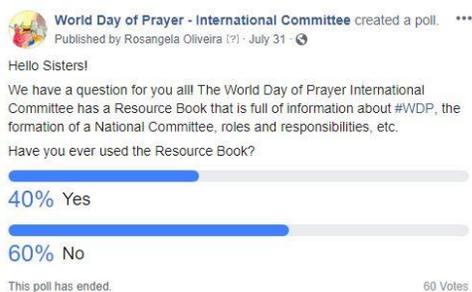


The financial resources to hold the International Meeting comes primarily from the contribution of each and all WDP National/Regional Committee. It is a joint effort to bring representatives of the various committees who are engaged in the World Day of Prayer together once every five years. This is an expected activity and each committee is encouraged to make plans for their participation ahead of time. The plan should include raising and saving money to send the delegates. How about saving £1 a day from now until 2022? That's not all! Plan to involve young women in the national committee leadership so she can be elected to represent the committee, increase the organizational capacity of the committee, engage in the study of the themes and annual promotion of the program, and be in communication with WDPIC office and your regional representative.

### Looking Forward the Next 100 years

Envisioning WDP in the future, we realized that the year of 2027 will be a landmark for the movement. If you have the timeline poster you can look for the first year of the united prayer. It was 1927 under the theme Pray Ye Therefore, prepared by Mary Hough, USA. We can count 100 years of uninterrupted prayers and action led ecumenically by women. It started in the USA, it was joined by women in Canada, and then spread across the world. It is a landmark! The celebration will start at the International Meeting in 2022 and conclude at the following International Meeting in 2027. The planning is in the early stages. WDPIC welcomes your suggestions.

### We Have a Question for you All!



"WDPIC has a Resource Book that is full of information about WDP, the formation of National Committee, roles and responsibilities. Have you ever used the Resource Book?"

This question was posted on the WDPIC Facebook on July 31 during the conversation about the Resource Book at the Executive Committee meeting. Including

the Executive Committee, 40% said yes, and 60% said no out of the 60 votes. It is an impressive response! The Resource Book was prepared by Eileen King and Helga Hiller. It is available for download on the WDPIC website and has been widely distributed (<https://worlddayofprayer.net/organizational-steps.html>). WDPIC has started a review of the Resource Book to continue making it a valuable organizing tool for WDP.

### "Build on a strong foundation"

This is the theme for WDP Vanuatu 2021. Vicki Marney, Pacific regional representative, presented the context of the country before the reading of the current draft of the worship service by the Executive Committee members. It was a moment of prayer with our sisters in Vanuatu, and also the final phase of the review dialogue with the Vanuatu Committee.

### Moving Along Grounded in the Cycle of Themes and Writers

After lifting up concerns and dreams for WDP, sharing together the meals and the daily prayers, the Executive Committee concluded the week with a draft plan of activities up to 2022, when new leadership will be elected in Scotland. WDPIC's plan is set by the cycle of themes and writer committees selected up to 2026. The theme preparation usually has two steps: a Strengthening National Committee workshop and the Writer Committee Preparation workshop. Those workshops will be held with the committees selected up to 2026. We may experiment with new technologies such as web conferences or webinars focused on the WDP movement and annual program. If you want to contribute to this initiative, please communicate with the WDPIC office.

The regional representatives planned to organize Strengthening National Committee workshops in countries where the committees need support in order to re-organize or to train new leaders for WDP. They will encourage the participation of young women in WDP through their communications to the region and in preparation of the International Meeting in 2022.

At the closing, Henrica Marona, from the Pacific commented on how her eyes have been opened and her understanding of WDP around the world has grown beyond what she knows in the Cook Islands – "WDP is about connecting and becoming linked to each other as one". No wonder the song "Bind us together" reflected in poetry our experience!

### [2019 World Day of Prayer Journal](#)

World Day of Prayer International Committee  
475 Riverside Drive Room 729. New York, NY. 10115. USA  
admin@worlddayofprayer.net - <http://worlddayofprayer.net>