



# A Newsletter for Clergywomen in the Church of the Nazarene

Produced by Pastoral Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131

# NEW

# HORIZONS

Summer  
1997

## CLERGYWOMEN'S BREAKFAST



24th General Assembly  
San Antonio, Texas

Sunday, July 22, 1997 - 7:30 a.m.  
at the Hyatt, Garden Terrace



Welcome & Introduction of Guests .....Dr. Phyllis Perkins  
*Former Editor, New Horizons*

### Heritage of Faith

Greetings & Invocation .....Dr. Wilbur W. Brannon  
*Director, Pastoral Ministries*

### Happenings of Today

Breakfast is Served  
Table Talk .....Individual Hostesses

Ministry of Music .....Marla Shank  
*Song Evangelist, Church of the Nazarene*

Announcement of Spring 1998 Interdenominational  
Women Clergy Conference .....Nancy Clayton

Current Trends  
Women in Ministry .....Rev. Rich Houseal  
*Church Growth Research Center*

Personal Perspectives .....Debbie Diehl

### Hope for our Future

Ministry of Music .....Marla Shank

Guest Speaker .....Dr. Nina Gunter  
*General NWMS Director*

Benediction .....Carmen Esperilla

## COME TO THE



# Water

“Then & Now:  
The Journey  
of Holiness”

**3<sup>rd</sup> INTERNATIONAL**

**Wesleyan/Holiness  
Women Clergy**

**CONFERENCE**

**April 24 - 26, 1998**

**The Four Points Hotel  
Riverwalk North  
San Antonio, TX**

# What Clergywomen wish their D.S's knew about women in ministry (A letter)

## Dear D.S.–

Imagine with me for a moment: two churches. Church #1 treats women as worthy of high esteem, values their spiritual gifts, encourages them to serve in all areas of the church, blesses them, treats them with compassion, never belittles them. Church #2 treats women as subordinate to men, that women are to have the primary tasks of childrearing and kitchen duties, even in the context of the church, women are forbidden to teach, preach, or otherwise share spiritual insights.

In these two scenarios, the question is: Which church would most reflect the life and teachings of Jesus? Which church would He attend? Which church would the world be drawn to as a place for redemptive dignity and grace?

Because of persistent questions that have been raised regarding women in ministry, an invisible (and sometimes not so invisible), stained glass ceiling has emerged. I ask that, as my D.S., you will prayerfully examine the following considerations to removing that stained glass ceiling here on our wonderful district:

### JESUS SET THE EXAMPLE

Down through the ages, there have been Biblical arguments made for critical issues such as slavery, works righteousness, for stoning people who work on the Sabbath, and for refusing to allow women in ministry. But we must follow the example of Jesus Himself - as He spoke to the woman at the well and then allowed her to go back to her village as a spiritual leader and evangelist among her people. As He rebuked Martha for condemning her sister for choosing a spiritual calling over a domestic one. As in Luke 11 where He himself taught that there was nothing to be gained by concentrating on gender but that our focus should be on serving God. As He allowed women to be the last at the cross and the first at the tomb. Redeemed women and men together have equal responsibility to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed.

### IT IS OUR HERITAGE

When Christ came, He declared authoritatively that there is no longer Greek or Jew, male or female (Gal.3:28) The apostle Paul, whom many quote as being against women in leadership positions, was himself served by the leadership gifts of Phoebe and used terms such as fellow helpers, workers, laborers and soldiers in describing women in ministry. When Methodist leaders tried to exclude women from the society activities, John Wesley told them he did exceedingly disapprove, and later went on to officially authorize Sarah Mallet to preach the gospel. This is the stand that the Church of the Nazarene took when it began in revival fires when 10% of the ordained ministers were women and most of the small group leaders were women.

### THE MALE-FEMALE THING

Some would argue that male leadership in the family requires male leadership in the church. This is primarily because I Timothy 3:15 refers to the church as God's household. In addition, some quote I Timothy 3:2 and say that elders must be men who are husbands of but one wife. This argument is weak and circular. If applied properly, it would mean that all church leaders must be married. In fact, they must all be married with children. If one cannot draw these inferences, then I don't see how we can draw a male-only inference. Yes, all the disciples were men. But they were also all Jews.

