

The Flyer

Vol XIX, No. 3

Summer/Fall 1999

Women's Congress: A Spiritual Journey

Gathering transforms lives into tomorrow

They came from Hawaii, Oregon, Florida, Minnesota, Arizona, New York, Oklahoma—35 states in all and Puerto Rico. Some had never experienced an airplane flight. Some had never been away from their family of origin or their current household. Some had never left their home state. Some had never tasted grits. Some

See 4-page insert for a photo collage and reflections on Women's Congress.

women of color had never hugged a white woman. Some white women had never hugged a woman of color.

Many came on faith. One missed her high school's senior prom to journey with people she had never met. Many were not sure what this event was all about or why other women had urged them to go. They did not know what they could offer this gathering called "Women's Congress: A Spiritual Journey." But journey they did through places they had never been and to a place they will never forget.

From April 14-18, 132 journey takers gathered for a journey set amid the dogwoods and azaleas of



Women's Congress closes with Holy Communion; servers, on right, are Commission members Margie Briggs and Phyllis Ferguson.

Simpsonwood Conference and Retreat Center in Norcross, GA. The event, sponsored by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW), was a combination revival, prayer meeting, hymn sing, dance party, mission trip, self-discovery, and women's festival.

These journey takers were led by 12 Wise Women leaders selected by GCSRW's Design Team who facilitated worship, music, workshops, and large-group sessions. Along with this group, 12 Commission members and 6 Commission staff served as facilitators.

The Holy Spirit moved among and through these women and one man, a member of the Commission's design team, as many had never experienced before. One journey taker captured the group's feeling with the comment, "I don't have to die to know what heaven is like. I've seen it here."

Inspiring and challenging worship, small reflection groups, five work-

shops, ministry experiences in a dozen of Atlanta's underserved areas—through these experiences women explored their own life journeys, shared their stories, and discovered and owned new directions for ministry.

As Janet Wolf preached during opening worship, "Our stories are of disciples on a journey by grace in proximity and partnership with folks who are struggling on the edge." Through revealing her own story of moving through journeys as mother of five, community organizer, and ordination despite rejection by her conference's board of ordained ministry, she reminded participants that "We are loved into impossibilities for life. And thus we learn to love ourselves."

In her own life Wolf learned from her grandmother this mantra for surviving, "Life is unfair and...I'm goin' on anyhow." We can go on, Wolf says, because God promises to be with us.

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ALERT

GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES

Pre-General Conference Orientation for Women Delegates

May 2, 2000, early breakfast to noon, sponsored by General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and Women's Division.

General Board of Global Ministries

General Conference 2000

Homosexuality remains near top of agenda

Delegates to General Conference 2000 will consider a host of wide-ranging changes to *The Book of Discipline*. However, if the church's recent annual conference sessions are any indication, delegates might stand pat on some of the most controversial parts of the book: those dealing with homosexuality.

Most of the U.S. members who acted on same-sex issues approved resolutions affirming the *Discipline's* language against homosexuality and same-gender union services. A minority adopted petitions seeking to soften or remove language against homosexuality.

Homosexuality was a chief topic addressed during the recent annual conference sessions, but it wasn't the only one. Others included children's concerns and violence, racism, abortion, gambling, capital punishment, debt forgiveness and Africa University.

During May and June, the 66 U.S. annual conferences met to worship, adopt resolutions on church policy, do outreach work, and elect delegates to next year's General and jurisdictional conferences. Petitions and resolutions

position on homosexuality. Some asked that the wording be strengthened.

Those supporting the denomination's position on homosexuality and same-sex unions, or that took action against changing the *Discipline's* wording on the issue, included Alabama-West Florida, Baltimore-Washington, Central Texas, the Dakotas, Eastern Pennsylvania, Holston, Illinois Great Rivers, Kansas West, Kentucky, Missouri West, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Alabama, North Arkansas, North Carolina, North Texas, Northwest Texas, Red Bird, Western North Carolina, and Western New York. South Georgia referred, without voting up or down, a petition to General Conference supporting the prohibition against such unions.

New Mexico adopted a resolution requesting that the bishops, Judicial Council and administrative agencies of the church begin proceedings to remove the credentials of the clergy who helped celebrate a same-sex union in Sacramento, CA, on Jan. 16.

Florida and Illinois Great Rivers

also want the bishops to strictly enforce the *Discipline*. North Alabama members approved a

petition for striking a sentence on equal rights in the *Discipline* and inserting: "We reject, however, efforts to extend to same-sex living arrangements those rights generally reserved to preserve and support heterosexual marriage."

Conferences that voted to remove the *Book of Discipline's* language against homosexuality, or change it to be more accepting of homosexuals, included California-Nevada, California-Pacific, Minnesota, New York, Northern Illinois, Oregon-Idaho and Pacific Northwest.

