

East Area Women's Conference — November 2004

A personal report by R. H.

Thirty-three AWM women came together in a lovely Middle Eastern setting to listen, teach, learn and fellowship. Besides times of worship (led by our one guest) and devotional talks, five seminars* were offered: Evangelism, Spiritual Gifts, Discipleship, Intercession, and Shame and Honour.

I think that I can speak for us all when I say that we greatly desire our neighbour to know the abundant life that God Creator originally intended for us. Yet there are no easy answers on how to make His provision of Christ Redeemer known. Moving forward faithfully in love despite falls, walls or pain is our desire, however. That is why participating in the EACW was a privilege and joy.

The Shame and Honour seminar has caused me to look at Bible stories with a focus on where my neighbour might feel a spiritual need. She does not tend to consider herself as sinful, but she clearly sees herself as defiled before a Holy God. The seminar pointed out that when we think in terms of defilement, we can then communicate: 'God wants us to be pure, Issa came in the power of God to lift us from a place of shame to a place of honour, and Issa bore our shame and purified us before God'.

The time spent praying for one another in the Intercession seminar

and then again during an evening of prayer was a gift. I have already passed on to my local church prayer group the practical steps to intercession that were shared with us. God also used informal conversations to move me forward. One sister shared a *J'ha* story with me. I have been able to use this story as a beginning point, moving into yet another more important story of the Kingdom of God.

For twenty years I have been sharing with my neighbour, but I have found it so easy to get bogged down, complacent, discouraged, distracted. The input from my sisters at the conference helped me as I heard of the ways that the Spirit of God is at work in them and through them. I think that we were pleasantly surprised to find ourselves formally teaching one another. We have something to give to one another. The EAWC was an opportunity to do just that. Thanks to the planning committee's sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit, their faithful hard work and prayer, we enjoyed two days in which we were renewed, encouraged and challenged.

***Editor's note:** *We will publish articles based on several of those seminar topics. The first part of the one on evangelism is included in this issue.*