



Movement of Christian Workers

# REVIEW

Issue 63 September 2017



## Solidarity: We are in this together

Each editorial of our previous 2017 MCW Reviews illustrated a component of the Review of Life Method; See (February) and Judge (May). Reflecting on the lived experiences and realities of ourselves and others in the light of Gospel values may only become meaningful if it becomes a provocation to take positive action towards change. Taking action can be a frightening prospect and a real challenge. However, it is important to put 'taking action' into a context. Whilst doing nothing is not an option, we all have limits as to what is possible, of what we can do and what we can be involved in. Our actions can be small or they may involve more complicated steps. Sometimes the process of simply raising our own awareness and then sharing it with others is quite a telling act in itself. What do we want to see changed? What can we do? How can we involve others in our actions are all questions arising at this stage of the Review of Life. What is crucial however is that you are not alone and that the aims and objectives are achievable. Having others sharing your aims along with a unity of purpose creates a solidarity of action and the continuing belief in the need for change; the need to be part of making that change. Being one person trying to raise the awareness of someone else is no less of a challenge or important than a group supporting someone taking action in the community or a workplace, or a member who has taken on a role as an MP, Local Councillor or Trade Union Rep. All are seeking to rise to the demand of being part of making change. This particular MCW Review highlights a much larger gathering which epitomises the resolve, tenacity and commitment to

the Gospel that can be involved in taking action.

This September edition highlights the coming together of 120 delegates representing Christian Worker Movements from 42 countries making up the World Movement of Christian Workers. Their gathering in one place with one purpose yet arriving via very different stories, experiences and realities helps exemplify what solidarity with and for others means in practice. The two or three 'pen' pictures, those taking on leadership roles, the promises to try and make a difference on their return home demonstrates their wanting to take action in anyway they can. The English MCW members and supporters are not an insignificant part of this undertaking. Without your generous and significant contributions to the solidarity fund it is likely that some who attended may not have found it possible. Thank you once again for your loyal, continuing support and faithfulness in the work of the National, European and International Movements. A short report from the European Seminar which took place immediately before the World Movement meeting is also included in this Review. The response to the 2017 appeal brings to mind that certainly one generation of Young Christian Workers (YCW) used to refer to the apostolic significance of finance when seeking a pledge of a day's pay to help fund the Movement. A memory such as this for ex-YCWs is being requested to mark the YCW's 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Their Celebration Mass on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November in Salford means that the MCW National Conference / AGM has now been changed to Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2017. It will take place in Gateshead.



Land, housing **WORK for a DECENT LIFE!**

From the 15th to the 21st of July 2017, 120 delegates representing Christian Worker Movements from 42 countries and under the theme "Land, Roof and Work for a dignified life" gathered in the University of Mysticism in Avila.

50 years at the service of evangelisation in the world of work



#3TVD

During the International Seminar



the focus was on the issues of how to build solitary in society. The current threat to human dignity and the situation of the right to work was analysed from the perspective of the employment situation of the workers shared by the delegates of the World Movement of Christian Workers (WCMW) from the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe.

(Mary Foy and Chris McHugh, WCMW delegates)

The Director of the International Labour Office in Spain participated in the dialogue as well as representatives of the International Trade Union sphere and popular movements, to speak about the world employment situation, the trends, the present and the past. Pope Francis' perspective on human work was presented by the Bishop of the Workers' Pastoral (Pastoral Obrera) of the Spanish Episcopal Conference.

The General Assembly of the WCMW, which followed the WCMW seminar, evaluated the actions carried out during the past 4 years, held elections for the new Coordination and approved the proposals for actions for its affiliates for the years 2017-2021.

This particular meeting marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Movement celebrating 50 years of commitment to the evangelisation of the world of work. (Photo capturing the cutting of the celebratory cakes.)



**Pope Francis' Message to the WCMW**

Pope Francis sent a message to the International Meeting of the World Movement of Christian Workers on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its foundation. Referring to the theme of the meeting "Land, Home and Work for a Decent Life", the message stressed that "the dignity of the person is closely united to these three realities" which remind us that the fundamental experience of the human being "is to feel rooted in the World, in one Family, in a Society. Land, home, and work, continues the message, means "fighting because every person lives in a manner consistent with their dignity and nobody is discarded. To this we encourage our faith in God, who sent his Son into the world because, sharing the story of his people, living in a family and working with his hands; He could redeem and save the human person with His Death and Resurrection ". Finally, the Pope urged the Christian Workers Movement "to persevere with renewed impetus in the effort to bring the Gospel into the world of work".