Same-sex issues have taken on particular importance in the California-

Nevada Conference, where an investigating committee recently received a complaint against 68 ministers who participated in a Jan. 16 union service for two women. The Cal-Nevada members adopted several petitions related to homosexuality, including one asking for more inclusive language.

Another petition would have the Social Principles clearly defined as not being church law. The principles currently state that ceremonies celebrating homosexual unions shall not be performed by United Methodist ministers nor in the denomination's churches.

Another battleground has been Northern Illinois, where Chicago pastor Gregory Dell was suspended from pastoral duties effective July 5 after being convicted by a trial court for disobeying church law. Dell, who performed a same-sex union service for two men last year, is appealing the



Many annual conferences avoided acting on same-sex issues...Of those that did...most...(asked) the General Conference to maintain the *Discipline's* restrictions against same-sex union services and/or its current position on homosexuality.

adopted by the conferences will help set the agenda for the General Conference when it meets May 2-12 in Cleveland. After that meeting, a new *Book of Discipline* will be published, with updated bylaws for the denomination, along with a new *Book of Resolutions*. The General Conference meets every four years.

Many annual conferences avoided acting on same-sex issues altogether during their recent gatherings. Of those that did take action, most adopted resolutions or petitions asking the General Conference to maintain the *Discipline's* restrictions against same-sex union services and/or its current

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The Flyer

The Flyer is published four times yearly by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) in the United Methodist Church (UMC) as a communication link with the 68 Annual Conference Commissions on the Status and Role of Women (ACCSRWs). Primary distribution of *The Flyer* is through the ACCSRWs; individual subscriptions, available through the GCSRW, are \$7.50.

Editor: Bonny Stainaker Roth

The GCSRW, a national agency of the UMC, acts as an advocate, catalyst, and monitor to ensure the full participation and equality of women in the church.

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General Conference

continued

verdict and the penalty. Northern Illinois members elected Dell and a slate of other General Conference delegates who largely support changing the rules that restrict same-gender unions and the participation of homosexuals in the life of the church.

Northern Illinois, Pacific Northwest and Oregon-Idaho members voted to remove exclusionary language against homosexuality and same-sex unions. Northern Illinois also adopted a resolution encouraging members to offer pastoral ministry to homosexuals and "to acknowledge the commitment of two homosexual persons to be in loving and mutually beneficial relationships with each other and with God."

Pacific Northwest members voted to offer an amendment to the *Discipline* that allows pastors to rely on their individual integrity and conscience, rather than on a mandate from the denomination, regarding homosexual unions. Members also voted to recommend removing the rule against ordination of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals."

New England included sexual orientation among a diversity of cate-

gories covered in a new resolution on inclusiveness in the life of the church. Memphis and Tennessee passed inclusiveness plans but excluded sexual orientation.

Troy and New York members passed resolutions supporting congregations and individuals who choose to participate in the Reconciling Congregations program, which publicly emphasizes openness to all people in the life of the church regardless of sexual orientation.

Some resolutions ask General Conference to adopt language that United Methodists are not of one mind on the issue, but that God's grace is available to all and that the church must be in ministry to all. Those include Kansas East, Minnesota, Wyoming and Wisconsin.

Wyoming members, whose conference covers parts of Pennsylvania and New York, want to amend Paragraph 65G. In their petition, they "call the church to prayerful reflection, study, and discernment about how we minister to one another in the midst of such disagreements."

Oklahoma members accepted, by a 280-262 vote, a task force report on homosexuality calling for continued dialogue. Likewise, a Central Pennsylvania committee reported that church-

es must discuss the need to minister to homosexuals, their families and friends. Cal-Nevada members created a committee on sexuality to promote dialogue.

Southern New Jersey declared a one-year moratorium on resolutions dealing with homosexuality.

Racism

A major item on General Conference's agenda will be an act of repentance for racism. Several annual conferences performed such acts. West Ohio members sang spirituals, revisited the slave era through words and pictures, held services stressing reconciliation and repentance, and apologized for slavery. Tennessee members said a litany of repentance and adopted a resolution asking General Conference to require that all clergy receive training in race relations.

Western North Carolina's theme, "Unity and Reconciliation," was reflected throughout the gathering, through a skit, a musical presentation and a pledge by the bishop and cabinet to fight "isms" (race, gender, sex, age). The Rev. Peter Storey, former Methodist bishop of South Africa, challenged members to lift up the power of God's Spirit and to break down those barriers.

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Fewer women among Conference delegates

An initial report from the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) indicated that 197 laywomen from the United States were elected to General Conference. This figure represents a loss of 24 delegates compared with the 221 lay women elected in 1996.

Cynthia Hopson is the first African-American laywoman elected by the Memphis Conference to General Conference as a regular delegate.