### GIFTS ARE GIVEN TO BE USED

God has called both men and women to exercise their gifts for the building up of His Kingdom and the body of Christ (1Cor. 12:4-26; Eph 4:11-12; Rom 12:4-8). We would be disobeying God if we restricted the gifts and the calling He has given us. The Holy Spirit was poured out on both women and men on the day of Pentecost. Both God's sons and daughters prophesied and spoke in tongues. Thousands were converted when they preached. It was not their gender that drew people to the Lord; it was their Christ-like spirit. We do not labor in our own strength but in the power of the holy Spirit. There is only one Spirit; therefore, the same Spirit that calls and enables us is also the same Spirit that calls and enables men.

### THIS IS NOT A POWER PLAY

We simply want to help build the Kingdom. We want to serve. Spiritually healthy individuals know that it is God

who gives us power, and that God's power to serve multiplies and transforms when shared. Paul said "We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. As we mutually submit to one another out of love, we will be led into a greater awareness of the effectiveness of true discipleship. And I can't help but wonder if perhaps Satan trembles at the thought of a host of ordained women and men working side by side, sharing the message of salvation and hope for the glory of God.

### WE NEED YOU

But, no matter how obedient we as female clergy are, we are limited in what we can do to bring about a change. We need you to do everything possible to sensitize our district churches to the unique heritage the Church of the Nazarene (and others in the Wesleyan-holiness tradition) has of women in ministry. Local congregations need to repent of unfair practices that encourages women to serve overseas in the same capacity as men, but restrict women's roles here in the USA. We need you to encourage pastors to be open to preaching about God's calling, regardless of gender, so that young girls, teens, and women are open to the ministerial calling.

"Be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (I Peter 3:15) Our hope is that clergywomen will not be simply tolerated, but welcomed as co-laborers for Christ.

Thanks for listening.

Your obedient servant in Christ,

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Recently Rev. Connie Dixon (Senior Pastor), Rev. Kelly Spitler (Associate, Assimilation), Rev. Becki McCoy (Associate, Music) and Rev. Ellen Decker (Associate, Administration), all from the Washington District, met to talk about their ministries and to be a support to each other. During their luncheon, talk came around to the Clergywomen Conference held last year in Indianapolis and how it continues to enrich their ministries today. Pastor Ellen shares some of the highlights of that discussion.

**Kelly:** One of the most important aspects of the conference for me was that it highlighted women who have successful ministries. It made me realize the responsibility I have to share with other women what it is like to be in a pastoral position so that they are more open to the calling.

**Connie:** I agree with you. That's so important, for all age groups of women in the church.

**Ellen:** One of the ways I have tried to pass on the legacy is to talk to Caravan or children's Sunday School classes about what it means to be a pastor, emphasizing that things like color, gender and race don't matter. I usually bring up my childhood in Africa when I talk, and share with them the African pastors (both male and female) who were influential in my life as a child.

**Connie:** But we need to keep in mind that God calls us to be women in ministry, not to fill a man's shoes.

**Becki, laughing:** I really liked Rev. Swope's comment in her sermon at the conference where she declared, "I can still wear a pretty dress, and splash on perfume, and be a lady ...and be on fire for God!" That's so true!

**Kelly:** It was also interesting to see the tremendous variety of ways that women were involved in ministry! Then I realized...look at the four of us - we are all involved in ministry in different capacities here on the district.

**Ellen:** One of the risks we run, though, as women in ministry is the pressure to feel like we have to do it better, or faster...just because we are women...

**Becki:** As though there is something to prove, or we have to justify what we're doing...

**Ellen:** Exactly. And that's why the conference was life-changing for me - I realized I wasn't "in this thing" alone - there were hundreds of women there, from many denominations, that God has also

# ONE YEAR LATER

uniquely called into ministry. It was very reassuring for me.

