

# *Re-imagining*

*The Ecumenical Decade  
Churches in Solidarity with Women*

*November 4-7, 1993  
Minneapolis Convention Center  
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

# Welcome

*Dear Friends,*

*Welcome to Re-imagining, a conference by women for women and men. We anticipate our time together will challenge and expand our horizons in undreamed of ways, will enrich and nurture us spiritually, and will provide the opportunity to dialogue with women and men from around the world.*

*We hope people will be nourished and take delight in this experience. We engage in the Re-imagining process because we must. Some ways of doing theology have been costly to creation, and to our relationships with each other, ourselves, and our God. We cannot afford to wait any longer!*

*On behalf of the Steering Committee, we thank Sally Hill, the staff person for TCMCC. Four years ago Sally convened a group to explore possibilities for involvement in the Ecumenical Decade. Since then, she has tirelessly and creatively worked with about 140 volunteers to bring about this event.*

*The Steering Committee members have been exceptional. Because of their deep sense of commitment and a willingness to treat each other with great respect and dignity, caring has developed. We have begun to re-imagine how to work together. A special thank you to the numerous volunteers who have contributed their creativity and many hours of work.*

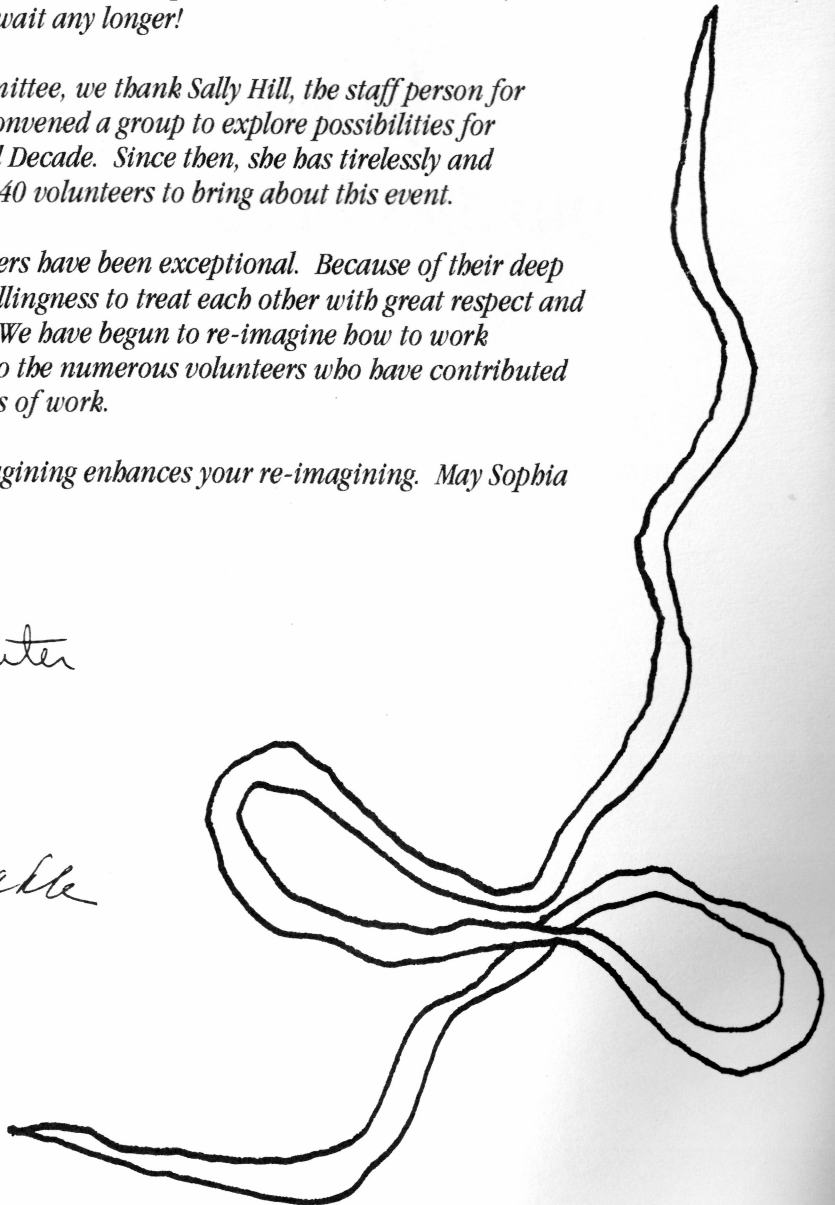
*We hope the fruit of our re-imagining enhances your re-imagining. May Sophia bless our shared journey.*