The chairwoman for the Commission on the General Conference, Mollie Stewart, was elected a lay delegate in the North Alabama contingent.

The North Georgia General Conference delegation made history by having a woman—Martha Forrest—elected first among its clergy delegates and a youth elected for the first time in nearly 40 years. Forrest is a member of GCSRW.

A tally by the section of elders and local pastors in the Division of Ordained Ministry of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry showed that 109 clergywomen were elected to 2000 General Conference from the United States. There were 107 elected from the entire denomination in 1996.

Of the 109 elected to General Conference, 99 are elders and 10 are deacons. The 10 deacons in full connection represent 10 conferences, and nine of those conferences also elected female elders in full connection. The 10 conferences include five from the Southeastern Jurisdiction, two from the North Central, two from the South Central and one from the Western.

Two Korean-American clergywomen were elected as delegates for the first time: Sung Ja Moon from Northern Illinois and Young Sook Kang from the Rocky Mountain Conference.

A preliminary report from the division also shows that 26.2 percent of the clergy delegates are women. That percentage is higher than the percentage of women among all ordained full members in the United States.

Of the 66 annual conferences, 12 elected a clergywoman first, and eight have a clergywoman as head of the General Conference delegation.

This report is adapted from United Methodist News Service press release, July 15, 1999. For full coverage of the release, refer to #375 "Campaign misses mark, but young people will have voice at assembly." www.umc.org/umns/99/july/375.htm

Native American Women in Ministry conference

Women from 21 Indian tribes attend 3-day gathering

Discussions about assertiveness, spirituality, clergy-laity partnerships and conflict resolutions were ingredients of a three-day consultation on issues affecting Native American women.

The April 22-24 national gathering, "Native American Women in Ministry," was the first event of its kind since 1987. It was designed to empower the women and to let them know that they are not alone, said Tweedy Sombrero, event chairperson and pastor of Native American Ministries of the United Methodist Church in Glendale, AZ.

At least 58 women from 21 Indian tribes across the country met with Native American clergywomen and laity who hold leadership positions in The United Methodist Church. The participants learned about being assertive; recognizing and handling sexism; developing a stronger awareness of wholeness and balance; living in partnership with each other; and increasing their understanding of Native women's spirituality.

The gathering aimed to provide a foundation for encouraging Native American women to enter ministry, Sombrero said. The United Methodist Church has 13 ordained Native women, according to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Showing assertiveness is difficult for many people, and participants learned that is particularly true for Native American women.

"For us as Native women, we have a different way of expressing it, which makes people unsure of how we assert ourselves," said Anne Marshall, a Creek Indian and staff executive at the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns.

During discussion about conflict resolution, Marshall said Native women had been in the center of resolving conflict and making decisions. The church helped change those roles when Christianity was introduced and men became decision makers, she said. Native women are attempting to return wholeness and balance to their communities so that decision making will be equally shared by men and women, she said.

In small groups the Native women discussed "From Solidarity to Accountability," a letter to the Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches from the women and men of the Ecumenical Decade Festival of Churches in Solidarity with Women. The letter, presented last December in Harare, Zimbabwe, provided a focus for discussing their vision for a United Methodist Church in which young and old women work together and are recognized for who they are and what they have to offer.

This article is excerpted from *Voices of Native People*, a newsletter from the Native American Communications Office, United Methodist Church, Nashville.

General Conference

continued

Other business

Abortion: At least seven conferences adopted petitions or resolutions to General Conference opposing "partial-birth" abortions. Some called for banning the procedure. South Georgia also referred, without vote, a petition to General Conference to delete from the *Discipline* the position that "we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures."

This report is adapted from United Methodist News Service press release #359, June 30, 1999, www.umc.org/umns/99/june/359.htm

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Calendar

September 25

Sacred Circles, Durham, NC. A women's spirituality workshop led by Robin Carnes and Sally Craig, authors of *Sacred Circles: A Guide to Creating Your Own Women's Spirituality Group*. Contact Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South, 1202 Watts St., Durham, NC 27701. (919) 683-1236. E-mail: stokesnet@aol.com.

September 29-October 3

Renew by the Ocean: A Retreat in the Alexander Technique, Trinity Center, on the North Carolina coast. Shed layers of habitual thinking, re-connect with the essential self, and journey inward through movement exploration, journaling, drawing, extended time in nature, and the Alexander Technique. Contact Meade Andrews, (301) 587-8736, or Glenna Batson, (919) 732-1640, glenna@mindspring.com.

October 24-28

Jesus—A Womanist/Feminist Perspective, Kanuga Conference Center, NC. Keynote speakers are Carter Heyward, Delores Williams, and Barbara Harris. Contact Kanuga Conferences at (828) 692-9136 or info@kanuga.org.

