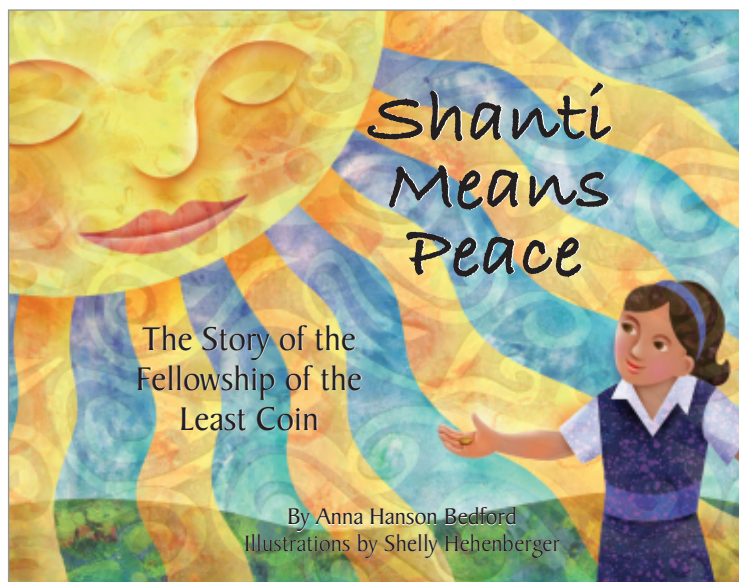


# Resources for *Shanti Means Peace*— *The Story of the Fellowship of the Least Coin*



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# A Song to Celebrate the Fellowship of the Least Coin and its Founder, Shanti Solomon



## “A Little Bird Told Me”

Verse 1.

As I was walking down the street,  
I saw a penny at my feet;  
I picked it up, but could not see  
How it was any use to me.

**Chorus (repeat between each verse)**

**Round and round your Least Coin goes;  
Love and prayer for all it shows!**

Verse 2.

“Don’t be so sure!” a small voice said—  
A bird was sitting on my head—  
“What Shanti started long ago  
Has never stopped to grow and grow.”

**Round and round your Least Coin goes;  
Love and prayer for all it shows!**

Verse 3.

“On every continent today,  
Whenever Christian women pray,  
They always give their pennies, too,  
The way that Shanti said to do.”

**Round and round your Least Coin goes;  
Love and prayer for all it shows!**

Verse 4.

As, one by one, the pennies mount,  
What they achieve can really count!  
“In Thailand, you should really know it,  
Kids eat fresh food and help mom grow it!”

**Round and round your Least Coin goes;  
Love and prayer for all it shows!**

Verse 5.

“In Togo, ladies  
manage money  
To sell their handmade pots, or honey;  
They celebrate with dance and song—  
They never fear they’ll count change wrong!”

**Round and round your Least Coin goes;  
Love and prayer for all it shows!**

Verse 6.

In Guatemala, I’ve been told  
Shy Mayan women now are bold  
To teach and preach and spread God’s word—  
Or that’s the story I have heard!”

**Round and round your Least Coin goes;  
Love and prayer for all it shows!**

Verse 7.

“So when you love and when you pray  
For needy families far away,  
Your Least Coin gift shows how you care,  
And brings a smile both here and there!”

**Round and round your Least Coin goes;  
Love and prayer for all it shows!**

Verse 8.

The bird flew off and home I ran;  
To save my pennies is my plan  
But, even more, to work and pray  
To build a peaceful world today.

**Round and round your Least Coin goes;  
Love and prayer for all it shows!**

# Shanti Logo Pattern

## What you need

Ruler, pencil, scissors, compass or other means of drawing circles, 1 brad, 1 straight pin

Colored construction or craft paper in the colors below, or the colors of your choice:

- 1 brown, black or dark blue 8" square
- 1 medium blue 7" circle
- 1 green 7" circle
- 1 white, pink or light purple 7" circle
- 1 yellow 1 1/2" circle

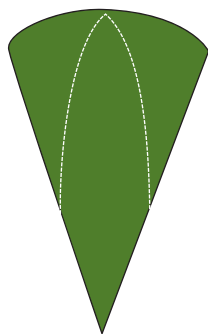
## What you do

1. **Brown, black or dark blue square**—Cut one brown, black or dark blue 8" square. This is the muddy pond. In pencil, mark the exact center of the square with a dot.
2. **Blue circle**—Cut one blue 7" circle. This is the clear water that surrounds the lotus. In pencil, mark the exact center of the square with a dot.
3. **Green circle**—Cut one green 7" circle. This is the leaves of the lotus. In pencil, mark the exact center of the square with a dot.

Fold the green circle in half, then fold in half again, then fold into fourths. Now you now have a "cone" shape.

To make leaves, lightly draw a curved line along the outside as in this diagram. Trim on the curved line.

Open up leaf "cone" and you now have 8 green leaves.



4. **White, pink or light purple circle**—

Cut one white, pink or light purple 7" circle. This will be the lotus. In pencil, mark the exact center of the square with a dot.

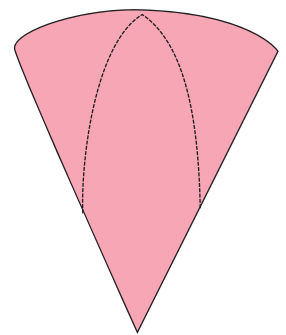
Fold the circle in half, then into thirds. Fold the first third over, the second third under.

To make the lotus petals, lightly draw a curved line along the outside as in this diagram. Trim on the curved line.

Open up the lotus "cone" and you now have 6 lotus petals.

If you wish, you can draw the "praying hands" on each petal. Use a pencil or fine point pen.

5. **Yellow circle**—This is the heart (pistil) of the lotus. With pencil or crayon, draw a 6-petal flower on the 1 1/2 inch circle, then cut it out.
  6. **Assembly**—Line up the parts in order—pistil, petals, leaves, clear water, muddy water.
- Keep them together by piercing them through the exact center onto a straight pin. Then push a brad through all 5 layers and secure at the back.
- You now have a lotus in a muddy pond—a modified version of the FLC logo.



