



White Ribbon Bulletin

World Woman's Christian Temperance Union

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WORLD CONVENTION EDITION - NEW WORLD OFFICERS



Front row: Sandy Harris, USA (Treasurer) – Dr. Sheela Lall, INDIA (President)
Joy Butler, AUS (Organization Secretary) – Kathleen Johnson, USA (Recording Secretary)
Back row, Vice Presidents: Merry Lee Powell, USA (1st) – Hannah Oh, KOREA (2nd)
Pastor Irja Eskelinen, FIN (3rd) Karen Edwards, AUS (4th)

Department Directors and Fieldworkers next edition

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and freedom to prisoners"

Isaiah 61:1

As interim Editor for WWCTU digital White Ribbon Bulletin, I congratulate our newly elected World Officers, Department Directors and Fieldworkers. A wonderful group of women who will need your prayerful support as they serve our beloved organization
"For God,
Home and Every Land"

Editor M
margaretostenstad45@gmail.com



Noontide prayer
Around the world, someone is always praying

President's Column

"Change your gear from surviving to thriving"

Theme for the coming year



Dr. Mrs. Sheela Lall
WCTU World President
sheelalall@midindia.com

Introduction – Many of you have seen me in world conventions since last 3-4 decades. Let me formally introduced myself. I am Dr. Mrs. Sheela Lall living in India. I am proud to be a fourth generation Christian and second generation missionary. My biological father was also my spiritual father who was a plastic surgeon trained from Christian Medical College Vellore in India then from London England. He dedicated his life to save the lepers in a remote village of India. I am the second child amongst four of the children of Dr. Douglas and Usha Diana Henry. I am married to Mr. Rajkamal David Lall whose parents Dr. Vijai and Dr. Mrs. Pushpa Lall were the one who started Mid India Christian Mission a prominent indigenous Christian Mission in India.

After 46 years of our marriage now we have three children two boys Shanit (Shawn) and Shiraaz and one girl Shiny. Two are married and blessed us with five grandchildren. David and I have started a Christian Production house a university featuring all faculties of science, math, Business, computers, arts journalism with college for teachers training and Nursing assistant training an Industrial Training for poor village children and many village education centers to bring the marginalized and underprivileged to get in to main stream of society. I have a Masters degree in Psychology and Ph. D. in Theology.

I became an active member of WCTU under my mother-in-law's guidance and served at various National and world position of WCTU board since 1989. Now as a frontline leader of this organization. I want you all to remember that you are all leaders of this organization too in your respective area. We are standing at the threshold of major changes and turbulences in our world and society.

Lets read Hebrews 12:1. *"Therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witness let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."*

What you can do -

- Make more members
- Use your church local school, police and some agencies to help you in this movement to build a support model for society.
- Raise funds to build our organization strong and start new projects at needy places.
- Start Day care, learning centers, sowing knitting centers, clean water projects etc. You can ask people to take up these projects as their birthday celebration or memorial gift.
- Encourage and involve people of your community.

Remember WCTU is a needed movement under God's banner it must go on. Be united to fulfill the divine purpose for which you have responded to His challenging and joined WCTU Remember you are not alone in it God is on your side. We are all parts of the body of Christ with different gifts and we need to unite from all corners of the world to make a better future for God Home and Every Land. Let's make a difference.

God bless! Sheela Lall



**Keynote Speaker,
19. August 2025,
Prof. Bertha K. Madras,
USA**

«Prevention: A shield against eroding drug policies»

My heartfelt thank you to Margaret Ostenstad for inviting me to speak at the World Congress. Her steadfast leadership, resolve in the midst of myriad challenges, has infused WCTU with renewed purpose and vitality. I say a warm hello all those who have journeyed from distant corners of the world and the U.S. to reflect, to learn, to share.

We face a deeper issue than a single drug problem – marijuana or alcohol or hallucinogens:

We face the shifting tides in how nations are beginning to view all drugs.

How nations are confronting choices in drug policy.

Choices that determine whether future generations inherit a society fortified by strong, resilient minds or minds weakened by the unchecked spread of drug use.

These voices for transforming drug policy are growing more aggressive, more intrusive in the halls of policy makers, wealthier so they can buy the opinions of the public and politicians. I am concerned

As a woman, a mother, a scientist, and a public health advocate, I cannot ignore how these shifting narratives may reshape the world our descendants will inherit.