October 29-31

A Dialogue: Christian, Buddhist and Feminist, Grailville, Loveland, OH. Leaders are Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rita Gross. Contact Patricia Miller, Grail Women's Task Force, Pm407@aol.com or (513) 583-0610.

October 30

Feminist Spirituality 101, Asheville, NC. A workshop on feminist spirituality led by Sr. Miriam Terese Winter. Women and men are welcome. Contact Holy Ground, (828) 236-0222 or HolyGrnd@aol.com. ■

Status Report

Women of Color Scholars: 10 years in theological education

Ten years have passed since the United Methodist Church set up an avenue to increase the women of color on its seminary faculties, and the program remains a trailblazer even today.

The Women of Color Scholars Program (WOC) was initiated by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in 1989. A group of professional women employed at church-related seminaries and participants at a 1987 black clergywomen's consultation had expressed concern about the lack of women of color faculty in theological education.

The WOC initiative's mission is the placement of women of color in faculty positions at all 13 United Methodist-related seminaries. The program provides up to \$10,000 per year in scholarships to women of color doctoral degree candidates, and it engages in regular mentoring.

It is unique in the life of the United Methodist Church, and other denominations are considering it as a model for their use.

"In fact, the program is quite radical and trailblazing," said the Rev. Rosetta Ross, a 1989-1993 WOC scholar and chairwoman of the ethics department at Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta. "There is no other denomination that has done anything like this. The impact of the program is evident from the number of people who are in the field as a result of this quiet revolution."

The scholars program, including a mentoring component, "is making a systemic difference in theological education today," said the Rev. Lynn Scott, director of clergywomen's concerns in the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in Nashville, TN. "This impacts both the academy and the church, and is preparing all of us to prepare to live and do ministry in a multicultural, multiracial and multilingual world."

Another goal of the WOC fellowship is increasing the number of women of color who teach, lecture, write and research at the doctoral level in all seminaries. The program seeks to heighten denominational awareness

of the need for women of color in theological education and to encourage eligible United Methodist women to consider careers in that field.

To be eligible, a United Methodist woman must have at least one parent of African, African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian or Pacific Island background; have a master of divinity degree; and be pursuing a doctorate for a career in theological education and religious studies.

A Korean-American clergywoman, the Rev. Ai Ra Kim, was the first graduate of the Women of Color Scholars Program. She likens the program to "midwifery," noting that "through its spiritual nourishment and financial support" she received a doctorate in religion and society from Drew University in Madison, NJ, in 1991.

Today, eight women of color have received doctoral degrees; six are serving on the faculties of United Methodist-related seminaries; eighteen are in the pipeline pursuing doctoral degrees.

For more information about the WOC scholars program and the Oct. 15-19 consultation and anniversary celebration, contact Debra Franco at the Office of Loans and Scholarships: by e-mail at dfranco@gbhem.org or phone at (615) 340-7337.

This report is adapted from United Methodist News Service press release #323, June 9, 1999. www.umc.org/umns/99/june/323.htm

Social Security reform could harm women: OWL

If not for Social Security, more than half of all women receiving these benefits would be living below the poverty level, warned a representative of the Older Women's League (OWL).

Speaking at an April 25 briefing for United Methodist Women from around the country, Kathryn Stern Ceja, a senior development associate at OWL, urged women to evaluate carefully the proposals for changes in the program.

"Women in the Social Security program are not a special interest group," she said. "They are a majority. Sixty percent of all Social Security recipients at age 65 are women, and that figure increases to 72 percent by the age of 85."

On the average women receive 25 percent less in Social Security payments than men do because most women have held lower paying jobs in service and clerical fields and because most women have taken an average of 11.5 years out of the workplace to be primary caregivers, according to a General Accounting Office report used in testimony before the House of Representatives Feb. 3, 1998.

"We need Social Security more," Ceja said. "For many of us, it's our

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Ovations

To **Heather Bethley**, 13, of Metairie, LA, who placed first in a national youth essay contest on avoiding alcohol and drugs. A member of Munholland United Methodist Church, she received her award and \$500 check during the Louisiana Annual Conference. The contest was sponsored by the Independent Committee on Alcohol and Drugs for United Methodists and UMR Communications.

To **Freda A. Gardner**, Princeton, NJ, who has been elected moderator of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), making her the chief spokesperson for the 2.6-million member denomination over the next year.

To **Cynthia Ramirez Lindenmeyer**, a student at Duke University Divinity School, who won the \$200 John Harrison Ness Memorial Award for a paper on Methodist history awarded by the General Commission on Archives and History.

To **Alyce Meadors**, who has been named Human Resources Vice President for the United Methodist Publishing House in Nashville.

