MISSIONARY CONFERENCES of the United Methodist Church in the United States

West Ohio Conference

Mission u

Dr. Linda Johnson Crowell
Opening Worship
Amos 5:6-24-NIV

- 6 Seek the LORD and live, or he will sweep through the tribes of Joseph like a fire; it will devour them, and Bethel will have no one to quench it.
- 7 There are those who turn justice into bitterness and cast righteousness to the ground.
- 8 He who made the Pleiades and Orion, who turns midnight into dawn and darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land— the LORD is his name.
- 9 With a blinding flash he destroys the stronghold and brings the fortified city to ruin.
- 10 There are those who hate the one who upholds justice in court and detest the one who tells the truth.
- 11 You levy a straw tax on the poor and impose a tax on their grain. Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine.
- 12 For I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins. There are those who oppress the innocent and take bribes and deprive the poor of justice in the courts.
- 13 Therefore the prudent keep quiet in such times, for the times are evil.
- 14 Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the LORD God Almighty will be with you, just as you say he is.
- 15 Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps the LORD God Almighty will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph.
- 16 Therefore this is what the Lord, the LORD God Almighty, says: “There will be wailing in all the streets and cries of anguish in every public square. The farmers will be summoned to weep and the mourners to wail.
- 17 There will be wailing in all the vineyards, for I will pass through your midst,” says the LORD.
18 Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD! Why do you long for the day of the LORD? That day will be darkness, not light.

19 It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him.

20 Will not the day of the LORD be darkness, not light—pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?

21 “I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me.

22 Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.

23 Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps.

24 But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!
Reflection

- The people of Israel are told of their duties
- They are reminded to be honest, just and serious in the applications of these duties
- How to these apply to us in 2017?
Reading-Psalm 56:8-13

8 Record my misery; list my tears on your scroll— are they not in your record? 9 Then my enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this I will know that God is for me.

10 In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise—

11 in God I trust and am not afraid. What can man do to me? 12 I am under vows to you, my God; I will present my thank offerings to you. 13 For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.
Early Beginnings

- Very early in the history of American Methodism, congregations were formed and are still begun today according to language and ethnic affinities.

- Separate language conferences continued to be a part of American Methodist traditions until the Rio Grand Conference, the most recent separate language conference, was disbanded and absorbed into annual conferences in Texas and New Mexico in 2014.

- The language conferences came into existence as a means to keep congregants who worshiped in the same language together and to help preserve their cultural identity.

- The Rio Grande Conference was given the option to merge with Anglo church or exist as a separate entity before their merger. They chose to remain a language conference.

- The denomination’s ethnic minority churches still want to retain their heritage.
The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, lost its African American members before and during the Civil War. In 1939 the Central Jurisdiction was formed for all African American members of the church.

It was one of six jurisdictions—administrative units responsible for electing bishops—of the church and the only racial jurisdiction.

Unlike the other jurisdictions, which were determined by geography, the Central Jurisdiction was shaped by race, which resulted in a segregated organizational structure and kept white and black Methodists apart.
The Central Jurisdiction

- The Central Jurisdiction was imposed on the black membership as a compromise between the white membership for the union of the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Methodist Episcopal Church North.

- The black membership had no say so in the racist decision to create the Central Jurisdiction. They wept on the floor of the General Conference as the white leadership sealed the deal as if they were invisible.
The Central Jurisdiction was also plagued by a lack of resources and the challenge of administering an excessively large geographic area.

As a condition for merger, the United Brethren insisted that The Central Jurisdiction be abolished in 1968, and African American Methodists were integrated into the larger church.

(Encyclopedia Britannica, retrieved June 30, 2017)
Central Jurisdiction

- “The Central Jurisdiction is the way the Methodist Church, from 1939 – 1968, practiced segregation. All Methodist African American conferences and local churches were placed in this Jurisdiction. This ensured the separation of whites and blacks at all levels, except at the very highest.”
- African American Heritage Center (2016)
General Church Agencies
Craig (2017) Missionary Conferences of the United Methodist Church
The former Rio Grande Conference and the three current missionary conferences, although serving communities that share a history, language, and to some extent a cultural identity, they were created under different circumstances than the Central Jurisdiction.

Those conferences are, rather, a part of the missional and historical work for social justice of The United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations.

The existence of the missionary conferences serves as a constant reminder that we must be a welcoming church, practicing radical hospitality not only with our words but also by our actions.

Their existence is indeed in contrast with the Central Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church.
United Methodist Women’s Ministries with the Missionary Conferences

- United Methodist Women have been in ministry with missionary conferences for over a century.
- The partnership is still very tangible through the United Methodist Women- supported National Mission institutions serving the needs of women, children, and youth and their families in the United States.
- Faith, Hope and Love in Action
Alaska-2 UMW National Mission Institutions

- AK Child and Family (Anchorage)

- Nome Community Center (Nome)
  - In existence for over 100 years
  - “Born from the hearts of United Methodist Women to address the needs of the community.”
3 UMW National Mission Institutions in Red Bird

- Red Bird Mission
- Began in 1919 by the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Evangelical Church- one of the UMW’s predecessor organizations
- Red Bird Clinic and Red Bird Mission Schools
- In operation since 1921
"Creating Opportunities for Better Lives Through Christ-Centered Service"

- Henderson Settlement (Frakes, Kentucky)
- Henderson Settlement began in 1925
Commitment Service

- Index Cards
- Something you learned during the session to share with someone else
- Something you want to ask forgiveness for
- At least one action you plan to take to bring changes for God’s people living on the boundaries of society in the missionary conferences.

Craig (2017) Missionary Conferences of the United Methodist Church
“I can’t stand your religious meetings. I’m fed up with your conferences and conventions. I want nothing to do with your religion projects, your pretentious slogans and goals. I’m sick of your fund-raising schemes, your public relations and image making. I’ve had all I can take of your noisy ego-music. When was the last time you sang to me? Do you know what I want? I want justice—oceans of it. I want fairness—rivers of it. That’s what I want. That’s all I want.
Go to serve

- Closing Hymn
- As you go, tell the world
- Peace be with you.