**World Movement of Christian Workers  
World Movement Coordination  
Elected July 2017**

**General Secretary**

Mariléa Damasio,  
MTC, Brazil

**Co-Presidents**

Jean-Claude Tolbize,  
LOAC, Rodrigues

Marie Fatima  
LOC, Portugal

**International Chaplain**

Bernard Robert  
ACO, France



&

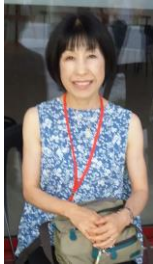


**World Assembly 2017**



**Other members of the WMCW Coordination ↓**

- Hortense Dembele, MTC Mali
- Julian Rigau, MTC Cuba
- Armin Huerner, KAB Switzerland
- Mala Sammunege, CWM Sri Lanka
- Marcelino Teodoro, MTC Brazil
- Samy Doray Sinapan, CSFM Singapore
- Philippe Chatelain, ACO France (treasurer)



**Kazuko Ariyoshi**

Kazuko is a national leader of the Christian Worker Movement of Japan. One of their current priorities is to work alongside migrants many of whom are disadvantaged and their circumstances put them at risk of both economic and sexual exploitation. The Japanese Movement offers practical help by linking them with relevant support organisations as well as specific legal aid so that their status can be regularised.

**Nakai Jun**

Nakai is a Jesuit Priest who was inspired to be a spiritual accompanier in the Movement when working with Victoria Seo Sunhee who is a leader in the Korean Movement. He witnessed at first hand her commitment and leadership in the trade union she helped to establish in her work place. She, along with her husband, is also an activist in the community and parents of two children.



**Sister Lydia (pictured here with David McLoughlin 2013)**

Sr. Lydia, a spiritual accompanier in Nicaragua, in a powerful bidding prayer during a Eucharistic Celebration spoke of the violence and discrimination routinely suffered by women in countries across Central and South America. The women with the least means were most at risk. Sr. Lydia blamed macho culture and a socio-economic system which endorses this behaviour. Her hope was that change was possible at a personal level as well as broader economic reforms.





## Final Statement of the International Seminar and General Assembly of the WMCW – Avila, Spain, 2017

Gathered to discuss and renew our commitment to bringing the Gospel closer to the world of work, we have completed the work of the International Seminar and the General Assembly on the theme "Land, Housing and Work for a Decent Life". This seminar brought together delegates from Africa, America, Asia and Europe.



During these days, we have lived together in a caring and fraternal way. We were welcomed by the city, its diocese, its mass media and for that we are very grateful. During our meeting, we were able to welcome among us the main leaders of the Church and the trade union representatives of Spain, who encouraged us to continue building bridges between the world of the Church and the world of Work. We thank God for 50 years of Christian presence in the world of work and for this journey alongside so many working sisters and brothers sharing their doubts and hopes, their joys and their sorrows. We feel supported by Pope Francis in our task of evangelization.



In his message to our Assembly, through the Bishop of Avila, the Pope invites us to « bring the Gospel closer to the world of work, so that the voice of workers continues to resonate within the Church; and to lead the struggle so that the whole world can live in dignity, with no one excluded from it. » From our perspective of believers, we have shared our experience and our presence in the different realities of the Movements that make up the WMCW. The International Labour Organization (ILO), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the Popular Movement of Forgotten Neighbourhoods shared their experience with us. We have deepened the teaching of Pope Francis on pastoral work, the economy of rejection and decent work.



(MCW delegate Chris McHugh speaking from the podium)

**We shared our concerns** about unemployment, the lack of decent jobs and the precarious labour relations around the world, and how these generate pain, suffering, death, lack of solidarity, despair, war, violence and migration. Profit is based on a model of labour relations which weakens labour law, collective bargaining, protection and social rights, as well as the representation and defence of workers. In one phrase, it is based on the impoverishment of life, dehumanization and inequality at work. These conditions affect the lives of millions of people and entire families irrespective of age, sex, race, irrespective of the place where they live. Young people, women and children (child labour) are also affected. This suffering is the result of a system based on a culture of rejection that transforms people into goods. These characteristics are found in all countries, since we share a context of economic globalization which does not take into account solidarity and respect for the common good.