To **Lynn Pier-Fitzgerald**, incoming Grand Traverse (West Michigan) district superintendent, and her daughter, **Erin**, president of the West Michigan Conference Council on Youth Ministries, who are the first mother-daughter team elected by West Michigan to the General/Jurisdictional Conference delegation.

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Union Seminary gets Re-Imagining archives

The Archives of Women in Theological Scholarship at Union Theological Seminary is serving as the archival site for The Re-Imagining Community.

Union Seminary Archives has as its mission to "serve as the living memory/documentary repository for materials pertaining to Christian women's movements for progressive

Status Report

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sole source of income" because many women do not receive pensions. "We have less money. We live longer. And our return is smaller."

She asserted that the current Social Security system has benefitted women by providing life-time benefits with cost-of-living increases. Supplemental payments provide assistance for those with lower earnings. It protects women workers if they become disabled. Older widows or widows with young children receive benefits if their partner was a participant in the system.

Ceja predicted that privatization of the Social Security system would send women into poverty. She said women have much smaller savings than men. Individual accounts would not be indexed to inflation as Social Security payments are now, and they would be dependent on volatile investment markets. "How long are we going to see this boom in the stock market?" she asked.

—United Methodist News Service,
April 28, 1999

In memoriam

The Rev. Tallulah Fisher Williams, a United Methodist clergywoman and leader in the denomination, died suddenly June 20, in Evanston, (IL) Hospital. She was 45. She had just been elected a Northern Illinois clergy delegate to General Conference. During her ministry she was many "firsts" in the Northern Illinois Conference, including the first woman of color to be a district superintendent, the first black clergy woman appointed to a large black United Methodist church, and the first African-American woman pastor to be appointed to a predominately white suburban church. She was the second African-American woman ever ordained in the Northern Illinois Conference. ■

social change, ca. 1960-present."

To visit their archive websites, which contain fascinating information on the feminist theological movements, contact these addresses:

www.uts.Columbia.edu/projects/AWT/S/mission.html or www.uts.Columbia.edu/projects/AWTS/exhibit2.html

To offer materials to be included in the archives, contact The Re-Imagining Community, 122 West Franklin Ave., Room 7, Minneapolis, MN 55404-2470. Phone: (612) 879-8036. Fax: (612) 879-8464. E-mail: reimagine1@aol.com.

Second annual gathering of women set for October

Join an ecumenical group of women from the U.S. and Great Britain for a week at Bossey (Switzerland), Oct. 10-15, 1999. This gathering will use the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women as its platform.

For additional information call (800) 212-2920 or write The Ecumenical Institute, 475 Riverside Dr., Rm. 915, New York NY 10115. ■

Jobs

Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas: W.J.A. Power Chair in Biblical Hebrew and Old Testament Interpretation.

Requirement: a senior scholar with demonstrated achievement in teaching and research. Review of applications will begin Oct. 15, 1999. Contact Mary Ann Marshall, Power Chair Search, Perkins School of Theology, SMU Box 750133, Dallas, TX 75275-0133. (214) 768-2320. Fax (214) 768-2966. E-mail: mmarshall@mail.smu.edu.

Christian Worship. Position available Fall 2000. Review of applications will begin on or about Oct. 15, 1999. Contact Mary Ann Marshall, Worship Search, Perkins School of Theology, SMU Box 750133, Dallas, TX 75275-0133. (214) 768-2320 fax (214) 768-2966. E-mail: mmarshall@mail.smu.edu.

New Testament Studies. A scholar with demonstrated achievement or potential in teaching and research in the field of New Testament studies. Review of applications will begin Oct. 15, 1999. Contact Lucy Cobbe, New Testament Search, Perkins School of Theology, SMU Box 750133, Dallas TX 75275-0133. E-mail: lcobbe@mail.smu.edu. ■

Resources

Balm in Gilead: Pastoral Advocacy for African American Families

Experiencing Abuse. Toinette M. Eugene and James Newton Poling (Abingdon, 1998). Using case studies from individuals who experience abuse, this cross-cultural work explores theological and ethical themes that are crucial for understanding and revitalizing pastoral care. \$16.00.

Dangerous Intersections: Feminist Perspectives on Population, Environment, and Development

ed. Jael Silliman and Ynestra King (South End Press, 1999). This project of the Committee on Women, Population, and the Environment offers a broad agenda presented clearly and compellingly by many voices. \$20.00.

Journaling: A Spiritual Journey

Anne Broyles (Upper Room, 1999). New stories, guided meditations, and questions to stimulate reflection are designed to help readers as they enrich their relationship with God. Includes sufficient space for practicing each of the six methods outlined. Appropriate for individuals or small groups. \$10.95.

Knowing Her Place: Gender in the Gospels

Anne Thurston (Paulist Press, 1999). Examines several biblical stories about women and interprets them within a feminist framework in order to identify new insights in familiar stories. \$12.95.

