

# U.C.W. challenged to use their power

"It takes enormous power to break through oppressive systems", stated Lois Wilson, former moderator of The United Church of Canada, and currently President of the World Council of Churches.

Speaking at the 1984 Ontario Conference for Women of The United Church of Canada which met at Waterloo this

past weekend, she provided challenging perspectives on the conference theme, "The Promise of Power". "Fifty per cent of scientific research is for war, not peace," she asserted. "Power is so frequently defined as control, authority, domination, and subjugation. Christian faith, in contrast, sees power as enabling others, setting them free from oppression wherever it occurs."

At the conference attended by Diane Hesse, Shirley Gray, Kathryn Latimer, Bernice Nichols and Margaret Atherley of Georgetown. Wilson explained power problems have global dimensions and cited the "real" cost of a Barbie doll. These are made in the Philippines in one of the export processing zones set aside by the Marcos government for companies like Mattel, Ford, or Del Monte. Labourers often work 16-hour shifts, for which they receive the equivalent of \$1.50 per day. Mothers are not allowed time off to check on their children. Unions are illegal, because they caused the business developers problems back in North

America, and they don't want to deal with them abroad. "The answer is not as simple as stopping trade", Wilson commented, "but we can be aware of the issues."

In the USSR, the church is required by law to stay out of politics. Many Canadians who criticize the Communist attitude to religion fail to realize that they are following the same policy voluntarily when they accept the status quo, rather than becoming involved in struggles for justice and peace in society. The Biblical option is for radical and prophetic action on behalf of those deprived of power. "The Third World is not just a place, but rather a situation in life where people have no power in their society."

While there are many "Third World" issues that call for action in Canada, awareness of problems in other countries is necessary because of our global interdependence. Wilson deplored the current developments in South African apartheid, in which black Africans are being

resettled in various tribal homelands, not unlike Canadian Native Reserves. The land set aside for these is too poor for productive farming. People with no record of their native roots are being assigned arbitrarily to various homelands. Bishop Desmond Tutu, an outstanding African and world churchman, like other black South Africans, has no vote. Many feel that a non-violent solution to these injustices is no longer an option.

What can Canadians do to show solidarity with black South Africans? The possibility of boycotting South African wine and canned or fresh fruit could be explored. The purchase of Krugerrands could be discouraged. Perhaps Canadian women could recycle their diamond rings, glutting the market, and undermining South Africa's diamond enterprises as a way of showing our support for the rights of black South Africans to have a fair share of political and economic power. "The lease we can do," Wilson urged, "is be informed."



Bert Arnold, President of the North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded, presented Milton's Maureen Carney with a special recognition award for her 10 years of volunteer at Tinkerbell Nursery. The award was part of the NHAAMR's annual meeting in Milton last Tuesday.

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