## More Fun with Padmini—Crafts

### African Proverbs

*"A wise person who knows proverbs reconciles difficulties." (Yoruba)*

*"Proverbs are the daughters of experience." (Senegal)*

*People in many countries use wise sayings that have been handed down from the past to sum up their values. We call them proverbs. Can you think of some from your country? Examples: "A penny saved is a penny earned;" "If you want a friend, be one." Can you think of others?*

*Read the African proverbs below. Put an (x) by the sayings that describe the way in which the*

*Fellowship of the Least Coin works.*

*Try putting it into your own words.*

#### **Ethiopia**

1. When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.
2. If you offend, ask for pardon; if you are offended, forgive.

#### **Ivory Coast**

3. Mutual affection gives each his share.
4. It takes two to make a quarrel.
5. A little leaven smoothes away the whole lump.
6. Talking with one another is loving one another.
7. Seeing is different from being told.

#### **Nigeria**

8. Seeing is better than hearing.
9. Fine words do not produce food.
10. Not to know is bad; not to wish to know is worse.
11. Before healing others, heal yourself.
12. The opportunity that God sends does not wake the one who is asleep.



#### **Sierra Leone**

13. To try and to fail is not laziness.
14. Quarrels end, but words once spoken never die.
15. To be without a friend is to be poor indeed.

#### **Tanzania**

16. Do not mend your neighbor's fence before looking to your own.

#### **Zululand**

17. A word uttered cannot be taken back.
18. A half loaf is better than no bread.
19. A fault confessed is half redressed.

#### **Sudan**

20. A little shrub may grow into a big tree.

Leslau, Charlotte and Wolf, compilers: *African Proverbs*, Peter Pauper Press, Inc., 1985.



## African Proverbs—continued

*Proverbs usually have more than one meaning. Below are suggested meanings of the 20 African proverbs above.*

*How do they compare with your ideas?*

1. Many “least coins” can overcome hunger and poverty.
2. Reconciliation begins by saying, “I’m sorry!”
3. Two friends want to share good things equally between them.
4. Even if someone is angry, there’s no fight if you don’t get angry yourself.
5. One peaceful person helps everyone calm down.
6. We show our love to someone by listening to what they need to tell us.
7. and 8. Find out for yourself what is wrong instead of just listening to what others say about it.
9. Actions speak louder than words—share food with hungry people.
10. Don’t let the good things you enjoy make you blind and deaf to the needs of others.
11. We pray for peace in our own hearts before we pray for peace with others.
12. Praying and giving a least coin awakens our hearts to the needs of others.
13. It’s better to try and fail than not to try at all—next time you may succeed.
14. Think carefully before you criticize someone else’s behavior.
15. True riches are found in the love of family and friends all around the world, not in wealth.
16. First ask God to forgive you—before you ask enemies to forgive each other. See Matt. 7:3.
17. Think before you speak; don’t add fuel to the fire.
18. Even if you don’t have much to share, be generous anyway.
19. If you wrong someone, admit it; they will forgive you quickly.
20. Shanti Solomon’s idea of offering a prayer and a least coin to bring peace among people has spread to over 30 countries.



## African Drum

*Drums are popular instruments in Africa where every country has its own version. In Togo, drums are called tamboni. Padmini danced to their rhythm when she joined the Togolese women’s celebration.*

*Drums can be made from many round, hollow objects, such as cooking pots, oatmeal boxes, or cardboard tubes.*

*If you have a flower pot, try making the one below.*

### Things You'll Need

Terracotta pot, 4" to 6" diameter  
Paints  
Paper

### Instructions

1. Paint your pot with the design of your choice. African designs often feature bright colors and distinct shapes like angled lines.
2. If making more than one drum, paint any other pots you will be using while the first pot dries.
3. Trace the open end of the pot on a piece of paper, then draw a circle with a radius approximately 2" larger around the circle created by tracing.
4. Cut the paper around the outer circle, then fray the outside of the circle by making cuts from the edge of the circle towards the center, stopping 1/4" from the circle created by tracing. You should fray the outside so that there are twelve different frayed portions.
5. Center the piece of paper over the dried pot’s open end, and fold the frayed edges around the lip of the pot tightly.
6. Secure the paper to the pot using the rubber band, and hit the paper with your finger tips to play your drum the proper way.

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Read more: *How to Make African Drums* | eHow  
[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_5391334\\_make-african-drums.html#ixzz2X4pfc4UI](http://www.ehow.com/how_5391334_make-african-drums.html#ixzz2X4pfc4UI)

# Handmade Paper

*Mothers and children at Wildflower Home make beautiful paper which they cut into cards and decorate with leaf prints. If you want to try making paper, follow the directions below or go to [papermaking.net](http://papermaking.net) or [ehow.com](http://ehow.com).*

## Things You'll Need

Bucket

Water

Paper scraps (no shiny colored paper)  
or newspaper, shredded

Potato masher, electric blender, or your fingers

Shallow pan (such as dish pan, casserole dish)

Piece of window screen cut to fit in bottom of pan

Hard, flat object, such as a spatula, trowel,  
brick, or the palm of your hand

More water

Small amount of food coloring or  
poster paint (optional)

Old dish towel or piece of cotton cloth

Iron, hair dryer or strong sunshine

## Instructions

1. Shred the paper into the bucket, add water slowly.
2. Squeeze the mix with your hands or mash it with a potato masher, or mix small amounts in a blender.
3. Let sit for awhile.
4. Squeeze some more, then spread the pulpy mix over the piece of screen in the shallow pan.
5. Add water to cover. Add a few drops of coloring to the water, if you wish.
6. Press down with your hand or any flat, hard object until pulp is smooth.



7. Carefully lift the screen out of the water and allow the flattened pulp (wet paper) on it to drip.
8. Place on a dishtowel; fold towel over wet paper.
9. Iron the towel with a hot iron to flatten and dry the wet paper under it.
10. Or move uncovered wet paper to a sunny spot to dry. A hair dryer speeds up drying.