A Map of Hope: Women's Writings on Human Rights, an International Literary Anthology

Marjorie Agosin, ed. (Rutgers University, 1999). This collection of essays, poems, memoirs, and excerpts from diaries and novels articulates the trauma and horror of war. \$19.00.

More Than Welcome: Learning to Embrace Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Persons in the Church

Maurine C. Waun (Chalice Press, 1999). Argues that mainline churches, preoccupied with debating homosexuality, are missing opportunities to minister to the sexual minorities who have been excluded from the church. \$15.99.

Pastoral Care of Gays, Lesbians, and Their Families

David K. Switzer (Augsburg Fortress, 1999). This volume in the Creative Pastoral Care and Counseling Series addresses the needs of both gays and lesbians and their families, and seeks to involve congregations in pastoral ministry. \$17.00.

Re-Imagining the Divine: Confronting the Backlash Against Feminist Theology, Laurel C. Schneider (Pilgrim Press, 1999). Rejecting strict monotheism, Schneider constructs a monistic pluralism—an approach, she argues, that solves more problems than trinitarianism. Hardcover, \$19.95.

Sending Up My Timber: An African American Prayer Journal, Karen F. Williams and Lloyd Preston Terrell (Upper Room, 1999). Features daily prayer concerns and scriptures based on monthly topics; quotations on prayer by historical and contemporary African Americans; ample space for recording prayer requests and journaling. \$17.95.

Sister to Sister: Devotions for and from African-American Women, Volume 2, Linda H. Hollies (Judson, 1999). Sequel to the best-selling *Sister to Sister* is here. This volume includes inspiring stories of perseverance, faith and glory. \$12.00.

Strength in the Struggle: Leadership Development for Women, Vashti M. McKenzie (Pilgrim Press, 1999). Using vignettes and leadership profiles, the author gives groups and individuals the means to understand their own leadership styles. Includes brief profiles of successful African-American women. \$9.95.

Talking Leadership: Conversations with Powerful Women, Mary S. Hartman, ed. (Rutgers University, 1999). This collection of 13 interviews of powerful women expands the definition of leadership beyond occupants of formal positions to include those who influence and move people through such efforts as teaching and writing. \$19.00.

This Far by Faith (Augsburg Fortress, 1999). This text is an African American worship resource developed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), and Lutheran Brotherhood. Hard cover pew edition, \$12.50.

Neither Separate Nor Equal: Women, Race, and Class in the South, Barbara Ellen Smith (Temple University, 1999). This unique collection offers contributions by Carol Stack, Mab Segrest, Sally Maggard, and other well-known scholars on Appalachia and the South. \$19.95.

Journals

On the Issues: The Progressive Women's Quarterly. This publication describes itself as a feminist, humanist magazine of critical thinking, dedicated to fostering collective responsibility for positive social change. Subscription for one year is \$14.95. Send to On the Issues, P.O. Box 3000, Dept. OTI, Denville, NJ 07834. (800) 783-4903. Web site: www.echonyc.com/~onissues. E-mail: onissues@echonyc.com.

Re-Imagining. This publication is a forum for the exchange of information and opinion from the Re-Imagining Community. Annual membership, including four issues, is \$25.00. Send to The Re-Imagining Community, 122 West Franklin Ave., Room 7, Minneapolis, MN 55404-2470. Phone: (612) 879-8036. Fax: (612) 879-8464. E-mail: reimagine1@aol.com.

Copy deadlines for Flyer information

To ensure inclusion of job announcements, calendar items, and other items to be published in *The Flyer*, please submit written details to the editor by these dates:

- Oct. 1, 1999.....Fall/Winter 2000
- Dec. 15, 1999.....Winter/Spring 2000

Send to:
Bonny Stalnaker Roth
GCSRW
1200 Davis St.
Evanston, IL 60201

(800) 523-8390.

You may also submit information through e-mail: gcsrww@gcfa.org

Change of Address?

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The Flyer invites you to subscribe and thus demonstrate your support for women in the United Methodist Church. As the primary communication tool of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, *The Flyer* offers its readers updates on women's issues and resources for annual conference and local church women's groups. Your subscription will guarantee four issues of **The Flyer** for one year.

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Women's Congress *continued from page 1*

That message launched a theme of self-discovery and strength for answering God's call. As the gathering drew to a close with Sunday worship, Teresa Fry Brown, preaching about sisterhood, reminded all that even in his culture that devalued women, Jesus loved women more than he loved the law. "We are sisters journeying together...We love God above all."

As she concluded her description of sisterhood, Brown proclaimed, "A sister is someone who loves you even when you find it hard to love yourself. Sisters come in long hair, gray hair, no hair, purchased hair. But sisters are always there for you...Let us not forget, sisters, that Jesus is still stepping over cultural restrictions."

