

You are reading the December 2014 E-LINK, a monthly newsletter from Canadian Baptist Women of Ontario and Quebec (CBWOQ). This newsletter is mailed to all who are interested in CBWOQ's vision and work, and to all who serve and lead on CBWOQ's behalf. Thank you for sharing the information in this E-LINK with everyone in your church.

From Diane

It's the Christmas season and at this time of the year our thoughts turn to the needy and the marginalized. How can we help, even in some small way?

Baptist Women has a great history of calling us to personal, practical involvement in mission. We rolled bandages and sent supply packages to hospitals we supported in India. In a generation where women were restricted in Christian ministry, Baptist Women supported an extensive team of home missionaries who directed entire ministries in inner cities. Women taught ESL classes, led homework clubs, visited new Canadians in their homes and a multitude of other great things. Personal ministry is biblical – and you don't have to be an expert to do it.

Jesus said giving a cup of cold water was valuable (Matthew 10:42). Think about that. He says one cup. We don't have to end human suffering, create social and economic justice for all or bring about world peace. Yes, it's important that we work effectively toward all those things. However, we don't have to change the world to please God and do something of great value.

Christ said success could be as simple as a cup of cold water. In a hot dry country, water is life . . . and cold water is a delicious pleasure. In other words, Christ wasn't just talking about a utilitarian meeting of basic needs. He is describing a personal interaction that gives value and dignity to the person in need.

Let me illustrate with a story. Once there was a missionary who wanted to teach a group of orphans about the love of God. She asked them, "What do you think loving kindness means?" A child replied, "Kindness is when you give me a piece of bread. Loving kindness is when you put jam on it."

Anchor Causes

At CBWOQ we want to provide ways for you to be involved in personal, practical ministry. In this E-LINK you will read about a new program called Anchor Causes. We hope this will provide structure, team support and training to set you free in ministry.

Please note that I am talking about freedom quite deliberately. We don't want this program (or any other) to become a burden. It is completely optional:

- Groups don't have to choose an anchor cause.
- If you choose a cause, it doesn't have to fit into one of the sectors we are focusing on.

As CBWOQ staff, we need to limit the number of sectors we support so we can do it well. And so we chose three areas that we felt best represented our history and calling: Vulnerable Women, Children and Youth at Risk, and Food and Community Development.

We want to support you as much as possible. Please let us know your ideas and difficulties.

This Christmas season, may your days be flavoured with acts of loving kindness and genuine interaction with Christ.

Diane McBeth
Executive director

In this E-LINK

1. Anchor Causes - new (free) CBWOQ program
2. Women's Weekend Away 2015 - Registration is open!
3. 2014 Church Forms available
4. 2015 Great Canadian Bible Study - The Legacy of Eve - now in Spanish!
5. Buying Sex Is Not A Sport Pan Am 2015 - December 2014 Prayer Guide
6. Stories From The Field - Rev. Anne Drost on Canadian Baptist Women's short-term mission to meet with Congolese women
7. Mission personnel birthdays - January

1. Anchor Causes - new (free) CBWOQ program

Do you want to help in your community but feel paralyzed by the number of needs? Perhaps you already serve but wish you could get training and connect with others doing similar ministries.

Introducing a new (free) network to support your effective integral mission both here and internationally . . . CBWOQ Anchor Causes.

Step 1 Pray and do research

Gather a few women together and pray. What do you feel called to? Before your next meeting, ask each person to pray and bring back a verse or thought they had about the issue. Try to discern God's leading by listening to what He says to you and others.

Meanwhile, research the needs in your community. Ask other churches and groups what they are doing. (Are you called to fill in a gap?)

You can survey your neighbourhood with two questions:

- What are the three biggest needs in this community?
- What do you think would help?

You will likely uncover needs you didn't know about and later, people will be more likely to participate if their opinions were included from the beginning.

Step 2 Choose an anchor cause

Consider the information you have gathered and listen carefully to how God is speaking to each member of the group. Prayerfully discern the one sector to which God is calling you. Then surrender the needs you *can't* meet into His hands. Ask Him to meet those needs through another channel.

When you choose your cause, think in terms of sectors rather than specific projects or programs. For example, instead of saying "We will partner with Women's Shelter X," say: "We will support vulnerable women, including Women's Shelter X."