## What You Get

After it has dried completely, you will have a recycled piece of paper that you can use to write on or decorate. Your paper can be re-made several times, if you wish.



## Make Leaf Prints

*Children at Wildflower Home and their mothers make leaf print cards to sell. Hunt for leaves near your home and see how you can make a leaf print. Do you think the leaves near your home are the same as the ones in Bo Sang, Thailand? Why or why not?*



### *Follow these steps*

1. Gather supplies: newspaper, poster paint, paint brushes, water for thinning paint and rinsing brushes, art paper or construction paper in a size big enough for the design you choose, leaves of different shapes and sizes.
2. Spread your paint supplies and your art paper onto the newspaper.
3. Choose a leaf, turn it over so the underside is up, and apply poster paint in any color all over the surface.
4. Turn the leaf over and place it where you want it on the art paper. Press down firmly with your hand.
5. Remove the leaf; you have a pretty leaf print on the art paper. Add more shapes and colors, if you wish.





## Cooking with Padmini—Recipes

### Recipes from Thailand, West Africa and Guatemala

#### *Thai Carrot Coconut Lime Soup*

##### **Ingredients**

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tsp. chili paste
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 1 tbsp. chopped, fresh cilantro
- 1 tsp. fresh, grated ginger
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 large potatoes, peeled & chopped
- large carrots, peeled & chopped
- 3 cups vegetable broth
- 7 cups coconut milk
- ¼ cup lime juice
- 2 tbsp. chopped, fresh cilantro

##### **Preparation**

Heat oil in a large, heavy pot over medium heat. Stir and cook chili paste, cumin, and 1 tablespoon of cilantro until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add ginger, onion, and garlic; cook until onions are soft and translucent, about 5 mins. Place the potatoes and carrots into the pot with onion mixture and cook for an additional 5 mins.

Pour the vegetable broth and coconut milk over the cooked vegetables. Turn heat to medium-high and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 30 to 45 minutes, or until potatoes and carrots are soft.

Remove the pot from heat and stir in the lime juice. Working in batches, puree soup with masher or blender until smooth. Serve hot or chilled, garnished with remaining cilantro.

**Serves 8**



#### *West African Ginger Drink*

##### **Ingredients**

- 3 large ginger roots
- 6 limes
- 2–3 cups of water, sparkling or still
- 1 heaped tbsp. peppercorns
- 1 heaped tbsp. raw sugar

##### **Preparation**

Leaving skin on, chop the ginger into small pieces. Chop lime with rind into small chunks.

In a blender, put more ginger than lime and add enough water to be able to blend it. Taste the mixture as you go and add more lime or ginger as needed.

Strain the mixture through a sieve into a bowl and squeeze remaining juice from the pulp.

In the blender add peppercorns and sugar—then return the strained liquid to the blender and blend until smooth.

Once more, strain the mixture through a sieve into a saucepan.

Bring the liquid in the saucepan to a boil. As soon as it has reached boiling point, take it off the heat and allow to cool.

Pour liquid over ice and add a little cold water and drink!

Yield: 2–3 cups

**Serves 4**



## **Guatemalan Guacamole**

### **Ingredients**

- 2 ripe avocados
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 scallions, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 medium ripe tomato, blanched, peeled, & chopped
- 1 jalapeño, minced
- salt and pepper
- ½ tsp. cumin
- ½ tsp. mild chili powder

### **Preparation**

1. Get a small, tightly sealable container (large enough to accommodate 2 or 3 cups).
2. Roll lime against a hard surface to soften; squeeze juice into the container; remove any seeds.
3. Add all other ingredients, except avocados.
4. Cover container and shake vigorously to mix.
5. Allow to chill to blend flavors.
6. One-half hour before serving, mash avocados into the mixture with a fork.
7. Stir to blend thoroughly.
8. Place a layer of plastic wrap directly over surface of guacamole, eliminating as much air as possible.
9. Cover container and chill for about ½ hour before serving for more flavor blending.



## **Super Simple Coconut Drink**

### **Ingredients**

- Coconut water—1 large glass
- juice of half a lemon
- sugar according to taste
- meat of one coconut, chopped fine
- crushed ice as much as you want
- very finely cut mint leaves

### **Preparation**

Pour the coconut water, lemon juice, coconut meat and sugar into a blender and blend briefly. Or, mix well by hand. Fill the glass with crushed ice and pour the mix over it.  
Top with freshly chopped mint.

**Serves 2**

**Enjoy!**

### **Sources**

Thai Carrot Coconut Lime Soup: <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/carrot-coconut-lime-soup/>  
West African Ginger Drink: <http://www.sbs.com.au/food/recipes/west-african-ginger-drink>  
Guatemalan Guacamole: <http://recipeofhealth.com/recipe/guacamole-103041rb>  
Super Simple Coconut Drink: [http://pot-puree.blogspot.com/2009\\_11\\_01\\_archive.html](http://pot-puree.blogspot.com/2009_11_01_archive.html)

## Shanti Solomon's Life Story— A Summary for Children

My mother's grandfather was the headman of a village in Uttar Pradesh, India.

Some Anglican missionaries told him about Jesus and our whole family became Christians.

Although Mom's brothers were sent to a Christian school, since she was a girl, Mom could not go.

My dad was an only child from a Hindu/Christian family. His parents sent him to Parker's Boys' School in Moradabad. He became friends with my mom's brothers there. He became a Christian, but did not want to hurt his parents, so he kept quiet about it.

My dad was married three times. The first time, he was only nine, and his bride was seven; but she died of small pox soon after. The second time, his wife died in childbirth and her baby died in a flu epidemic.

Then his parents died, and Dad was all alone, but he told everyone about his faith.

Friends told Dad about my mom, and they got married even though she was only 14 and he was 34. They were happy together. He got an important job as a regional revenue officer and rode to work every day on his horse. Mom and Dad had 12 children, but nine died when they were small.

Dad's love of Jesus made his family angry. They would not share the family inheritance with him. Dad went to court, but it decided against him. So Dad went to the High Court and, after a long struggle, he won. Dad was delighted. "Now we'll be at peace," he said. I was born right at this time—June 10, **1920**. My parents decided to call me 'Shanti,' meaning peace had come at last to our house.