Journey Takers, Wise Women, and Commission members and staff knew that they had been challenged to listen for the guidance of the Spirit to move forward on their journeys to minister to a hurting world.

Women's Congress Leadership

Wise Women

Teresa L. Fry Brown, Candler School of Theology, Atlanta, GA
Grace Imathiu, Edgehill UMC, Nashville, TN
Donna Fado Ivery, artist, South San Francisco, CA
Lydia Salazar Martinez, writer, artist, pastor, and lover of life, Austin, TX
Susan Peek, United Methodist Communications, Nashville, TN
Naomi Southard, Berkley UMC, Berkley, CA
Linda Thomas, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, IL
Kappitola Williams, liturgical dancer, Atlanta, GA
Cynthia Wilson-Felder, Ben Hill UMC, Atlanta, GA
Janet Wolf, Hobson UMC, Nashville, TN
Heather Wood, massage therapist, Sarasota, FL

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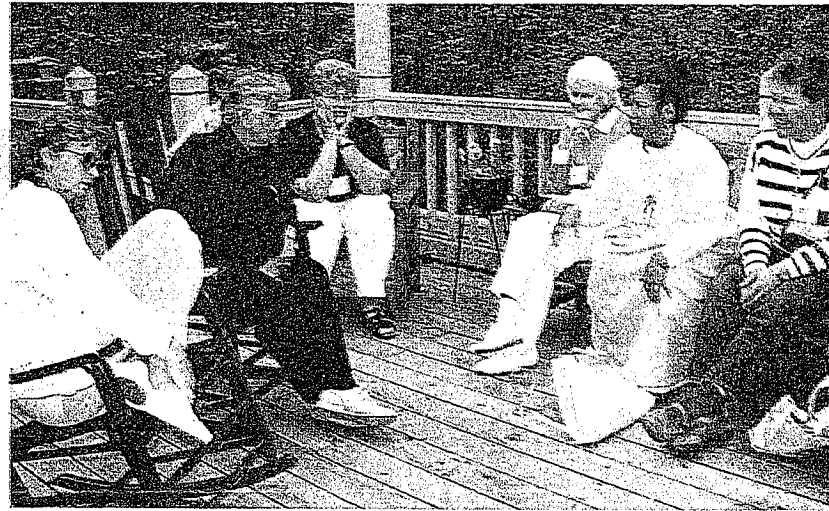
This supplement offers a selection of visual and written images from the GCSRW-sponsored Women's Congress, held April 14-18, 1999, at Simpsonwood Conference and Retreat Center, Norcross, GA.

Women's Congress:

A Spiritual Journey

*So my daughters, arise, arise.
Let my spirit guide and keep you.
Daughters, arise, arise,
Know it shall be accomplished,
What I've called you to do.*

—Words from "Daughters, Arise," lyrics and music by Johnetta Johnson Page, written for Women's Congress



Journey Takers get acquainted.



LaSander Saunders and Norma Adams lead hymn by signing.

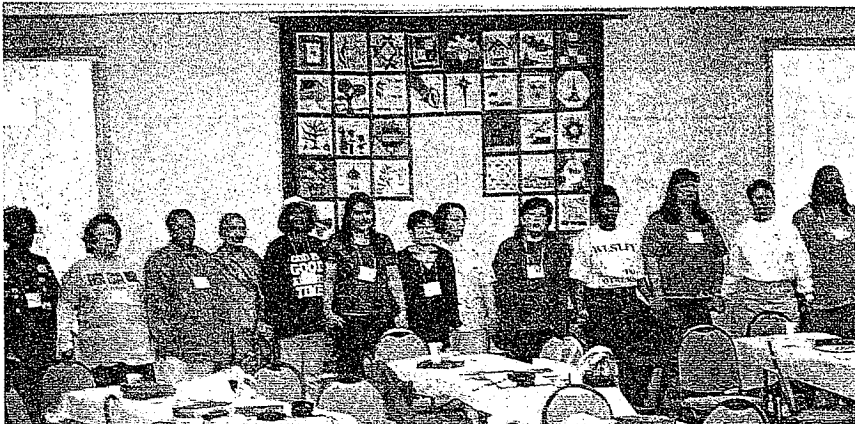
Journey Taker: Thank God for all these beautiful people...they have given me confidence.

Linda Thomas, Wise Woman, recalling awakening in seminary: She told us there were two creation stories in the Bible...God created Hadam, not male or female, but human...I felt that I had been lied to. For me, the whole world exploded.



Margie Hardy and Snelhlata Patel

Journey Taker: My whole life people have told me to calm down, control myself, act like a lady. Here I have been affirmed that it's OK to be a fighter. I'm going back home knowing I am a daughter of Abraham. Last year our conference Commission on the Status and Role of women sponsored a retreat for young teen girls. We were told that we are not a programming agency so we cannot do it again. Now I know better.