What are these proposals to transform drug policies?

Across the globe, there is growing consensus that drug addiction should be treated as a disease to be remedied by a public health approach. This is progress.

But new fault lines lie elsewhere - a divide between those calling for unrestricted drug access and use, and those calling for strong drug policies rooted in science, public health, safety, our future

- They point fingers at failed policies, they promote criminal justice reform instead of improving implementation of the law,
- They claim that legal restrictions on drugs are unrealistic and doomed to failure and reject them. It is inappropriate to imprison people for drug distribution.
- They advocate for destigmatizing drug use, normalizing use as beneficial, a source of comfort, escape, and medication
- they claim abstinence should not be a goal of treatment
- They call for distributing “clean pharmaceutical grade drugs” to drug users
- They even have the audacity to blame addiction, the opioid overdose crisis on the “war on drugs”.

- Yet they go further: they attribute drug use to social determinants - drug use is rooted in failed social and drug policies, poverty, homelessness, social injustice.
- They refuse to acknowledge that easy access, normalization, and destigmatizing use are among the root causes of our current drug disaster
- Worst of all, they are skeptical, dismissive or even in denial of scientific evidence showing that drugs can be a root cause of adversity: physical, psychological behavioral, mental or social.
- Some claim that the root cause of drug use is a social – social determinants of health. This may be the case for individuals, but these do not fully explain the pull of drugs. We know hardship shapes many lives; Yet we know that millions face adversity and do not turn to drugs.

AND THIS ONE:??

Let me equip you with counterarguments Against Legalization of All Drugs

1. Public Health Risks

- **Increased Use and Availability:** Legalization tends to increase availability, reduce price, and reduce perceived risk — all of which are strong predictors of increased consumption (seen with alcohol and tobacco).
- **Addiction Prevalence:** Greater exposure means more people will experiment, and some will develop substance use disorders. For highly addictive drugs (e.g., heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine), even a modest rise in users could translate into a large increase in addicted individuals.

2. Neurobiological Vulnerabilities

- Drugs act on reward circuitry of the brain, with lasting changes in motivation, impulse control, and mood regulation.
- Adolescents, whose brains are still developing, are especially vulnerable to drug-related neuroadaptations, raising the risk of lifelong addiction.
- Legalization removes critical barriers to initiation, exposing youth to higher risk.

3. Societal and Economic Costs

- Substance use carries immense costs in healthcare, lost productivity, accidents, and social instability.
- Any tax revenue from legal sales may be dwarfed by increased public costs of addiction, hospitalizations, mental illness, accidents, and child neglect.
- Alcohol and tobacco already cost societies far more in health and social harms than they generate in tax revenue — critics argue replicating this with more dangerous drugs would be catastrophic.

4. Mental Health Concerns

- Drugs (cannabis, hallucinogens, stimulants) can trigger psychosis, depression, anxiety, or cognitive impairment, especially in vulnerable individuals.
- Broad legalization could increase the incidence of drug-induced psychiatric disorders, including schizophrenia-spectrum illnesses.

5. Risk of Commercial Exploitation

- Legalization paves the way for corporate drug industries.
- Just as the alcohol and tobacco industries have historically downplayed risks and marketed aggressively, a “Big Cocaine” or “Big Meth” could arise, prioritizing profit over health.

- Normalization would shift cultural values toward acceptance of use.

6. Weakness of the Harm-Reduction Argument

- While harm reduction can reduce overdose and disease transmission, it does not address the broader harms of addiction itself: lost ambition, fractured families, impaired learning, and violence.
- Legal, “safe” supply does not prevent misuse at higher doses or in unsafe contexts (e.g., driving, parenting, workplace hazards).

7. Impact on Vulnerable Populations

- Legalization may disproportionately harm disadvantaged communities, where addiction risks are highest due to stress, trauma, or lack of resources.
- Instead of reducing inequality, legalization could deepen cycles of poverty, illness, and incarceration linked to drug-related dysfunction.

8. International

Full legalization in one country could create spillover effects — cross-border trafficking, “drug tourism,” and pressure on neighbors.

- Weak global regulation could allow cartels and criminal enterprises to infiltrate legal markets, as seen in parts of the legal cannabis industry.