But he was wrong. His cousin bribed a shopkeeper to put poison in the milk he sold Dad to drink at lunchtime. Dad died almost at once and his family cremated him. Mom did not know what to do and she had two little kids and six-weeks-old me to think about.

Dad's family said, "Join our faith or leave this house!" Mom decided to leave with only a little money. But she hid all the legal papers about her property in a tin box and took it with her. She waded across a big river and we arrived at the pastor's house 20 miles away, soaking wet and tired out.

Next day, the pastor sent us to the Badaun Mission, and the missionaries helped Mom and kept us safe.



Shanti Solomon with samples of the least coins collected by FLC.

My mom had pneumonia, so I was sent to Babyfold, an orphanage run by missionaries. I was there for two years, while my mother studied to become a teacher. As soon as she was earning a salary, Mom sold the family property and used the money to buy a house and make a home for all of us.

Mom was strict, but fair with us kids. When I was in 5th Grade, I wanted to play the part of a glamorous lady in a play, but my mom said, "No." She explained that I would shock her non-Christian relatives. She taught me to treat everyone kindly—rich, poor, old, young—even if I didn't like them!

I went to Lal Bagh Girl's Boarding School for secondary education, then to Isabella Thoburn College—a famous Methodist women's college in Lucknow. I earned a B.A. in Geography and a B.Ed. In college I won a gold medal for storytelling, and that skill was a big help when I started teaching at Debra Dun. This was a quiet town with lots of retired people. They could not believe we young teachers wore shorts to play games!

Before I started teaching, I told my mom I wanted to buy her a present with my first salary. I kept asking her what she wanted, and I kept telling her all the things I wanted for myself—especially a pair of high-heeled shoes! Mom wouldn't say what to buy for her, but, after I left for my new job, she wrote to me. "Please give one-fifth of your first salary to Babyfold. They took care of you for two years without pay," she said. I was shocked. Now I couldn't buy the smart shoes; I couldn't even buy toothpaste! My best friend shared her toothpaste with me, and I sent the money to Babyfold as Mom wanted.

India became independent from Britain on August 15, **1947**. Muslims were expected to move to Pakistan and



Hindus to India. It was a terrible time! Debra Dun was under curfew for five months and our school was closed. We teachers had to keep the children calm and busy. In the daytime we could do it, but at night we were all scared, especially when we heard gunshots outside.

After three years at Debra Dun, I was offered a job at All Saints, high in the hills at Nainital. I taught Psychology and School Management to teachers-in-training. I loved it there and got in a lot of mischief with my friends from many countries. One day, for fun, an English girl and I walked to the Governor's House, and the guard told us to put our names in a book if we wanted an appointment to see Governor Sarojini Naidu and visit her gardens. We forgot about it, but a few days later an invitation came.

Mrs. Naidu offered us tea, sandwiches and cake. She whispered to me, "Are you happy in your school? Are there many Indians, or mostly English teachers?" She thought I had come with a complaint! I was ashamed of myself, but Mrs. Naidu smiled when I confessed. "I wish I had more visitors like you!" she said. She gave us bouquets of flowers to take home and packages of dried fruit. We could hardly wait to recount our adventure and share our goodies with our friends.

I left All Saints School in **1949** because I wanted to work on a Master's degree. I joined the Indian Village Service, and there I met Reuben Solomon. My friend, his half-sister, introduced me. Reuben was 15 years older than I, but we married and had 10 happy years together at home and at work before he got sick.

In **1956**, a few years after the Korean War, I was chosen to join international Presbyterian women on the Pacific Fellowship Mission. The idea was to visit Asian countries that had suffered during wartime and seek forgiveness and reconciliation. Getting a passport wasn't easy in those days. A policeman even came to my house to make sure I was who I said I was! All the neighbors thought I was running away!

I was scared to fly for the first time. We were to go first to America, and I was to stay in people's homes. "What will Americans think of me?" I wondered. I decided to take as a hostess gift a clay doll whose head was on a spring that wobbled and made her nod up and down.

When I stumbled off the plane in New York, a smiling lady, Dr. Margaret Shannon, met me with a big hug and a kiss. This was something new for me! "What a charming young lady you are!" she said. Margaret had to leave next day and I left soon after for three weeks visiting black and white families in their homes and churches. I left Margaret's gift on a shelf with a note:



From left to right, Dorothy Wagner, Shanti Solomon and Shirin Samuel.

"Give this little clay doll a push, and she will express my gratitude to you for your kindness."

After three weeks, Margaret Shannon joined the Pacific Fellowship Mission team and we set off for Northeast Asia. We soon learned that forgiving is very hard. Everyone had suffered so much. In Japan, the women



Members of the Pacific Fellowship Mission team lead by Margaret Shannon, second from the left, on a team visit to Hong Kong, 1956.

who met us brought flowers for me, but said "We do not welcome you!" to the Americans. In the Philippines, women said, "We will never welcome the Japanese!" Hurt feelings were very strong. I felt it myself when I applied for a visa to South Korea. The President of India had just agreed with the United Nations to divide North and South Korea. So, as an Indian, I was not welcome there!

I had to stay in the Philippines while the rest of the international team went to Korea. I thought how Jesus forgave everyone who hurt him, and how he asks us to forgive one another. It is so hard to do! But as we ask God to forgive us for hurting others, God will help us to forgive others who have hurt us.

I shared these thoughts with my team when they came back from Korea. Together we all decided to start a movement for peace and reconciliation. We pledged that

each of us, when hurt by another person, would kneel down and pray for strength to forgive that person. We would begin with ourselves and start a ripple of peace that would spread throughout the world.

Forgiving is a costly action. I thought that, if we set aside a small amount of money each time we prayed, it would strengthen our commitment to be peacemakers. Knowing that all around the world others were doing the same thing would bind us together in one purpose. We decided to call our movement, "The Fellowship of the Least Coin." Every person—rich or poor—could participate because we were all giving the same amount of money, the smallest currency of our country.