**We feel challenged** as the pain of the whole family of workers is also our pain. We want to be a sign of hope and show signals of hope, personally and collectively. We want to maintain an attitude that strengthens our presence among our working brothers and sisters, so as to listen, accompany, train and denounce situations. This depends on our personal commitment and is how we can bring about processes of humanization and allow Jesus to be visible through us, as a gesture and sign of love towards others, in our close, precarious and poor spaces. This goes together with an explicit commitment to increase global solidarity, in line with the international dimension of our Movements.

Meeting these challenges can be achieved by continuing the evangelization of the world of work and announcing the good news, in line with the humanization project that God is pursuing for all and which places the person, made in His image and likeness, at the centre of all concerns. We are aware of our limitations but we also know that other major actors share our commitment and fight for the sacred dignity of the person. They share the slogan "land, housing and work for a decent life." Pope Francis encourages us to continue building alternatives, both small and large. The World Movement of Christian Workers wants to continue to grow, in partnership with other realities, to build a world with more justice, solidarity and a more sustainable world.



**We offer our commitment**, our work and our struggles to all the workers of the world, at local, regional and global level. This is how we will realize our evangelization mission. We intend to adapt the organization of the MMTC to better respond to this challenge.



**We are committed to:**

1. Strengthening our militant lifestyle, our formation and our Review of Life in accordance with our faith in Jesus Christ, with the Gospel and the social doctrine of the Church.
2. Promoting the relationship between Movements and the workers pastoral: we need to be a voice in the Church and a voice in the world of work, with particular attention to the most excluded and precarious people.
3. Analysing the regional situation of workers in order to create dynamics that denounce situations of vulnerability of rights and protect the dignity of the person. Promote equal opportunities for men and women in all areas working in partnership with other organisations.
4. Encouraging alliances with other major actors at local and regional level who share our approach to decent work and the construction of the common good.
5. Promoting solidarity and common action with popular movements, during World Meetings, in a dialogue with the Pope, and at specific regional meetings.
6. Continuing to invite all Christian Workers Movements to take part in the International Day of Decent Work (7 October), together with the world trade union movement and the International Labour Organization.

7. Proposing at local and regional level a partnership of Christian inspired organizations, and in doing so try to launch an international initiative of the Church in favour of decent work.

8. Demanding decent work for all.

9. Urging states to guarantee a social wage or citizen's income that will help avoid the rejection of millions of people if access to decent work is not guaranteed.



View of Avila from the CITES Institute Conference Centre, Avila, Spain, July 2017



### **European Seminar, Avila 2017**

Sixty participants from 11 European countries met from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> July to hold their annual seminar. It was timed so that the delegates could then attend the WMCW meeting without extra travel expenses.

The English MCW's delegates for both meetings were Mary Foy and Chris McHugh. Jim Dearlove attended the meeting as a member of the European Coordination.



The theme of the ECWM seminar was:

### **Decent work and precarious jobs in Europe**

The starting point for this seminar was the focus on personal experiences and the consequences of the changes taking place in the world of work with particular emphasis on the alarming increase in the precariousness of working life throughout the continent. It was noted that those with the least means in every country were the most vulnerable and most at risk of suffering from the precarious nature of modern employment.



There was also reflection and debate on the plight and situation of asylum seekers and refugees led by Alberto Plaza SJ who is Director of the Jesuit service to migrants in Spain (pictured on right of top table contributors).

Participants visited 2 projects in Avila. The first was an organisation supporting the creation of small businesses and the second was a special employment centre for people with disabilities. At the end of these visits an action took place where the participants approached the citizens of Avila to get their opinion on decent work.





Gerard Müller, (on the right of the picture) is Chaplain to the ECWM and has much experience as a spiritual accompanier at a local and national level in the ACO of France. He gave a thought provoking presentation focusing on the time and context of when Isaiah was voicing his proclamations in 539BC. There were Jews returning home from exile. In addition there were foreigners newly arriving.

However, these newcomers and the Jewish Diaspora were coming back to where an already established Jewish community existed. This settled community treated all the incomers with suspicion and considered them to be of lower status. In this moment of crisis Isaiah was pointing out that there was an absence of justice. He declared that if you have respect for justice you will be saved and respecting justice enabled you to untie the cords of your yolk. This was and still is vital to remember. Gerard was saying that this situation, this prophesy, informed and had a significant impact on the way that Jesus acted because He promised to create a new heaven and a new earth which would fulfil the story of liberation. Thus, God’s promise to us is in the here and now providing we commit to making a positive difference.