**Kelly:** I think, too, that it was important to see so many women, all involved in pastoral ministry, yet in such a variety of ministry areas. There's a real sense of peace that comes when you are content being an Associate Pastor and not feeling like the "next step" needs to be Senior Pastor.

**Connie:** That's right. God called me to be a Senior Pastor, but I reassure women who talk to me about the possibility of becoming a pastor, that he certainly doesn't call everyone to be a Senior Pastor.

**Becki:** I think the offering of workshops at the conference were really geared to a divergence of callings. The ones I took were really helpful.

**Ellen:** The workshop I most benefited from was the one on leadership by Dr. Nina Gunter. It was outstanding - I left feeling empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve!

**Connie:** There was one on writing that I really enjoyed - I think you took that one, too, didn't you, Ellen?

**Ellen:** Yes, and I enjoyed it too. Since then the Lord has impressed upon me that writing is a powerful tool we can use to get out the message of hope - that God calls women, too. We need to do everything possible to sensitize the church not only to the unique heritage it has of women in ministry but also the ongoing calling of women into ministry.

**Kelly:** I really appreciated the frank talk about the "Stained Glass Ceiling" in the area of women in ministry. One of my most painful experiences in ministry was when I went to speak at another church and a Church Board member stayed home because a woman was preaching.

**Connie:** For me, it's been both personal and impersonal. Personally, I have been frustrated at the different standards when it comes to counseling. As a Senior Pastor, I have to counsel both men and women. Sometimes it seems as though the standards for caution need to be so much more restrictive for women than for men, and you wonder if you can be effective in those situations.

**Kelly:** I know what you mean! And sometimes when you counsel men, it seems like it puts a barrier between you and the women in their lives, and that's frustrating when you try to minister to them to... What did you mean by the impersonal effect?

**Connie:** Well, when people accuse you of being of the devil and curse you for what you are doing simply because you are a woman. Fortunately, it's rare, although I have received anonymous hate mail.

**Becki:** That's terrible! Things like that only emphasize to me the need to pray for each other and to be "sisters in Christ" for each other.

**Ellen:** I agree. The fellowship at the conference was so uplifting that I realized

the importance of getting together with each of you here on the district to share the joys and frustrations of our calling. I just wish our schedules allowed it more often!

**Connie:** I find the challenge exciting. There are some negatives to being a woman in ministry, but there are also reasons why God calls women. For instance, there are women who, because of abuse in their lives, will only respond to a female pastor.

**Ellen:** You're right - I've counseled with several. I also think that (typically) women are more sensitive to people's feelings on issues - that can help diffuse some potentially explosive church situations! Also, women tend to lead in a more "relational" manner, which helps to build community and express compassion - two things that people are seeking nowadays.

**Kelly:** When I first received my call from the Lord, it took me by surprise. I wondered why God would want to use women in ministry. But I came to realize that it

came down to only two choices: obey God or disobey God. It's that simple. \*

\* *Rev. Ellen Decker wrote both articles.*

All four are looking forward to the next Clergywomen's Conference, to be held in San Antonio, TX, April 24-26, 1998. They hope to see you there!

Rev. Ellen Decker, an Associate Pastor at the Stillmeadow Church of the Nazarene on the Washington District, gives God praise for her D.S., Dr. Jerry Porter, who welcomes the ministries of clergywomen. Pastor Ellen gives permission for you to copy this letter for your D.S., and welcomes responses to this article by either clergywomen or District Superintendents.

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## NEW HORIZONS BULLETIN

With budget cuts in the office of Pastoral Ministries it has become necessary to find a more creative way to provide *New Horizons* to women clergy. If you would like to help us, please complete the following form and return it to us. Pastoral Ministries, 6401 The Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64131 or leave it at the Clergywomen or Pastoral Ministries booth.

Yes, I am interested in keeping the *New Horizons* available to Women Clergy and I would be willing to subscribe annually for \$5.00.

No, I do not feel that the *New Horizons* is useful to Women Clergy.

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