Shirin Samuel, Shanti Solomon, and Dorothy Wagner celebrate the Fellowship of the Least Coin. The plaque was created by women in Canada.

With Margaret Shannon's great publicity, the Fellowship of the Least Coin soon spread around the world. Women in India kept their least coins in clay pots with a slit at the top; Yugoslavian women used matchboxes, and in Venezuela, women used plastic boxes shaped like a cowboy's boot. Margaret showed me that a vision needs a practical shape in order to spread and grow. She was a person who built others up, and I realized that it is important to help everyone be their very best selves.

My husband died in **1960**. When he was very ill, Rueben told me that he knew God was calling me to a life of service after his life was over. When he went to be with God, I was so sad I felt life was over for me, too. But, one day soon after, my niece came running to me with a telegram. It was from the United Church of North India (UCNI) in Mainpurie, asking me to come right away and work for them in the Literature Department. Since I was so tired, they first gave me a whole month's holiday in the mountains. Once I got strong again, I went to work and enjoyed it. I thought I would stay on that job forever.

In **1964**, we learned that the United Presbyterian Church, USA, could no longer send money to pay for local pastors' salaries. UCNI asked them for three more years' salary all at once. I said, "No, that's wrong!" I knew I had the skills to earn my living, and I did not want to depend

on money from overseas. I sold all the books in the Literature Department, gave Rs. 30,000/- to UCNI, and then closed the Department.

I found a job teaching Psychology to nurses at the local hospital, but took time out to attend a conference in Rome. While I was there, a cable came from UCNI saying, "Hurry home! We want you to be head of Women's Work for the whole of UCNI." I had to think about that. I said, "I will do it only if you agree to make Women's Work financially self-supporting in five years." Of course, UCNI said yes—but I had to raise the money myself!

I made a plan that each congregation's women's group would contribute to a central fund, according to its means. We reached our target and were self-supporting in five years! But it was really hard. In **1970** women from seven Protestant denominations came together as one. We called ourselves "The Women's Fellowship for Christian Service (WFCS)." I was proud that women leaders paid their own way to a celebration at All Saints Cathedral in Nagpur.

Just one month later, I became the Executive Secretary of the Asian Church Women's Conference (ACWC). I was in touch with many women's groups throughout Asia, so, in **1971**, I began managing the IFLC least coins that they collected. The fund kept getting bigger! Too much for one person to manage! We decided to let the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, take care of it. They still do, but an IFLC committee always decides how the money will be used.

In **1973**, while I was working for ACWC, I got an invitation from Korea to come and speak at a conference. I wrote back and told them what happened to me in 1956. "That won't happen again!" they promised. I packed my things, got a visa easily, and boarded a plane to Seoul.

At the airport, the customs official asked me to open my suitcase. Full of fear, I did so. "Why are you importing these long strips of cloth?" he asked. He had never seen a sari. I opened my long winter coat to show him. That's a pretty dress!" he said. "Yes," I replied, "and no sewing!" He laughed and waved me through.

What a welcome awaited me! The President of South Korea was a Christian and his wife was active in the churchwomen's movement. They invited me to stay with them for two days' luxurious rest before I went on to my conference.

Visiting Communist countries was scary. One time, I went to East Germany carrying a suitcase full of World Day of Prayer leaflets and Gospel portions. I was terrified I would have to declare them, but the customs official said, "Welcome, lady from Nehru's country!" and passed me through. The government allowed no more than five



people to gather at one time, so I was taken to a house with the lights off and curtains closed. In twos and threes, people kept trickling in.

The room was full, but I never saw their faces. I asked them, "What will you do with this material your friends have sent?" They said, "We will learn the Gospel portions by heart at night, and teach them to Nursery School children by day." I was not sure I would be that brave. Before I left, they gave me a bottle of homemade wine and a loaf of homemade bread. I took them to West Germany, and we used them for Communion; the two parts of Germany were united in worship.

I had another adventure in **1979**. I went to Moscow for a conference on the International Year of the Child. At that time, Russia was still a Communist country. Waiting for the return flight from Leningrad to Moscow, I was chatting to a lady from Switzerland and almost missed the plane. I ran up the ramp and all the seats were taken.

I finally squeezed into one next to a Russian woman, who told me she was a translator for the President of Mexico and his wife, seated across the aisle. She whispered that she was a Christian and asked if I could get a Spanish/Russian Bible for her. But I should give it to someone coming to Moscow; if it came by mail, the government would take it away. I slipped her my English New Testament under cover of my shawl, and said I would try my best.

In Geneva, Brigelia Bam, the South African head of the Women's Desk of the World Council of Churches at that time, said, "Shanti, you shall not have all the stars in your crown! I will get this Bible and see that it gets to your new friend!" I laughed and happily agreed.

Meanwhile, IFLC money kept on growing! And so did the circle of members around the world. So in **1981**,\* when we celebrated IFLC's Silver Jubilee (25th birthday) in Manila, Philippines, we had women coming with banners, songs, and stories from 40 countries. And we had a new emblem by Rayann Ma of Hong Kong. It was a circle of praying hands, shaped like a lotus flower with a plum blossom at the center. A booklet of prayers from many countries and churches was also introduced at this meeting. I was honored that the assembly invited me to be IFLC's first full-time staff person.

While I was still in Manila, I went to see Nicerata Solomon who, in 1956, had encouraged me to go ahead with my

idea for the Fellowship of the Least Coin. She had said, "My daughter, it is a unique idea. May the world be blessed with its significance." Now 93, she was as frail as an egg shell. She took out a little blue purse that she called "God's purse" and gave me all the pesos—her least coins—in it. Propped up in her bed with pillows, she prayed that women everywhere would join in the Fellowship happily, heartily, cheerfully.

For six happy years I was Executive Secretary of the IFLC. At last, though, it was time for someone else to lead. I was so happy when Shireen Samuel of Pakistan came to take my place. Shortly after, in **1988** I was awarded an honorary doctorate of theology by the Academy of Ecumenical Indian Theology and Church Administration in Madras.