A prayer circle forms during worship.

Women's Congress *continued*



Mattie Mae Rice, front, leads group as they board bus for ministry experiences in Atlanta.

Grace Imathiu, Wise Woman:

I always believed the Bible men were black and African. When I went to Israel years ago, a cab driver asked me, "Why don't you Africans have your own story?" I was shattered. I had to start over and make the Bible my own.



Grace Imathiu

Journey Taker:

The first day was beautiful, so many different colored faces. For 25 years I taught second grade and talked to children about the wonder of our diversity. Now that I've seen it myself, I know I can keep teaching it to children after I finish seminary.



Journey Takers at Bethlehem Senior Center.

Journey Taker:

I fully understand the meaning of the word connection.



Heather Wood, kneeling center, leads massage workshop.

Reflections on Women's Congress

Journeying Forth: Worship April 18, 1999

I had to kneel at the altar in the middle of the room. I had to kneel in the middle of the circle that was to end my journey here in this place, not simply a meeting room, but truly sacred space. I had to kneel and offer my thanks and my tears for the comforting hands on my shoulder, for the women whose names and faces have already begun to blur in an indistinct image, but who have marked my life.

I had to kneel at the altar with its baskets of rocks, the symbols of one hundred and fifty women offering the gift of themselves. I knelt among the spirit of thousands of women whose names were taped to the walls. Pages of names of women, formed a paper quilt testifying to the thread that binds us across centuries and miles. Each woman a sign post, a trail marker on the path of footsteps that led us individually to this time of revelation which was called Women's Congress: A Spiritual Journey.

This Journey exists in the realm of the Spirit, beyond words and divisions, and occupies a place in our hearts. We will know how to describe it when we enter into the fullness of God's kingdom. Today, we can only try to explain that we have been given glimpses—in the minutes, hours, and days spent together—of the joy to come....

...I had to kneel at the altar to thank God for the great privilege to serve. Praise God for the miracles waiting each time we step outside ourselves and into the journey.

—Cathy Warner.



Donna Fado Ivery, right, demonstrates scarf painting.



Tai chi class at Bethlehem Senior Center

Reflections on Women's Congress

Journey with Self: My Promise

*Have I cried enough for you
created a stream with my tears
that can carry you gently
down this river toward wholeness*

*Have I cried enough to save you
from the struggles of life
and the pain that threatens
to sweep you away from me*

*I would cry tears
tears to fill the Nile
and hide you in a basket for safekeeping
But even Moses wasn't spared
the knowledge of who he was
and what I had in mind for his life*

*I can't protect you as I once did
sheltering you in your mother's womb
surrounded by a sea of perfect love*

*But I offer you all that I am
My hands to wipe away your tears
My arms to cradle you once again
My eyes that promise you are loved
and wonderful and perfect
My lips to kiss your cheeks
and murmur the truth
of who you are
My steps can match yours
if you let me guide you
onto the path set before you
my beloved child*

—Cathy Warner

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Lydia Salazar Martinez, Donna Fado Ivery, Linda Thomas,
Susan Peek, Kappitola Williams

Lydia Salazar Martinez, Wise Woman:

*I'm inspired to see this group of women come alive with such
spiritual growth. Someone said there are lots of mothers here.
I feel like I've found lots of children. Every once in a while, like
now, I get a glimpse of the kingdom when everything is just right.*

Journey Taker:

*This morning when I woke up, I was
thinking how proud and privileged I
am to be a United Methodist. We
women have power to say we need
a place; not all churches have that.
We are pioneers.*



Janet Wolf



Kappitola Williams

*Simpsonwood gift shop clerk: As I am working here, I encounter folks coming through the gift
shop. I see so much trouble in my local church. Sometimes I feel like giving up on the
United Methodist Church. But your group has renewed my hope and my faith.*



Cynthia Wilson-Felder

Women's Congress *continued*



Kim Coffing, Joyce Waldon Bright, and Latanya Cunningham



Teresa Fry Brown, Ethel Johnson, and Cecelia Long



Naomi Southard

Naomi Southard, Wise Woman, speaking on the story of Esther, conquered people living among their conquerors: *Why did God put you in the place you are in? Do you have a vision of God's role for you?*



Cecelia Long, Stephanie Anna Hixon, Betty Wright, Deb Kiesey, Darlene Saunders Ousley, Terri Rae Chattin, Margie Briggs, and Ethel Johnson



Susan Peek explains computer skills to Liana Sardinha, while daughter Micah smiles.

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Journey Taker reflecting on quilt of midwives:

Who was my midwife? My mother's spirit; she died when I was very young. I was sexually and emotionally abused, and it was her spirit that kept me going.

Photography by Bonny Stalnaker Roth