9. Moral and Social Considerations

- Opponents argue that normalization of drug use undermines social norms that promote restraint, health, and responsibility.
- Legalization may send a message to youth that drug use is safe or socially endorsed, contradicting decades of prevention efforts.

Summary:

Legalization of all drugs will increase use, addiction, and psychiatric harms, compromise safety in schools, roads, workplace. It outweighs tax benefits with health and social costs; expose societies to corporate exploitation; and disproportionately harm the young and vulnerable.

Over the past two decades, the U.S. and many nations have experienced a sea change in drug perception and policy:

- Marijuana has been repackaged as both medicine and a harmless benign form of recreation.
- The movement to legalize is gaining momentum.
- The Hemp Bill in the US essentially legalized intoxicating cannabinoids that can be made from hemp.
- Pharma convinced doctors that opioids are safe. Opioids were prescribed freely under a dangerously broad interpretation of safe if used for pain relief. Now they have been replaced by deadlier fentanyl
- Hallucinogens are now rising as the “new drug de jour”.
- Criminal justice reforms are emboldening drug distributors.

Since 1999, more than 1,000,000 Americans have died from drug overdoses. That’s more than the entire population of Copenhagen or Oslo. In 2022 alone, we lost 109,000 lives—people isolated, vulnerable, death came far too early.

- In some cities, open-air fentanyl markets operate in plain sight. Police are told to look away.

Dealers are not arrested.

- this utopian experiment has become dystopian - and women, families, communities are left behind to bear the grief, the loss of their stability, their serenity, their conscience.
- Some advocates on that side have good intentions. Others may be swayed by ideology or personal experience.
- Others are profiteers—they receive consulting fees, political donations, gifts from the industry, or income from addiction and housing services. They are not held accountable for the wreckage they leave.
- Those of us with a different vision—one rooted in prevention, health, and accountability—are dismissed. We are called outdated, pearl clutching fossils, “Drug warriors.” But we speak from a place of ethical values: we value health, safety, dignity, and the potential of the human brain.
- With normalization and commercialization, use will rise. Youth will be the first to fail and fall.
- Daily users of marijuana now exceed daily users of alcohol. Hallucinogen or psychedelic use is soaring.
- And yes, we are engaged in a human experiment without informed consent. Let us take the example of the state of Oregon.

Those with conservative views on drug policy perceive drug use/addiction as a discretionary, voluntary activity with potentially severe burdens on the individual, on families, on nations. They support the involvement of criminal justice system to curtail supply. What is the reality?

We must apply the precautionary principle: When a substance may cause serious harm, and the science is uncertain, we must err on the side of protecting lives - especially young lives.

This is our responsibility.

Let us choose a future grounded not in permissiveness, but in prevention. Not in profit, but in protection. Not in surrender, but in the strength to stand for what is right.

In an age of rising overdose deaths, widening access to potent psychoactive substances, and policy debates shaped more by ideology than evidence, we must reclaim prevention as the first, most ethical, and most effective step in any serious drug strategy.

Let us build that future—one rooted not in resignation, but in responsibility. Not in permissiveness, but in protection. Not in surrender, but in strength



World Convention

National Officers



Welcome USA



Response Finland



Guest Speaker



Guest Speaker



«Amazing Grace»



«Amazing Grace»



World Convention

Korean Report



Song leader



Wonderful reception hosted by National WCTU and surprise 80th birthday party for President Ostenstad.



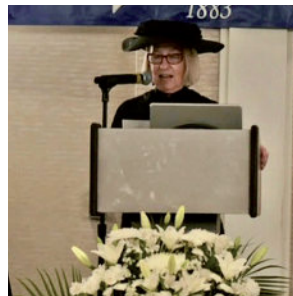
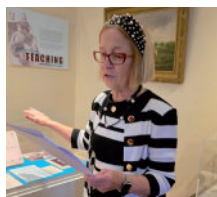
Convention Flags



Convention Speakers, Awards and delegates



Host Country's Day and Outing to Evanston





Margaret Østenstad
WCTU World President
19. August 2025

I have had the privilege of leading the WWCTU (World Woman’s Christian Temperance Union) since 2013, making me the longest serving President since World War II.