*Mary Kay Sauter*

*Mary Kay Sauter*

*Kathi Austin Mable*

*Kathi Austin Mable*



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# Time Flow

## Wednesday, November 3

Pre-Conference Events

## Thursday, November 4

**1:00 REGISTRATION BEGINS**

**5:30 OPENING CELEBRATION**

Gathering Ritual  
Minnesota Harvest Feast  
Talking Circle I  
Religious Imagination  
Mary Farrell Bednarowski  
Chung Hyun Kyung  
Bernice Johnson Reagon  
Talking Circle II  
Holy Play Ritual

## Friday, November 5

**8:15 RE-IMAGINING GOD**

Gathering Time  
Morning Ritual  
Re-imagining God  
Chung Hyun Kyung  
Rita Nakashima Brock  
Talking Circle III

**11:30 LUNCH**

**1:00 FOUR MAJOR  
PRESENTATION GROUPS:**

### Jesus

Delores S. Williams  
Kwok Pui-Lan  
Barbara K. Lundblad

### Creation

Anne Primavesi  
Sr. José Hobday  
Elizabeth Bettenhausen

### Church as Spiritual Institution

Ada María Isasi-Díaz  
Joan M. Martin  
Violet Al Raheb

### Sexuality - Family

Frances E. Wood  
Mary Hunt  
Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite

**3:15 BREAK**

**3:45 MULTI-FORMAT OPTION GROUPS**

**5:15 BREAK**

**5:30 TALKING CIRCLE**, optional

**6:00 DINNER**, on your own

**8:00 THE PLAY**

*Simple Gifts*

**THE CONCERT**

*Sweet Honey in the Rock*



Saturday, November 6

**8:15 RE-IMAGINING COMMUNITY**

Gathering Time  
Morning Ritual  
Re-imagining Community  
Lois M. Wilson  
Mercy Amba Oduyoye  
Talking Circle IV

**11:30 LUNCH**

**1:00 FOUR MAJOR  
PRESENTATION GROUPS**

**Language - Word**

Johanna W.H. Bos  
Rosario Batlle  
Jacquelyn Grant

**Women - Arts - Church**

Nancy Chinn  
Nalini Jayasuriya  
Ingeline Nielsen

**Ethics - Work - Ministry**

Beverly Wildung Harrison  
Aruna Gnanadason  
Toinette M. Eugene

**Church as Worshipping  
Community**

Virginia Ramey Mollenkott  
Christine Marie Smith  
Ofelia Ortega

**3:15 BREAK**

**3:45 MULTI-FORMAT OPTION GROUPS**

**5:15 BREAK**

**5:30 TALKING CIRCLE**, optional

**6:00 DINNER**, on your own

**8:00 THE PLAY**

*Simple Gifts*

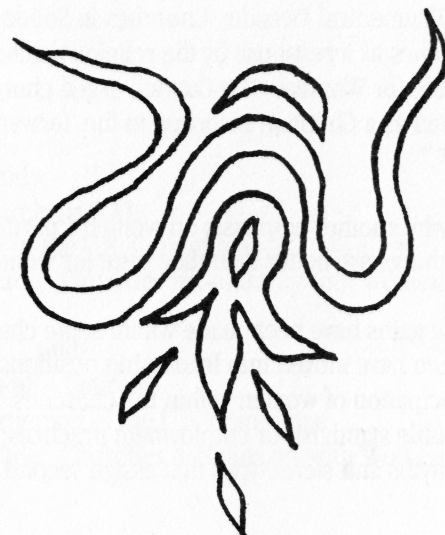
**THE CONCERT**

*Sweet Honey in the Rock*

Sunday, November 7

**8:30 SUNDAY RITUAL**

Talking Circle V  
Living in the Struggle Ritual  
Brunch  
The Struggle for Transformation Ritual  
Proclamation: Christine Marie Smith



# The Ecumenical Decade

The Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-98) provides Christian women and men the opportunity to gain an increased understanding of the situations of women and to act to improve the status of women in churches and communities. "Decade" groups in various countries and regions of the world are developing programs and actions which address women's needs within the context of their cultures.

Following the UN Decade for Women, the World Council of Churches called the "Decade" into being as a way to address the unfinished work regarding the plight of women around the globe.

## Goals of the Ecumenical Decade

- Empowering women to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, their country and their church.
- Affirming—through shared leadership and decision-making, theology and spirituality—the decisive contributions of women in churches and communities.
- Giving visibility to women's perspectives and actions in the work and struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.
- Enabling the churches to free themselves from racism, sexism and classism; from teachings and practices that discriminate against women.
- Encouraging the churches to take actions in solidarity with women.

## Background of the Ecumenical Decade

The Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998) was initiated by the World Council of Churches as a response by the religious community to address the unfinished agenda of the United Nations Decade for Women. The Council urged churches "to eliminate teachings and practices that discriminate against women as a Christian response to the 'forward-looking strategies' adopted by the UN Conference in Nairobi in 1985."

But why another emphasis on women's participation in church and in society, some ask. We're obviously moving and things are better than they were for women. Haven't things improved for women?

