

# GCSRW Monitoring Report, April 30

Our morning began with beautiful images of our great diversity! It was evident in the music, the worship leaders, and especially in the persons who were commissioned as Home Missioners and Deaconesses. We further witnessed this diversity as we received the report for United Women in Faith.

Bishop Delores Williamston called the morning plenary session to order by engaging us in prayer. We are grateful for the incredibly capable women who chair the several committees of the General Conference and who report daily to aid the work that awaits the delegates!

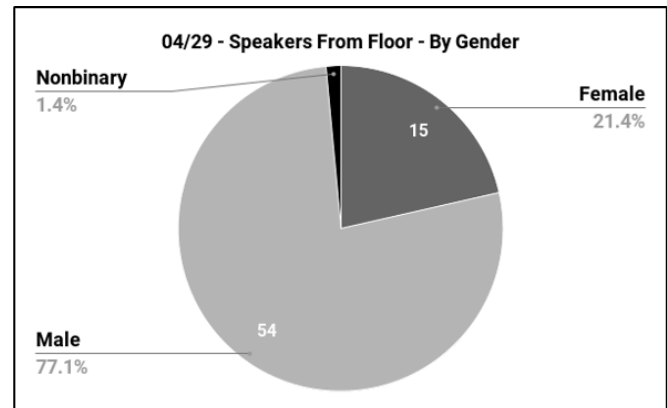
Much of the first section of the morning session was used for nominations across important areas of our work and connection. As we moved further into the morning and early afternoon, Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball presided for the day's first calendar item. Bishop Mande Muyombo presided for the later afternoon session, which included receiving the report of Africa University (AU). Throughout the AU report, we heard about the difference that Africa University is making for the empowerment of women in Africa. This was made evident by Rev. Dr. Betty Kazadi's presentation.

A great deal of our day was utilized debating calendar items. However, while in past days we have seen a fair balance of speakers according to gender, this did not hold true today. Today's deliberations from the floor were dominated by

male speakers. We saw that 77% of the speakers identified as male, 22% identified as female and 1% identified as nonbinary. We can do better than this!

During the week ahead of us, we should ask ourselves, "If I choose to speak, will I be preventing another voice from having opportunity?" Another question for self-reflection might be, "How many times I have entered the pool to speak. Do my multiple requests prevent someone else from speaking for the very first time?"

Let's commit together to ensure that all delegates have the space to contribute to our collective work!



# GCORR Equity Monitoring Report No. 7

In an official monitoring report last week, we were reminded to "honor each other's personal space" by "respecting appropriate boundaries." As we continue in full plenary sessions, it is important to recall this expectation. A specific example of the need for respecting boundaries has been recognized:

Among our observers is an individual who is accompanied by a service dog. It is important to remember that this service dog is at work when present in the Convention Center. We should never approach, pet, or talk to the dog without the clear permission of the person they accompany. In the words of someone with a service dog, "Please look at and talk to the human, not the service dog." That

approach will preserve dignity and honor boundaries.

Bishop Karen Oliveto of the Mountain Sky Conference delivered a sermon reminding us of the importance of being church with and loving those on the margins. Incorporating John Wesley's admonition not to overlook the lost, lonely, and least, Bishop Oliveto challenged us to consider that if we are a denomination defined by those who are left out, "Has Jesus Christ ever been let in?"

The debates early in the day were a celebration as African Conference delegates spoke most often. However, it was mostly white delegates from the United States requesting to end debate. The debates lasted around three hours and have relevance for the equity questions about the impact of legislation:

- Who will benefit and in what ways?
- Who will gain or lose power (authority, access)?

There is growth across multiple conferences and countries in Africa. Delegates and the UMC are grappling with the equity between needs and resources. Yet, why was this body discussing the boundaries and arrangements of the Episcopal Areas in Central Conferences? Some Central Conference delegates may not have had advance information about those deliberations. Information is power, often influencing and impacting decision-making processes and outcomes. Who holds that information and who shares it matters greatly.

- Who will gain or lose resources (budgets,

staff, ministries, buildings)?

They also invite us to recall Jesus' admonition in the Gospel, "I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat..." When one delegate challenged the delegates to consider how the historic and contemporary plundering of Africa by colonializing powers has created some of the financial imbalances, it also pushed The United Methodist Church to ponder Jesus' further teaching in that passage:

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you...?' 'The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" Matthew 25:34-40. NIV

In the midst of holy conferencing Tuesday afternoon, we received word from Bishop Connie Shelton of a mass shooting here in Charlotte. Immediately, many of us from the United States recognized this announcement as one that we hear far too often. It will be followed by images of police responses, blocked streets, chaos, and the distress of families, friends, and neighbors standing by in a chasm of unknowns. As we continue our prayers for the people directly impacted by this tragedy, may we remember, in the words of Letty M. Russell, that among the things in our families, churches, and communities "most in need of justice and healing, there is no separation between things spiritual and material, religious and political, sacred and secular in our lives. God is in all of it, calling us to make connections that mend our lives, churches, and world."

From Just Hospitality