Our organization has a strong history of fighting for the protection of women at home and work; we have fought for women’s suffrage rights, shelters for abused women, women police officers, and stiffer penalties for sexual crimes against girls and women.

Our alcohol and drug policies, as well as our policies to prevent domestic violence against women and children, are great examples of our organization’s drive to love and protect our neighbours for “God, for Home, and every Land.”

We now need new members to help us fight the continuing battle of all addictive substances.

Frances Willard is quoted as saying: “God grant that we may be so divinely led that history’s verdict upon our work shall be: By God’s blessing they helped to make the world better for women and happier for all humanity.”

Other quotes by Frances Willard:

- **Mother-love works magic for humanity, but organized mother-love works miracles.**
- **The three requisites for success are ability, availability and responsibility.**
- **Alone, we can do little. Separated, we are the units of weakness; but together we become battle warriors.**

Unity is very important as is illustrated by Lady Henry Somerset in 1898 when she said: “May God grant that we may carry on our work in that spirit of unity which means that we are always ready to attribute the best and highest motives to each other, and that even where we may differ, we may be ready to understand that such differences are brought about not by a deflection from principle but by a different angle of vision.”

The history of the WCTU in the United States is remarkable. Even today, it is the key to solutions because they worked in unity recognizing the challenges of the day and acting on them.

For those of you who are here for the first time, the WWCTU (World Woman’s Christian Temperance Union) was founded in 1883 and is the oldest continuously existing women’s organization in the world. WWCTU is unique as it is a woman’s organization with men as proud honorary members without voting privileges. World WCTU has membership in 62 countries for which the existence of the WCTU in the United States is of pivotal importance. You are the anchor point which UNITES world as one body. Without you we would exist for a while as individual countries drifting along without common goals and purposes. Without the WWCTU, WWCTU would eventually implode, and no one wants this to happen.

Being UNITED by faith in God against the evils such as alcohol and other drug consumption is our greatest strength.

Around the world, amazing women of God do incredible work with little or no funds. In the World White Ribbon Bulletin, Anne Bergen reports on the inspiring work reported on with supporting photos. It is so encouraging and very moving.

Members worldwide frequently meet people who are in the midst of the pain and chaos caused by drugs. Some try to regain control of their lives, but their efforts often fail, reminding us of the importance of God’s help. In many situations, a caring neighbour may serve as God’s most important tool for helping a struggling individual. God’s love is the source of all our

ine to preserve the past and lighten the future”

efforts to help, support and comfort others, and in an encounter between people, this love can be seen as genuine interaction, participation, listening and respect. Each of us is called to be messengers of God's love in this often-cruel world.

Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched a new report on the health labelling of alcohol. The report recommends statutory health labelling on all alcohol products, and points in particular to the need for information on cancer risk. Alcohol hinders development. Many people see alcohol as something positive, but most also see the downsides in the form of abuse, violence and health problems. It is perhaps in the richer parts of the world that it is clearest that there are problems linked to alcohol - but it is also a growing problem in many low- and middle-income countries. Some of the biggest public health problems in the world are caused, or exacerbated, by alcohol. Alcohol creates economic problems, both for individuals and societies, and is an important factor to take into account when working with poverty reduction.

Alcohol limits people's opportunities for personal development and independence. Alcohol causes people to become less involved in politics. People have poorer conditions for education, poorer health and increased social problems. High alcohol consumption leads to economic vulnerability and social vulnerability in both rich and poor countries. But when margins are small and social safety nets are weak, people are hit harder. Lower alcohol consumption does not solve all developmental problems, but many problems become easier to solve.

WCTU has reached out to different schools and given presentations, teachings and motivational speeches to students and prayed for them. Most of them signed the Freedom From Alcohol and Drugs Form. Information leaflets were translated into the local language and given to young people in churches, youth groups and on buses. The Tanzanian President, Pastor Matilda Yared Dondo, concluded her report with: *“We know prayer has been a silent weapon that accomplishes much at the throne of grace. We believe that through this ministry God is going to release many who are bound.”* Amen!

The only way light can grow is by passing it on.

Dr Bertha K. Madras PhD (the honorable) Professor of psychobiology at Harvard Medical School
Highlights from her key note speech on Cannabis at the Nordic Summit in November.

