

SAMACHAR

NEWS FROM ALL INDIA COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN

SEPTEMBER ISSUE



BAL SHANTI UTSAV CHILDREN PEACE FESTIVAL

60th Anniversary Celebration of
Fellowship of Least Coin Movement
on
International Day of Prayer for Peace
(21st September 2016)

Organized by

All India Council of Christian Women
Women's Wing of National Council of Churches in India
In Partnership with Methodist Church Mecosabagh, Nagpur

Dear Fellow Pilgrims of Justice and Peace,

Warm greeting from All India Council of Christian Women – Women and Gender Justice Wing of National Council of Churches in India.

This is my pleasure to share with all of you that in 2016 we are commemorating the 60th Anniversary of Fellowship of Least Coin Movement (FLC).

On this occasion AICCW is making efforts to revive and revitalize this praxis oriented prayer movement of justice, peace, healing and reconciliation. AICCW has invited Women's Fellowship of member churches to promote FLC in local congregation and among grassroots women church leaders.

The XXVIII Quadrennial Assembly mandate of NCCI is to build just and Inclusive Communities in partnership with member churches, related agencies etc. Promoting FLC and World Day of Prayer has been prioritized by AICCW as one of its main focus to build inclusive communities of justice and Peace. In fact for past 40 years AICCW has been engaged in this ministry uniting church women through FLC and WDP.

Children are the most vulnerable victims of any form of violence yet they are practitioners of peace. Hence on the occasion of Diamond Jubilee of FLC AICCW-NCCI is making efforts to recognize children's contribution in peace building. FLC movement enables us to nurture spirituality of justice, peace, healing and reconciliation among children also.

In this **Samachar** it is our privilege to share with you about **Children's Peace Festival or Bal Shanti Utsav** organized by AICCW in partnership of Methodist Church Nagpur on 21st September 2016 on International Day of Prayer For Peace in Nagpur .

We also share with you about 'Shanti Solomon Educational Scholarship Program' of AICCW and other activities to promote FLC and build just and inclusive communities

We invite you to join us in this pilgrimage .

Shanti! Shalom! Salam!

Moumita Biswas
Executive Secretary
All India Council of Christian Women
Women and Gender Justice Wing of National Council of Churches in India



BAL SHANTI UTSAV - CHILDREN WEAVING SHANTI (PEACE) on International Day of Prayer for Peace



100 children majority from Dalit and vulnerable background between the age group of 3 years to 14 years from Marathi and Hindi Methodist Church participated in this peace festival along with Women's fellowship Leaders, Sunday School Teachers and some Youth leaders. Children shared their understanding of peace and how they practice peace every day in their own home, school, and community. During this peace festival they also learnt about the significance of International Day of Prayer for Peace shared by Rev Dr Roger Gaikwad ,General Secretary of NCCI. Mrs. Preeti Waghchoure, shared about history of FLC and story of Mrs. Shanti Solomon. Children learnt about the pragmatic dimension of peace and the need to break the culture of silence and their own rights to life in its fullness. Children sang songs of peace and splashed the colours and their understanding of peace through their painting and drawings.

CHILDREN'S NOTION OF PEACE

" Sharing food with friends " -Rohit Dhatre

"I can go to school just like my brother with a nice school bag and a tiffin box" - Sharon Emmanuel

"Mum gives me same hot bowl of rice and big piece of fish just like my brother" - Payal Mendhe

"Cleaning our neighbourhood so that all can feel happy and fresh and its not smelly and dirty. " - Prince

"Listening to the birds and not plucking flowers and cutting trees. The tree can also share the fruits with birds." - Ashlee Emmanuel

"Loving trees and watering them every day." - Joshna Patte

"Loving our body means stop smoking cigarettes, taking alcohol, and say ' NO ' to Drugs." - Astha Waghmare

"Peace at home means dad loves mum and loving our Mother land and Mother Earth." - Pooja Francis

"Play every day and not be afraid of darkness ."Achal Vilas Gaidekar

"Rain coming in monsoon ,green paddy field and trees filled with fruits and flowers" - Sachi

"Clean city is full of Peace"- Shiphrah Waghchoure

"Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and people of all religion live happily together " - Nikita

ALARMING CONCERN

Children shared during the festival that they are aware of eve teasing and other forms of abuse on children . They even thought physical and corporal punishment in school and at home is normal phenomenon. As per Government of India Commissioned survey 65% of school children reported facing corporal punishment and beatings by teachers. Lack of awareness about Child Protection Policies and the necessity of implementation of such polices make situation worse. Parents and relatives, persons known to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility were mostly found to be the perpetrators of child abuse in the India .The report further revealed two out of every three children have been physically abused . 53% of children in India face sexual abuse including boys .



VOICES



"Children are practitioners of peace. However their contributions in making peace are not always recognized by the society. It is very important for us to acknowledge children's contributions of making peace and also nurture their spirituality of justice and peace. The '**Children's Peace Festival**' organized on the occasion of 60th Anniversary of FLC on 'International Day of Prayer for Peace' is one such endeavor of NCCI for ecumenical and spiritual formation of children towards building just and inclusive communities of peace " -Rev . Dr Roger Gaikwad ,General Secretary of NCCI

"Our children in this country are raised in culture of violence and they think it is a normal phenomenon to face violence. Violence is rhythmic. Children grown up in culture of violence have tendency as adult to perpetuate violence and even as children they can imitate adults. Children's Peace Festival not only provided space for children to share their understanding of peace and how they practice peace but it is an eye opener for us regarding the need to create awareness about 'Rights to Life in Dignity' of children and promote Child Protection Polices. We have to work vigorously to end culture of violence on children. Church can play prophetic role to do so. " - Rev Saroj Timothy , Methodist Hindi Church, Nelson Hall , Mecosabagh.