While gains have been made within some churches regarding ordination of women as clergy and laity and some women have moved into leadership positions, nonetheless, we still have far to go to reach the goal of full participation of women within the churches. We still express our faith in words that exclude women; we still have a double standard for employment practices; there is still pay inequity and we, too within the churches perpetuate the myths and stereotypes that assign second class status and roles to women.

In times of economic difficulty, women are the first to lose their jobs; women workers in industry are paid the lowest wages without benefits and often without protection; women in rural areas receive the least attention in development plans and are not consulted about their basic needs; as socio-economic conditions deteriorate and men's frustration grows, the level of sexual abuse and violence against women grows.

It is clear that much remains to be done around the world and in our own country. The churches are being challenged, as a worldwide movement, to engage in this struggle with and for women at the grassroots. As we move into the Decade, churches are being challenged to create a ministry of empowering, sharing and healing. They are being asked to denounce hierarchy and the oppression of women within their own structures and through shared leadership and decision-making, theological reflection and spiritual renewal, to affirm the contributions of women in church and community. The churches are being challenged to free themselves from racism, sexism and classism and to model new forms of partnership.

This is no small agenda for institutions that historically have often been the slowest to change, often the most cautious in responding to their own message of transformation, often the most closely identified with a culture that has relegated women to second-class status.

And yet it is in the churches that women have so often found their voices, been educated, called to full participation and equipped for meaningful vocations. And thus it is that we call the churches to live out their message of full personhood for all to commit themselves to the struggle for liberation for all persons.

This is not to be a Decade of women for women; it is not to be a Decade for churches to work for women; it is to be the Decade for men and women in churches to work together to bring changes in ecclesiastical and social structures that are obstacles to women's full development and participation.

For the Decade to achieve its goals, the knowledge, experience and commitment of women and men in new configurations at the local level will need to be developed. Priorities will need to be set in light of local needs and local resources. As we work on our issues in our places of work and worship and struggle together for solutions to common problems, we will find ourselves in solidarity with sisters and brothers working on a common agenda across the globe.



Ms Mary Ann Lundy,  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)  
Former Co-chair of the U.S. Committee  
Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women

The Rev. Forrest C. Stith,  
The United Methodist Church  
Current Co-chairperson of the U.S. Committee  
Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women

## Pre-conference Events

### Wednesday, November 3 - Daytime

#### **AN URBAN AMERICAN INDIAN EXPERIENCE**

The Twin Cities is the location of a significant community of Native Americans. Participants will talk with Indian leaders, tour an urban reservation, visit church and community agencies that provide needed services and tour the Minneapolis American Indian Center.

### Wednesday November 3 - Evening

#### **EVENING WITH THE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITY**

Participants will have the opportunity to share an American Indian feast and enjoy traditional entertainment.

### Thursday, November 4 - Daytime

#### **DAY WITH WOMEN POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY LEADERS**

Tour the Minnesota Women's Building, a building owned and developed by women, which houses many non-profit organizations for women and hear a panel of community leaders. Visit the Minnesota State Capitol and meet women political and government leaders. Lunch at the American Association of University Women clubhouse with a panel of legislative lobbyists. Finally, tour a battered women's shelter near the Capitol.

#### **A WALKING TOUR OF STUDIOS OF WOMEN ARTISTS**

The Minneapolis warehouse district houses many artists' studios. This is an opportunity to visit women artists who work in different media and see their work in progress.

#### **A GATHERING OF STORYTELLERS**

Three women storytellers will help participants re-imagine our stories through storytelling. Come to listen, come to explore, come to learn the art of telling personal and Scriptural stories from a feminist point of view.

# Ritual of the Spirit of Re-imagining

GATHERING PEOPLE IS AN ANCIENT ACT. THE CARE AND MINDFULNESS WITH WHICH WE GATHER THIS EVENING IS, IN ITSELF, A RE-IMAGINING OF COMMUNITY AND AN ENCOUNTERING OF THE DIVINE. WE LINGER HERE, AS GATHERING MOMENTS INVITE US TO BECOME A PEOPLE TOGETHER.

## Making Holy Space

The drum is feminine and the drumbeat is the heartbeat of the earth. In the Lakota Culture, it has not been considered traditional for women to sit at the drum and sing. However, two women got a seat at the drum in order to help out their male partners. They were so in tune with that heartbeat that women are now sitting with the drum. The heart of mother earth indeed beats with our own as one. These women sit there with the drum sharing her heartbeat for the life of the nation. They are the Meadowlark Singers from various South Dakota tribal groups and bid us welcome to this place.

Danean

1. As one we walk this earth to - geth - er.  
2. As one we join with her, our moth - er.

As one we sing to her our song.  
As one we feel her sa - cred song.

As one we love her, as one we  
As one we touch her, as one we

heal her, her heart beats with our own  
heal her, her heart beats with our own

as one.  
as one.

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