The latter part of the seminar programme concentrated on preparing for the International Seminar and General Assembly of the WMCW.

### Hello and Goodbye



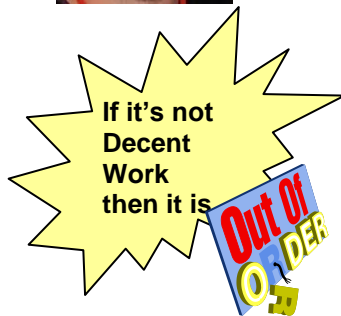
A new European Coordination group has now been formed.

It’s hello to Mary Foy who has taken over the mantle from Jim Dearlove who has now finished his mandate on the group. We congratulate Mary and wish her every success in this new role whilst thanking Jim for his time and hard work over the last 4 years.

The new Coordination Group of the ECWM is now made up of: Otto Meier, ECWM President (KAB, Germany); Armin Hürner, Treasurer (KAB, Switzerland); Gerard Müller, European Chaplain (ACO, France); Mary Foy (MCW, England); Karl Brunner (KVV, Italy); Olinda Marques (LOC, Portugal); Sylvain Knittel (ACO, France); Peter Koutny (KAP, Czech Rep.), Celia Santiago (ACO, Spain) and Pontien Kabongo (EWP Representative).



We say goodbye to Manolo Copé (left) the ECWM Coordinator for the last 4 years. His hard work and dedication during that time was immeasurable. He became a great friend of the MCW and as Jim Dearlove said “Manolo was a joy and inspiration to work alongside”. We welcome Toni Santamaría, (right) the new Coordinator and wish him well in his new role.



Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2017 is designated World Day for Decent Work. Please see if you can mark this day in some way and remember those who don’t have decent work. Perhaps make a point of talking to at least one other person so that they too can become aware of the need to stand up and speak out about the necessity to become more conscious of the situations some workers have to endure. Work that is not decent and does not respect the dignity of the worker is definitely out of order!

## MCW National Conference including AGM

The MCW National Conference  
including the AGM will take place on  
**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

From **11:00 until 16:00** in

**Gateshead Civic Centre,**

**Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH**

**Conference Focus:** Sharing and reflecting on stories, accounts and experiences  
from Refugees, Asylum Seekers and those who work alongside them.

**It is in the shelter of each other that the people live**

An old Irish Proverb

It is important that we know how many people are attending for catering purposes.

Please do let Jo O'Brien know on [mcworkers@aol.com](mailto:mcworkers@aol.com) if you are planning to attend. Thank you.

We look forward to seeing you there.

## YCW 80th Anniversary

The YCW celebrates its eightieth anniversary on 5<sup>th</sup> December this year. On that day in 1937 100 young workers from London, Bristol, Blackburn and Liverpool gathered in Wigan for a Congress and elected Harry Tolfree (Haverstock Hill, originally Bristol) National President, Pat Keegan (Wigan) National Secretary and Gerry Sherry (Liverpool) National Treasurer. Pat Keegan moved to London, became the first full time organiser and established a National Headquarters in the capital.

As there was no adult movement with its ethos and methodology in the Church, many former YCW's felt the need to establish an adult counterpart, hence the formation of the *FSA (Family and Social Apostolate)* now the *MCW (Movement of Christian Workers)* and the *Cardijn Associations*.

It is true to say that since its inception tens of thousands of young people joined the YCW inspired by Cardijn's call to 'Create a new world through a new youth' and 'Formation through Action'. Cardijn called the YCW a 'University of Life'.

So to celebrate its eightieth anniversary we invite all former members to share their experiences and memories with us! Those submitting a memory are asked to record their personal memories, feelings, experiences and reflections in no more than 500 words. Please state who you are, where and when was your first contact with the YCW and please send it to either: Michael McCann or Bernard Wynne. **Thank You**

**[michaelmccann185@btinternet.com](mailto:michaelmccann185@btinternet.com) or [bfwynne1@gmail.com](mailto:bfwynne1@gmail.com)**

The YCW has elected a new President, Kate Wilkinson. She takes over from Phil Callaghan who has been President for the last 6 years. We wish every success to Kate in her new role and Phil in the future. The celebration for YCW's 80th year in England and Wales is on 18th November 2017 from 3pm, with a Mass at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Evangelist in Salford, followed by a celebration in the Cathedral Assembly Room. All members, past and present, friends and supporters are welcome.

*The views expressed by contributors of the MCW Review do not necessarily represent the views of the MCW*

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