Once you get involved you may discern many other needs and possibilities. New women who join your group may bring different ideas and ways to help.

Step 3 Get connected

Let us know what sector you have chosen (bwoq@baptist.ca or 416-620-2954). We will send you some information and connect you to related Canadian Baptist Ministries programs in the same sector.

We begin by offering support to the following three sectors:

- Children and youth at risk
- Vulnerable women
- Food and community development

For each of these three sectors we plan to:

- present at least one training workshop each year
- facilitate at least one online conference per year with an international program working in that sector
- eventually offer sector-related short-term mission trips.

Step 4 Launch

Organize and start helping in the area you have chosen. Let's maximize whatever we have for the kingdom and for others.

Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. (Matthew 13:8 NIV)

2. Women's Weekend Away 2015 - Registration is open!

"Strong and steady. Give your all." is the theme for our 2015 Women's Weekend Away.

"Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the LORD, because you know that in the LORD, your labor is not in vain." I Corinthians 15:58 NRSV.

From April 24 - 26, 2015, come away to the Best Western Lamplighter Inn and Conference Centre in London, Ontario, and experience worship, workshops and teaching that will inspire you to plant your roots deep. Raquel Contreras will bring our theme messages. President of the Baptist World Alliance - Women's Department, her twin passions for justice and spiritual formation will ignite yours. Laurel Martin, worship leader at First Baptist Church, London, will lead worship.

Registration costs: \$219 (Early Bird - before April 1) | \$239 (April 1 - April 15)
These costs do not include hotel.

For all the information you need to begin planning your getaway to this Women's Weekend Away, refer to your November/December issue of *live* and the four-page information/registration form included. Or visit our website: www.baptistwomen.com and click the Women's Weekend Away image that will slide across your screen. You'll be able to download the information/registration form **plus a poster** for you to display on your church's bulletin board.

3. 2014 Church Forms Available

2014 Individual Church Women's Ministries Review and Women's Ministry Link Compilation Report forms are available to download on our website. You will find them in the resources/forms section. We are happy to mail copies to you if you aren't able to download them or get them from your women's ministry link representative.

If you are a women's ministry leader in your church and you don't have a women's ministry link, download the Ministries Review form, fill it in and mail it to the office. If you are a women's ministry link, we'd love to have your compilation reports by February 2, 2015.

Thank you for helping us gather information through these reports. These reports can significantly shape the way we serve you in the future. If you have any questions about these reports, please contact us at bwoq@baptist.ca.

4. 2015 Great Canadian Bible Study - The Legacy of Eve - now in Spanish!

Our thanks to Erika Abele and others from Oasis Dufferin Community Centre for their leadership in translating 2015's study into Spanish. You may download either version from our website.

Every year, Baptist women across Canada meet in small groups to do a pre-set Bible study that focuses on women from the Bible. Participants bring a small offering to support a joint project that lasts for three years. Great things happen!

2015's study is The Legacy of Eve. We hope you'll gather some women together and try it for yourself. Many groups choose a date in January but it's not required.

Since 2012, Baptist women across Canada who've participated in this project have raised over \$24,000 to assist victims of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Your offerings have been used for medical assistance, trauma counselling, workshops to reduce discrimination of victims and their children, and to support microcredit programs to get survivors started on a new life.

So, get the women in your church organized; book off one night and do the study. And remember to make your cheque out to Canadian Baptist Women of Ontario and Quebec, with GCBS written on the memo line.

5. Buying Sex Is Not A Sport Pan Am 2015 - December 2014 Prayer Guide

Visit the Buying Sex Is Not A Sport website (www.buyingsexisnotasport.ca) to download December's prayer guide or print this e-mail as prayers are listed below. December's prayers were written by Kathy Donevan from Queen Street Baptist Church, Hamilton.

We still have room for three more contributors. If you'd like to contribute to the guide, or know someone who would, please send an e-mail to rsejames@gmail.com. Prayer is the most important weapon in the fight to end slavery.

December's prayers:

Prayer focus: Prevention

Scripture: He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. (Isaiah 61:1)

Week of December 1: Pray for families

Creator-God, you say that we must be a holy people; obedient to your Word, resisting temptation and following in Your footsteps. Teach us, according to Your holy way, how to love our families and our neighbours as ourselves.