In 1991, I decided to make my home in Delhi and I chose St. Stephen's Home, which was started by missionaries years in 1891. Three friends and I settled there to be a fellowship of women that devote themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ and serve others for Christ's sake. We fixed up the old place simply, but comfortably.

My kind friend, Margaret Shannon, had left me some money for my retirement, and I used it to build a large dining room. It came in handy when visitors from all around the world started coming to St. Stephen's to rest and pray. Then, one day, we were asked to start a children's school in our front garden, so their parents would not send them out begging on the Delhi streets all day.

We couldn't say no. We had a tin shelter built, a water connection made, and soon we were welcoming two big bus loads of children—500 in two shifts—every weekday. Now we listen to the happy voices of children reciting lessons, or singing and drums beating. When we want some quiet, we go to the back garden!

In **1995** I went to Vancouver, Canada to help plan IFLC's 40th anniversary. It was my last trip abroad, a tiring journey. But my tiredness vanished when I saw how the International Fellowship of the Least Coin had spread. I thanked God for the many women who make it possible. The International Fellowship of the Least Coin is indeed like the lotus flower that grows pure and white in a muddy pond. Our praying hands and loving hearts spread peace throughout the world.

## Source

*Shanti Solomon, A Legend and a Legacy*, ISPCK, 2004

\*Date differs from p. 172 of *Celebrating the Legacy*

Bio Source—*Solomon, Shanti A Legend and a Legacy*, ISPCK, 2004

## More from Shanti Solomon

### 20 Questions for Shanti's Bio

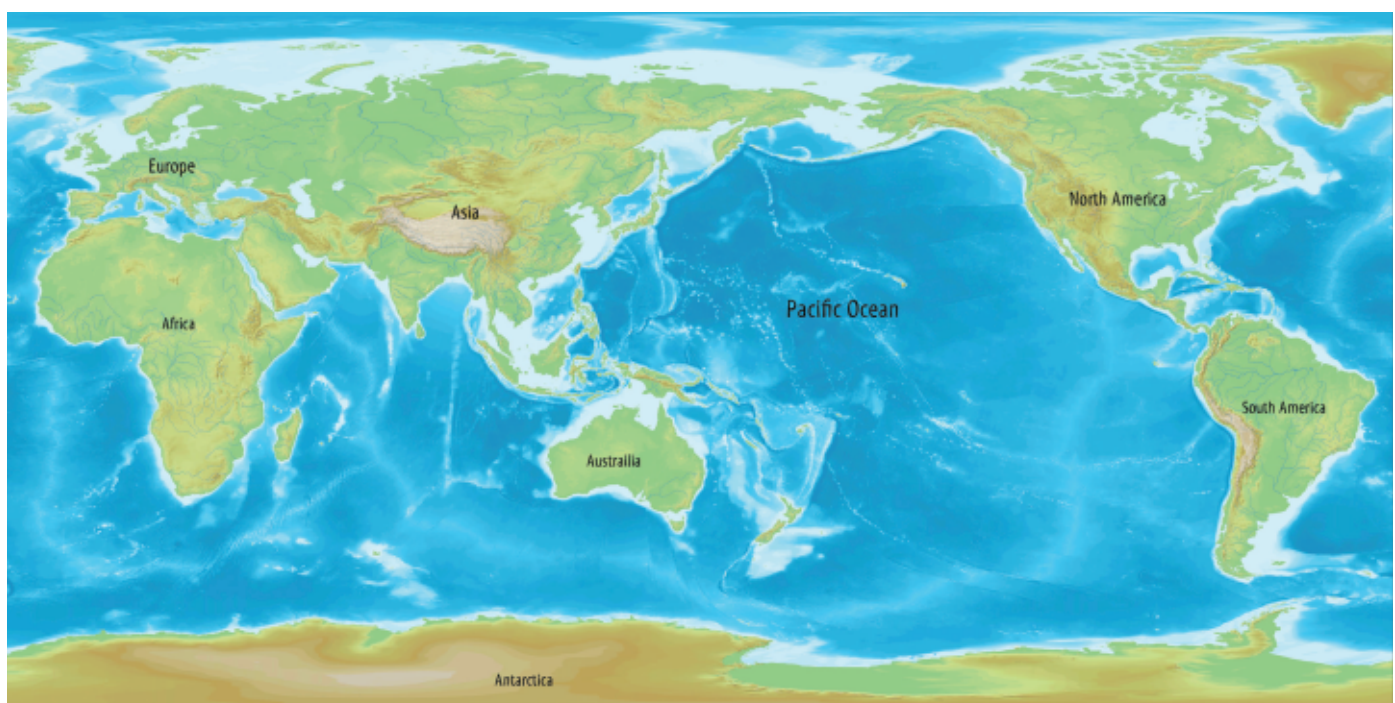
#### Questions

1. In what state in which country did Shanti grow up?
2. Why was Shanti's mother not allowed to go to a Christian boarding school?
3. Why would Shanti's uncles refuse to share their inheritance with her father?
4. What does Shanti's name mean in the Hindi language?
5. What was Shanti's first job after she finished college?
6. What do you think Shanti's mother was teaching her when she asked Shanti to send part of her first salary to Babyfold?
7. What did the international group of Christian women hope to accomplish when they set out on the Pacific Fellowship Mission in 1956?
8. What does Shanti's choice of a gift for her American hostess tell you about Shanti's personality?
9. Why did Shanti have to stay in the Philippines while the rest of the team went to South Korea?
10. Shanti had an idea that would help bring peace between enemies. What two things did she ask people to do? What name did she and her friends choose for the new movement?
11. Why was it important to Shanti that women in each country should donate only the least valuable coin of their country's currency?
12. Was Shanti right to think that people overseas should not pay her salary when she worked for the church in India? Why?
13. When IFLC funds got too big for one person to manage, who did the movement ask to manage them? Who decides how the money will be spent?
14. What happened to Shanti when she finally got to visit South Korea in 1973?
15. In East Germany during the Communist era, why do you think people were afraid to meet to read the Bible and pray together?
16. In Russia, what did Shanti secretly give to her seatmate on the plane? What were they afraid of?
17. How many countries were represented at IFLC's 25th birthday celebration? What was Shanti asked to do at that time?
18. When Shanti decided to retire, where did she go? What was special about the place she chose?
19. Who were the 500 children that came by bus every weekday to St. Stephen's? What did they do there? How did that change things for Shanti?
20. Why did the IFLC choose a lotus flower as its emblem? What is special about this flower? How does it help us understand the purpose of the Fellowship of the Least Coin?



