

## **GBGM Women's Division: United Methodist Women's Assembly May 4-7, 2006 Anaheim, California**

by Kelly C. Martini



More than 8,000 women will gather at United Methodist Women's Assembly on May 4-7, 2006, at the Anaheim, Calif., Convention Center. Part of a one-million member organization, the women are bonded by common concerns – the issues and struggles of women, children and youth.

Held once every four years, the event this year will follow the theme of "Rise, Shine, Glorify God!" United Methodist Women from across the country and visitors from around the world will join in celebration and education opportunities through performance, music, Bible study, interactive exhibits, and a host of dynamic speakers.



*Participant performs liturgical dance at 2002 assembly.  
Image by: Paul Jeffrey  
Source: Women's Division*

### **Basic Schedule of the Event**

*Thursday, 7:00 p.m.--* Opening Procession and Worship

The first evening's program will open with music and a carnival-like atmosphere, as a procession of 63 banners, one from each United Methodist annual conference, enters the arena led by three huge, brightly-colored puppets. The participants can expect to be enveloped by color, music, and excitement.

The mood will change as worship begins. A soloist singing "Kiowa Prayer Song," ("Jesus, we come to you to pray"), will be followed by a "Holy Spirit dancer," as a flowing, expanse of white fabric moves ethereally.

Women's Division president, Kyung Za Yim will enter for the Call to Worship, which will reverberate with "calls" from around the world:

- **Latino drums**
- **Tongan drums**
- **African drums**
- **Native American drumming and chanting**

As worship continues, Japanese Taiko drumming will intermingle with Scripture readings.

### *Friday Morning*

Mornings will begin with Bible Study, followed by plenary presentations on the work and mission of United Methodist Women with women, children and youth. Leadership for the Friday morning session is still being confirmed, but includes:

- **New Entra Casa – a project that evolved from a prison transitional program for women. Teenagers from this group, having survived the worst family circumstances, developed their own Gospel Rock tunes and named themselves, the “Sanctified Soul jahz”.**

### *Friday Afternoon*

Participants have selected from **more than 60 workshops**, which address spirituality, theology, membership and innovative worship ideas, social issues, political issues, and mission – all with a focus on women and children.

### *Friday Evening*

- **Latino Orquesta Jubileo, (The Jubilee Orchestra), will perform with a 14-piece Christian salsa band.**
- **Actress, playwright, and writer, Anna Deveare Smith, will give a one-woman performance focusing on issues of social justice pertinent to women and children. Ms. Smith is best-known for dramatic interpretations of controversial events from multiple viewpoints. She combines journalistic techniques of interviewing her subjects and interpretations of their words through drama. She gave similar performances following the civil unrest following the Rodney King verdict, and the 1991 riots involving racial tensions in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, N.Y. At present, she’s in New Orleans preparing for her next drama that will incorporate the events in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina with its human suffering.**

### *Saturday Morning*

- **Music and theology will converge as Grammy award-winning musician, Emily Saliers of the Indigo Girls, joins her father, Don E. Saliers, professor at Candler School of Theology, as keynote speakers on this morning. Emily is one-half of the award-winning duo with Amy Ray. Together, they have had a distinguished recording and touring career as musicians for 18 years, producing 14 records with a consistent social justice theme. Her first book, in collaboration with her father, Don Saliers, is entitled *A Song to Sing, a Life to Live* (Jossey-Bass, 2004). Dr. Saliers is the William R. Cannon Distinguished Professor of Theology and Worship at Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta, Ga., where he also directs the Masters in Sacred Music Program. Prior to moving to Atlanta in 1974, he taught at Yale Divinity School. Author of a dozen books and more than 100 articles, he is in demand as a lecturer across the ecumenical church. Dr. Saliers has contributed to the development of worship for The United Methodist Church for nearly 40 years.**
- **The *a capella* singing of the Tongan Women’s Choir exemplifies just one aspect of the diverse cultures and heritages that comprise the California-Pacific annual conference.**
- **Bible study leader, Garlinda Burton, General Secretary of the denomination's**

**Commission on the Status and Role of Women, will weave stories from the Gospel of Matthew with real life, depicting some of today's women doing extraordinary things to improve the lives of women and children. The women, who will be present to tell their stories, are:**

1) **Casimira Rodriguez**, a domestic worker from Bolivia who has organized millions of domestic workers throughout Latin America

2) **Kim Hallowell**, a teenager from California who founded a "Free the Children" Book Club and has organized youth around global child labor issues

3) **Christy Smith**, a writer from Tennessee, who moved into disaster work when devastating tornadoes hit Tennessee a few years ago. Following this fall's hurricanes across the Gulf Region, she began working as a case manager for the United Methodist Committee on Relief, assisting people affected by the natural disaster.

#### *Saturday Afternoon*

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#### *Saturday Night*

- **Clark Atlanta University Steppers** come from a historically-supported United Methodist Women's institution, carrying on an African-American tradition that was highlighted at the 1996 Olympic games. Stepping combines the agility of cheerleading with the stomping rhythms of clogging.
- A historical United Methodist Women-supported and -founded institution, Ewha University in Seoul, Korea, is now the largest women's university in the world. Ewha University Alumni Choir, with women from around the country and world, will share their music and history.

#### *Sunday morning*

With dancers, lighting, and a sunrise, all focusing on "creating a new heaven and earth to glorify God," the Assembly comes to a close with worship on Sunday morning. The program will include dancers, the house band, musician Jorge Lockward, and the closing message from **Dr. Jan Love, chief executive of the one-million member United Methodist Women.**

#### *Other Assembly Highlights*

- **Interactive Exhibit area** designed to educate participants on the issues of women and children through communications, racism training, education, environment, spiritual growth, and much more.
- **Opportunities to meet international guests** who have worked with women and children in the most impoverished areas of the world, and on issues of justice for them.
- **Thursday's "Walk for Mission,"** with women from around the nation walking to raise money for mission with women, children and youth.

- **Pre-event Higher Education Summit, which will involve a global panel of participants from historically UMW-related institutions of higher learning. These participants will share their concerns, the needs, and resources for empowering young people through education.**



**See Also...**

**Topic:** Children | Music | Women | Youth |

**Geographic Region:** United States |

**Source:** Women's Division