Keep us:

- alert . . .
- faithful . . .
- set apart to be the holy people you desire . . .
- alive in you . . .
- close to you.

We want to nourish our families and our church families to truly be your holy people.

Week of December 8: Pray for neighbourhoods

Author of grace, we long to hear Your voice as we think of how to prevent sexual exploitation. You sought out those who lived on the edge: the disenfranchised and “unlovely.” So too we are called to offer relevant love in wise obedience.

Make us wise as we explore our communities to learn about what may or may not be happening and what we can do to stop sex trafficking and exploitation. We need courage to be Your hands.

Week of December 15: Pray for schools

Abba, as a grandmother, this campaign has pushed me to realize how vulnerable our young people are. My heart bleeds.

Give us school board trustees, school administrators, teachers and advocates who will teach children how to treat their bodies as gifts You’ve given them to be enjoyed in healthy relationships.

Week of December 22: Pray for each of us

Breaker of chains, we each need to be alert to the sex slavery that occurs around us in every village, hamlet, town, city and rural area in Canada.

Your purpose for every person is that they know the life and liberty that is theirs in Christ. So we pray for all trafficked and prostituted persons; all pimps; all traffickers; all johns. You came to set the captive free. This Christmas, may Your blessings flow as far as the curse is found.

Week of December 29: Pray for the media

Lord, what can one person do to be an advocate for this campaign . . . in the media? We know you’ve used many of your servants in mighty ways. Yet Moses didn’t feel adequate to go down to Egypt.

Give us the courage and strength to be observant . . . in order to challenge the sex myths and sexualized culture pushed by our media: television, digital, Internet. We ask for the discernment that only You can give.

6. Stories From The Field - Rev. Anne Drost on Canadian Baptist Women's short-term mission to meet with Congolese women

For over a year and a half, Canadian Baptist women have supported a CBM program through offerings taken for the Great Canadian Bible Study. These funds supported Congolese women who had been victims of the civil war there and had experienced the horrors of that war: rape, beatings, machete cuts and so much more. This short term mission was to meet some of these women, hear their stories and share God’s heart with them.

After planning from afar, the day in late fall 2014 came when I led a team of Canadian Baptist women to meet with Congolese women in Gisenyi, Rwanda. We worshipped together in song and praised God in at least five languages. They taught us some of their songs and we taught them ours. They taught us to dance and praise God. God’s Word was shared through devotional times and then we played together.

One of our activities was to do nails and hand massage. These dear Congolese sisters told us that for

the first time in years, they felt young and beautiful! When it came time to share stories, one by one our sisters poured out their hearts about what had happened to them.

Our hearts nearly broke as we cried with our sisters. As each Congolese sister shared, I took her in my arms and through tears, prayed for God to come close and hold this dear woman in his arms. Over and over Congolese and Canadian sisters shared their hearts, sometimes sharing deeply held secrets that no one knew about until now.

The gates of heaven opened and healing and wholeness was showered down upon this group of women. It didn't matter where they were from; God was doing a healing ministry. After the first 24 hours were over, we were no longer strangers. We were bound by the love of God to one another in sisterhood.

When it came time to part ways, no one wanted these days to end. We prayed with each other and gave small gifts to our new friends. Each person from Canada was given a woman's name from the Congo to pray for and each woman from the Congo was given one of her Canadian sister's names to remember in prayer.

We walked to the border together, arm in arm trying to prolong our days together. When we could go no further, we wrapped our arms around each other and in tears, we each sang, "God be with you till we meet again." We waved until we could see each other no more and we left our sisters in the hands of Jesus for His care and keeping.

Read our full interview with Anne in the January/February 2015 issue of *live*.

7. Mission personnel birthdays - January

ACTIVE: 10-Mireille Haddad (Lebanon)

CBM CHILDREN: 23-Anna Grove (Cameroon), 27-Caleb Bustin (Rwanda)

For more information about Canadian Baptist Ministries' personnel, call Barb Keys at 905-821-3533.

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CBWOQ E-LINK

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BAPTIST WOMEN'S E-LINK - DECEMBER 2014