## ANSWERS

1. Uttah Pradesh, India
2. She was a girl and people thought girls didn't need to be educated.
3. He was a Christian so did not share their religious beliefs.
4. Shanti is the Hindi word for "Peace."
5. She was a school teacher in Debra Dun.
6. To express gratitude for caring for her while her mother was unable to do so.
7. To ask forgiveness for past injustices and seek reconciliation between former enemies.
8. She had a sense of humor; she was willing to risk that her American hosts would be amused.
9. Her country (India) did not have diplomatic relations with South Korea at the time.
10. To pray and to donate the least coin of their country. She called it The International Fellowship of the Least Coin.
11. She thought it would enable rich and poor people to share equally.
12. She was right because having to earn something by one's self makes it more valuable.
13. The World Council of Churches in Geneva manages it; IFLC leaders decide on its use.
14. She was welcomed royally and got to stay in the President's mansion.
15. The Communist government did not believe in religious freedom; they were afraid that if large groups met they would plot against them.
16. An English New Testament. They were afraid that a Communist government informer might report them.
17. Representatives came from 40 countries. Shanti was asked to be IFLC's first Executive Secretary.
18. Shanti went to St. Stephen's Home in Delhi. It was founded by women missionaries in 1896.
19. They were children in Delhi, who earned money by begging on the streets. They attended school in St. Stephen's front garden. Shanti went to the back garden when she needed quiet.
20. The lotus grows in muddy ponds, although it is pure white. Like the flower, IFLC's practice of praying and sharing brings beauty and peace in difficult places.





## More Stories about the Fellowship of the Least Coin

### Miss Esther and the Crystal Bowl

Miss Esther stared through the window of the plane as it sped from Thailand to Malaysia. Far below, she saw sparkling water, green earth, and grey buildings. Soon she would be in Kuala Lumpur. And, soon, she would see 190 women from 30 countries around the world who were gathering to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Fellowship of the Least Coin. What a happy time they would have together! Miss Esther could almost hear their voices as they greeted one another and shared stories of their friends and families back home. "We are one big family," she thought "We are all children of God."

Thump! The plane hit the runway with a bump. Miss Esther clutched the bag on her lap tightly. Inside, carefully wrapped in soft shawls was a beautiful, crystal bowl. "I mustn't drop it!" she thought. "I must keep it safe until the closing ceremony—a surprise ending for a wonderful gathering!"

It was wonderful: bright banners, cheerful songs in many languages, talks by respected leaders, delicious Malaysian food, and gifts for each woman. Everyone celebrated how a little movement for prayer and peace had changed the lives of women and their families all over the world.

On the last day, everyone gathered for a Service of Thanksgiving for the Fellowship of the Least Coin. Maija Vuorinen led a choir from Finland; Battu Jambawai lit a candle from Africa. Then it was Miss Esther's turn. On a table where everyone could see it, she placed her precious crystal bowl, half-filled with water. One by one, women from 30 countries came forward to drop the least coin of their country into the water. Little by little, the water rose higher in the bowl. Coin by coin, it rose until it reached the brim. Sparkling in the candle light, water splashed over the top.

Miss Esther looked around at all the happy faces. "This is just like us," she said. "One by one, we filled this bowl of water to overflowing. So, one woman—Mrs. Shanti Solomon of India—began a movement of prayer and peace that—with our help—is making enemies into friends all over the world!" Then, with the help of Jill King from England, Miss Esther floated purple orchids in the water. "Thank you, God," she said, "for every



Esther Byu and the Crystal Bowl

woman who has done her small part to help spread your love!"

#### Note

The 13th Quadrennial Asian Church Women's Conference Assembly and Jubilee Anniversary Celebration of the Fellowship of the Least Coin were held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on October 8-13, 2006. Esther Byu was ICFLC Executive Secretary at that time.

#### Source

*FLC Moves and Touches for Justice, Peace and Reconciliation*, Jubilee Issue 2007, pp. 3-4.

#### Activity

##### What You Need

Clear container; a jug of water; a washable marker, crayon or chalk; pebbles, shells, buttons, or other small objects that sink in water. (Ask an adult to help you.)



### **What to Do**

Pour water into a clear container. Fill it only half full. At the water line, mark the outside of the container with chalk, crayon or washable marker. One at a time, add shells, pebbles, buttons or any small objects that sink to the bottom of the container.

### **Find Out Why**

What happens to the water? Why does this happen? What would happen if you used leaves, feathers, paper, or other things that float?

### **To Think About**

Why do you think Miss Esther performed this experiment at the 50th anniversary of the Least Coin? What did she want the women to learn?

### **Prayer**

Dear God, thank you for the Fellowship of the Least Coin that helps families all over the world. Teach me how to be a good friend to people I know and to people I have never met. Because you love us all.  
*Amen*

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## **Fun with MUM**

Do you ever keep secrets?



I have a secret I don't want the kids at school to know about. They already tease me because my clothes are worn and sometimes not so clean. If they knew my mum and dad are both in prison they might not let me play with them.

Hi, I'm Jeannie,\* and I live in Victoria, Australia with my

auntie. I miss my mum a lot. Sometimes I cry at night when I'm in bed. Once, I got on a bus and then walked a long way and went to see her. I got in big trouble because the police had to bring me home. I was really scared.

It's better now, though. A really nice lady came to my auntie and said she would drive me to see my mum once a month. Auntie said yes because she has to go to work and has a lot to do. The lady said her name was Dorothy\* and she smiles a lot and talks to me like a friend. Sometimes, she talks about Jesus and says he loves me and my mum, no matter what.