Cannabis

In her introduction she said: ***“We, the world are at a crossroads in drug policy.***

I come here today, at the Nordic Summit, to focus on marijuana, but cannot in good conscience, dismiss changing drug views, policies, laws that are the root of current changing views on marijuana.

Most pundits agree on the need to treat drug addiction, that addiction can be viewed as a public health issue. But drug policy views are entering a new phase, a dispute between those advocating unrestricted drug use and others supporting restricted access/use.

Development projects will be better if they work against alcohol problems. If there is significant alcohol use in a village or community, it affects the economy, health, levels of violence, gender equality and the situation of the children...”

Nelson Mandela was right when he stated, *“Education is the most powerful weapon you can utilize to transform the world.”* Yes, the solution to any issue lies in education. Education is essential if you want to progress and succeed.

Einstein once said, *“Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think.”*

"Let your light shine to preserve the past and lighten the future"

These words encapsulate a fundamental truth about education: it goes beyond the mere accumulation of knowledge and focuses on nurturing critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving skills. You know as a parent or grandparent that education is about more than just academics. It's about nurturing the whole child – mind, body, and spirit.

In closing my last speech after 12 years of service, let me leave you in the secure knowledge that God has everything under control. He has given me strength to stand with my Board members, especially Anne Bergen and Dr. Jung Joo Kim to forge solid foundations for the continuation of our work. Ephesians 2:20 "...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

In the Bible, the number 12 has significant symbolism, linked to God's plan and election. It represents the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of Jesus, and points to fellowship, leadership, and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.

May God bless and encourage you in all your endeavors for His Service and the WCTU mission. WCTUers have a banner over them.. His banner over you is LOVE!.

In the SONG OF SOLOMON 2:4.

"He brought me to the banqueting hall, and his banner over me was love."

Remember this if you sometimes feel that you are weak and weary, the song we just heard, "You raise me up", can be a motivation to trust God and continue to do His work:

*When I am down and, oh, my soul, so weary
When troubles come and my heart burdened be
Then I am still and wait here in the silence
Until You come and sit awhile with me
You raise me up so I can stand on mountains
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas
I am strong when I am on Your shoulders
You raise me up to more than I can be.*

God, who said, **"Let light shine out of darkness,"** make his light shine in your hearts to give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. May those suffering cry out

"Restore us, Lord God Almighty;

make your face shine on us,

that we may be saved." Psalm 80:19

BE BLESSED IN HIS SERVICE

Margaret



After 12 years a President Emeritus leaving after a wonderful Convention Banquet. Thanks and blessings to the Host Country, USA.



CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

Delicious food!



Memorial Service led by Bunny Gallidora



Signal Press

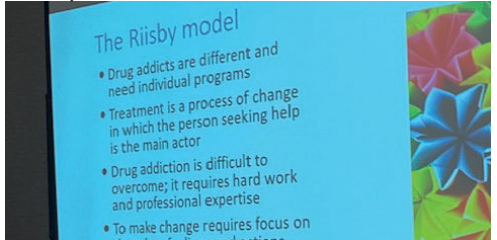


Attentive audience at all sessions



All had fun in the break modelling clothes from the Philippines - even 97 year old Norma Taylor

Norway's treatment centre



Holy Communion



The Body and Blood of Christ after the Banquet.

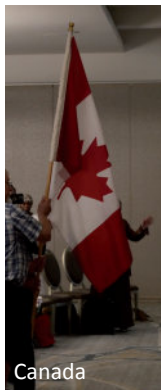




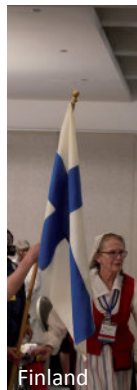
Australia



Cambodia



Canada



Finland



Ghana



Guatemala



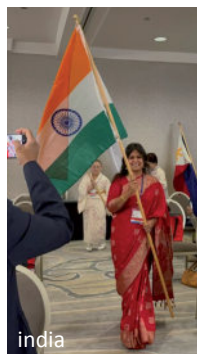
Temperance



Christian

Norway

USA



India



New Zealand



Papua New Guinea



Japan



South Korea



Philippines



Uganda

Photos:
Thanks to Dora,
Bunny, Merry
Lee, Manny and
Rosemarie 🇺🇸