

Women In Ministry Hosts “Women United in Heart for the Family” Conference

Tom Cutts
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On July 25, 2015, a sunny Saturday, the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLCL) Women In Ministry hosted a “Women United in Heart for the Family” conference at the Antioch Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York. This event ran in conjunction with the Women In Ministry Four City Seminar Tour.

Amidst the bright yellow decorations, ministers and guests arrived early to convene for a continental breakfast, spending time to catch up with one another. Over 100 participants arrived from the northeast, which included the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut regions to regroup, share messages and inspire each other.

As the event opened, the emcee, Bishop Sulanch Grand-Lewis, began the program with a performance of the song Amazing Grace, sung in a strong gospel voice. The fully packed six-hour conference continued with intervals of praise and worship, and proactive participation from the audience. The vocalist and pianist for the event, Tyetia Beckford, lifted the atmosphere of the church with her graceful music.

Rev. Dr. Vonih Johyn, the Co-chair of ACLCL-NY, offered a moving opening prayer, after which all were introduced to their host, Dr. Robert Waterman. He spoke briefly, welcomed all the guests and showed enthusiasm to talk about family.



The trailblazer and cornerstone of ACLCL, Rev. George Augustus Stallings, Jr. (National Co-Chair of

ACLCLC) then offered a welcoming address, inviting the audience to rejoice for the potential of greatness to come. He formally showed his gratitude to those working beside him, including Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Continental Chair of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU). He also praised the Women In Ministry and the commitment of its Chairwomen, Rev. Reiko Jenkin and Rev. Marilyn Kotulek. Inspired and excited by the Four City Seminar, he proposed to next have a Women's Retreat where women can spend a weekend together discussing future ministry projects in Washington, DC. He said, "If ACLCLC is to grow it is because of the Women In Ministry in our organization." Participants responded with enthusiasm and felt empowered.

Before introducing the presenters, a statement of purpose was recited by Rev. Marilyn Kotulek. Rev. Kotulek included the mission statement, reading, "The ACLCLC Women In Ministry's mission is a committee of the National ACLCLC. ACLCLC Women In Ministry reflects the heart of God by ministering to rebuild the family, restore the community, and renew the nation and the world."

Two presentations were shared each by Dr. Patra Kidwell and Rev. Zena Sykes. The presentations were accompanied by remarks from Dr. Michael Jenkins, the Chairman Emeritus of ACLCLC and a reading of True Mother's speech, "Blessed Marriage and Eternal Life" from Spring 1998, by Rev. Tanya Edwards, Pastor of Family Church of New York City.

Dr. Patra Kidwell spoke of the Three Great Blessings, using both quotes from the Bible and words of True Parents. Her powerful voice enthralled the audience to join in key moments and repeat, "Glory to God!" which led to a standing ovation from participants. Participants gained new insight into God's plan and discussed amongst each other during Q&A.



Rev. Zena Sykes covered the Fall of Adam and Eve interactively by directing a play with fellow ACLCLC members. Rev. Zena Sykes and her husband assumed the role of Adam and Eve, while Rev. Jesse Edwards stood as God, and Rev. Tom Cutts stood as the serpent. Rev. Jesse Edwards and Rev. Tom Cutts both sat on separate ends of the stage. The audience laughed along to the comedic performance and watched intently as the play unfolded. Participants spent time discussing and expanding on the meaning of the Fall and the significance of the fruit. After having two successful presentations, participants sat for a video presentation on the history of ACLCLC, covering the We Will Stand Tour and ACLCLC's role in America.

Despite waiting in long lines for a delicious buffet lunch, the participants remained lively with live worship music and moments of dancing. Although this was an event themed on women, at each table was seated a diverse group of ministers both male and female.

Upon finishing their lunch, everyone gathered for the keynote address presented by Rev. Que English, the Senior Pastor at Bronx Christian Fellowship Church and Chairperson of Coalition Against Human Trafficking & Domestic Violence. Rev. Que English moved the audience with her concern of domestic violence. She declared, "If we are going to bring healing to families, let it be us," and also, "Let's change our thinking of victim to victor." She poured her heart out about the 282,000 reports of domestic violence

by the NYPD. Passionately, she engaged the audience to join her in sincere prayer for each person to not be afraid to wear their faith on their sleeve.



The program continued with a panel presentation by Rev. Yolanda Brown, the Minister of Economic Development, and Ms. Dawn Diaz from Milagros Day Worldwide Inc. Ms. Dawn Diaz brought her beautiful hopeful spirit and shared her story of her mother suffering from domestic violence as she grew up. The audience openly received her message of changing abuse to success.



Closing the program, Bishop Michael and Rev. Zena Sykes introduced the Proclamation of Gratitude and asked members to sign the long banner. A celebration cake was served to everyone and this concluded the event. Despite running behind schedule, participants left inspired and empowered. Rev. Tom Cutts, National Executive Director of ACLC, satisfied from the event mentioned, "Many participants, even those hearing about the Fall of Man for the first time, grasped the idea that the Fall was not caused by eating a literal fruit." On the general ambiance he added, "The young lady on the keyboard masterfully maintained a bright spirit throughout the program. And the food at breakfast and lunch was delicious and plentiful. There was a powerful anointing on all the speeches given throughout the program. Minister

Reiko Jenkins gave concluding remarks and it felt like True Father was speaking through her.”



After this event, ACLC ministers will be preparing for the nationwide Holy Marriage Blessing on October 3rd and 4th. Women In Ministry continues to strive for excellence in empowering marriages and families.

For more information on Women in Ministry and its current projects, here is an interview with Rev. Reiko Jenkins, Co-Chair of Women In Ministry:



How long has Women In Ministry been working?

It started in 2004. What happened was True Father gave a special proclamation that this is the women's era and all women in America have to really serve the world. That was in 2004, March 23rd. On March 24 we had an ACLC convocation, and during that time we had a small women's gathering of about 75 women. With True Father's proclamation, we really believed that the Holy Spirit came down to all women and that was the beginning of the women's ministry. God brought women together through our

ACLC leadership.

We had to go along step by step. You know women are very strong at times, so we may conflict with each other. We had to mature and grow together and pray together. The first thing we did was pray together in 2004. For 11 years, we have been praying on the phone, and we also had three conferences. In Jamestown, Virginia we did a reconciliation of colonial descendants and Native American women. Women In Ministry is working to reconcile and to bring America to fulfill its purpose.

What is the Four City Seminars Tour?

For the Four City Tour, Rev. Stallings had a special revelation and said, "You Women In Ministry, I challenge you to go to the four corners of the nation to speak out for America." We started in Chicago on March 28th, and New York is our second city. Next week we are going to Los Angeles, and Oklahoma in September.

What do you think of Rev. Stallings' idea for a Women's Retreat?

I think it's a great idea! I can see that God uses our leaders to really go to the next level. We have to get ready. It's like an assignment, not just a wish. It's an assignment that God is blessing us, so a new responsibility is opening up.

What do you think of the future of Women In Ministry?

True Mother is very serious about bring young people in our church. The youth is the hope, because for the past 15 years so many ACLC pastors have ascended to the spirit world. So absolutely, young people need to come, that's the next step. We want to do an internship for young women or men to be part of ACLC. It's always not easy for Unificationists to relate with Christianity, so we want to conduct education or Bible study together. At ACLC we have a Pastors' Forum to teach Divine Principle through Bible verses. This actually came as a result from the True Family Ministry, where we used the Divine Principle and Bible verses to really explain concept for Christians to receive the words well.