"We will promote FLC among children in Zonal level also . FLC unites us Christian women in prayer and enables us to renew our commitment to make world a safe place where our children can be safe and happy". -Mrs Shehalata Singh , WSCS District President, Methodist Church.

"We will use these painting of peace by children as resources for advocacy for NCCI's **365 Day Zero Tolerance to Gender Based Violence: Make it Happen Now!!!** Campaign to build culture of peace. Children's articulation of peace with justice can also help us to develop child theology. Children as practitioners of peace are lay theologians their spiritualities can help us to develop contextual mission paradigms to promote peace. Children can carry on the legacy of FLC movement. This is the first endeavour in history of AICCW, NCCI to promote FLC among children . The ripple effects will continue throughout India as we are training our young women fellowship leaders" Miss. Moumita Biswas – Executive Secretary of AICCW



Rev Saroj Timothy ordained woman pastor of Methodist Hindi Church with children



Sharon Emmanuel of Methodist Hindi Church during the inaugural service



VOICES



Mrs. Preeti V. Waghchoure narrating Shanti Solomon story



Children offering their least coin

"I am an indigenous Tangkhul Naga woman working as intern in AICCW. I belong to Tangkhul Baptist Church of Manipur Baptist Convention. I have never heard about FLC and World Day of Prayer before. Working in AICCW has provided me the opportunity to know of prayer movements that unites women. I feel proud that I have been assigned the responsibility helping AICCW to promote FLC and WDP. I am working on modules of various training programs for children, youth, women etc. I have fully participated in planning and implementation of this Children's Peace Festival. My colleague Mr. Hrudhay Adduwar and Mr. Shitovi Yephthomi has helped me in organizing this festival. I hope when I go back to Manipur or in my future ministry I will introduce FLC in my church. In fact on November 25th- 27th 2016, there is *Baptist Women Convention* in which twelve Baptist Conventions in India will be coming together in Chandipur, Odisha, where AICCW will share about FLC." - Ms. Hungrephy Zas -Intern of AICCW

"Being a young widow raising two daughters I feel proud to say prayer and faith in God in midst of crisis has sustained me. This is the reason why I want to promote FLC among children so that in prayer they find healing, strength and united with each others in both happiness and crisis"- Mrs. Preeti V. Waghchoure, Sunday School Teacher, Methodist Marathi Church.

"I came to know about FLC from my grandma Mrs. Joshi. However I was never a part of this prayer movement. Being an organizer of this 'Children's Peace Festival' I also learnt more about FLC. As a young woman leader of my church and Sunday School Superintendent I feel now it is my duty to promote FLC not only among women and children but also among the youth in our church." - Ms Pratiksha S. Bhasey, WSCS Member, Methodist Marathi Church.



Mrs Snehalata Singh , Rev. Dr Roger Gaikwad with children planting Neem trees during the inaugural praying for peace with Mother Earth



Children celebrating peace





Fellowship of Least Coin Movement Sparking Hope

The FLC is a world-wide ecumenical movement of prayer for peace, justice and reconciliation. Through this movement christian women around the world seek fellowship with each other and are reminded to live a reconciled and forgiving life with others. Every time women and children pray for peace, justice, healing, reconciliation they offer the least coin. These coins are later sent to ICFLC (International Committee of Fellowship of Least Coin) which supports projects and women's initiatives of peace around the world. This prayer movement emphasizes on praxis dimension of prayer reflected in action. However this prayer movement need not be just confined to women united in prayer only. Anyone can participate in this prayer movement. The pioneer of this movement was Mrs. Shanti Solomon a legendary woman leader from church of North India (CNI) who also is the founding mother of 'All India Council of Christian Women' (which unites Christian women in India from Orthodox and Reformed traditions) and Asian Church women's Conference (that unities Asian women church leaders.). The foundation of this prayer movement is based on the Biblical story of Widow's Mite . FLC deconstructs the notion of power of mammon. Through this prayer movement even the economically poor person can also contribute least coin of their currency and can spark hope and transform lives of many .

International Committee of Fellowship of Least Coin(ICFLC) each years supports seed grant for projects and initiatives of women around the world. FLC has contributed in giving scholarship and medicine grant for abandoned old women and widows of Mulvany Home – run by Diocese of Calcutta – Church of North India. Supported orphan children of Pandita Bai Ramabai Mukti Mission. Helped in healing process and rehabilitation of trafficked and abused girls from Myanmar and refugee camps in Thailand etc.

Shanti Solomon Scholarship

You can change the Life of a Child from Vulnerable Background

AICCW has initiated a Shanti Solomon Scholarship program to support children of vulnerable background

- Orphan Children
- Children from economically poor background
- Dalit and Tribal children
- Children of widow's and single Mothers
- Children of Sex workers and trafficked women

We invite you and Women Fellowship to graciously donate to transform lives. (For more detail contact: Moumita Biswas at ncci.aiccw.moumita@gmail.com)