I was nervous the first time she took me to the prison where my mum has to stay. My mum and I both cried

and hugged when we saw each other. Then Dorothy said, "Come on, 'Fun with Mum' is about to start. We went over to a table where lots of children and their mums were making jewelry. Mum and I made identical necklaces to wear. Then we got to sing songs and pet some baby ducks. I drew a picture of one to take back to my little brother.

One time at "Fun with Mum" we played dress-up and I was a princess. And on game day Mum and I won the three-legged race. We laughed so hard we both fell over! Next time I go, it will be Mother's Day. I've already got lots of ideas about what I'll make for my mum.

What would you make?

### **Note**

In 2012 Fellowship of the Least Coin helped *Kidz Matta: Prison Network Ministries, Inc.*, Kerrimuir, Victoria, Australia, to sponsor children of prisoners at Christian summer holiday camps.

\*Jeannie and Dorothy represent many clients and volunteers in the Kidz Matta program.

Story info taken from various issues of "Inside/Outside" PMN's online newsletter. A good photo—child with her back to camera coloring with crayons is found in Dec 2012 issue.

## Two Bible Stories about Sharing

### Every Pot Helps

Nathan was hungry. And he was scared. It was nearly bedtime, but there was no way he could sleep tonight.

He could hear his little brother, Micah, crying. Micah was hungry too, and there was no food to eat in the house. Mother comforted him, rocking him in her arms, but Nathan knew she was hungry as well. But there was nothing to eat in the house. Nothing.

Now that his father had died, Nathan tried his best to help. He ran errands for the neighbors; he took care of Micah while Mother was away from home washing clothes for people or cooking for their parties. Sometimes she borrowed money to buy food.

Long ago, Nathan had swung on the olive tree to shake down the last of the fruit. His mother had crushed the olives in a basin, and he had helped her squeeze the pulp and pour the oil into pots.

This morning, Mother had taken the last handful of meal, mixed it with a few drops of oil from the very last pot, and patted it with her hands into a small loaf of bread. It smelled so good when she took it out of the oven. But it was so small! Mother carefully broke it in two pieces and gave one to Micah and one to Nathan. She did not keep any for herself. It was gone in a few bites!

Now there was no more food and no money. And tomorrow the moneylender was coming to ask for payment. If Mother didn't have it, they would take Nathan and Micah as slaves instead! That was the custom of the country.

Nathan wondered, "What would Father have done? He was a man who taught people about God and he followed a holy man named Elisha. He taught that neighbors should help one another. Would Elisha know what to do? Nathan decided to find out.

He slipped out of the house and ran to the city gate. Elisha was sitting there in the cool of the evening, teaching people about God's love. Nathan crept through the crowd and tugged on his sleeve. "Please come to my house, sir," he said. "My mother needs your help."

The great man didn't hesitate. He told his listeners he had important work to do and he must leave them for now.



Mother was amazed to see this holy man on her doorstep with Nathan pulling on his hand. "Sir!" she blurted out. "Tomorrow the moneylender is coming to take my children to be his slaves!"

"Tell me, what do you have in the house?" Elisha asked.

"Nothing, except one pot of oil," she said, wiping her eyes on her head scarf.

Elisha said, "Go to all your neighbors and borrow as many containers as possible. Get a lot and bring them back to your house." "Micah and I can help!" said Nathan.

And they did. They went house to house, door to door and asked everyone they knew, "May I please borrow an empty pot? I'll bring it back soon."

"Sure," the neighbors said. They didn't have food or money to spare, but everyone had an empty pot or two. Soon the house was full of clay jars.

"Now close the door and take your pot of oil and begin filling these empty ones," said Elisha. Mother looked doubtful, but not Nathan. He quickly went from pot to pot and started pouring. First one, then another, and more and more jars were full to the brim! When his arms were tired, Mother took over. One by one, as Micah lined them up, she filled big jars and little jars, fat ones and thin ones.

Finally, "Bring me one more, Nathan!" Mother said at last.

"That's the last one," he answered.

Mother straightened up and went to where the holy man was sitting with Micah on his lap. "Sir," she said,

“The oil has stopped flowing,” Elisha smiled. “Now you can sell the oil and pay your debts,” he said. “And then, you can buy some good food for Nathan and Micah, and, perhaps, even for me!”

Suddenly, the sound of loud clapping filled the room. All the neighbors were peeking through the windows, laughing and cheering. “We’re so glad the small help we could give made a difference,” they said. “Praise God for the miracle of sharing!”

Nathan jumped up excitedly. “Mother, let’s invite everyone to dinner!” he said.

### Source

2 Kings 4:1–7

### To Think About

This story comes from the Bible—2 Kings 4–7. Read it for yourself.

How did Elisha and the people Nathan, Micah, and their mom have enough to eat?

What did Nathan say at the end of the story?

How did Nathan feel about the miracle of sharing?

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## A Little Means a Lot



One day, Jesus was teaching people in the Temple in Jerusalem. He happened to look up and he saw rich people coming forward one by one to toss money into the collection box. How proud they looked as their coins clattered into the box. “I’m sure our friends notice how generous we are!” said one smartly dressed lady to her husband as she emptied out her purse.

Then Jesus noticed an old lady coming quietly up to the collection box. Secretly, she dropped two tiny coins into the box—the least coins of her country. A peaceful smile lit up her face and she closed her eyes for a moment in prayer. “Thank you, God, for all your blessings to me!” she whispered.

Jesus saw that she had donated two *lepta*—almost nothing! You could earn 128 of them for just one day’s labor. He knew that she was a widow and did not have a family to support her. He said, “The truth is, this woman has given by far the biggest offering today.”

“We don’t understand!” his listeners said. “You can’t buy anything with that tiny amount!”

“But everyone else gave away money they will never miss,” Jesus said. “She gave what she couldn’t afford... she gave away all she had!”

### To Think About

This story comes from the Bible—Luke’s Gospel, chapter 21, verses 1–4. Read it for yourself.

Is Jesus saying it is wrong to give a lot of money to help others? If not, what do you think he meant?

How would you explain it to the listeners who didn’t understand?

Why do you think the Fellowship of the Least Coin asks us to give only our least coins?

What difference does it make if we pray before we give?