



Women-Church Convergence

Vision of Church

Member Organizations

8th Day Center for Justice
A Critical Mass: Women Celebrating Eucharist
BVM Network for Women's Issues
Catholic Network for Women's Equity (CNWE)
Catholics for Choice (CFC)
Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC), Canada
Catholics Speak Out / Quixote Center
Chicago Women-Church
Con-Spirando Collective
Dignity/USA
The Grail in the USA
Greater Cincinnati Women-Church
Loretto Women's Network
Louisville Women-Church
Mary's Pence
National Coalition of American Nuns (NCAN)
Peace with Justice Committee of The Sister of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods
Roman Catholic Womenpriests
San Francisco Bay Area Women-Church
Sinsinawa Dominican Women's Network
Sisters Against Sexism (SAS)
Sisters of Charity: Office of Peace, Justice & Integrity of Creation
Southern California Women-Church
Women-Church Baltimore
Women-Eucharist Boulder
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER)
Women's Ordination Conference (WOC)

Introduction and Invitation

Groups in Women-Church Convergence recently participated in creating a Vision of Church. Spiritualities and theologies, liturgy, and community emerged as constitutive elements in our vision. You are invited to reflect on and adapt this Vision of Church. Please share your dreams with us.

Spiritualities and Theologies

Are consistent with the values of the Gospel as a discipleship of equals.
Affirm equality and mutuality
As expressed in feminist liberation theologies and spiritualities
Challenge kyriarchy¹ and patriarchy
In church and in society
Seek justice
With the oppressed, the poor, and the marginalized who are disproportionately women and children
Effect social transformation and the realization of scriptural values-
Love, compassion, justice, freedom, peace
Celebrate inclusivity
In structures, ministries, language, and images of the Divine
Value diversity
Regarding ableness, age, class, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, symbol
Are committed to feminist praxis
And feminist analyses of life struggles
Honor interpersonal relationships
And the dignity and uniqueness of each person as bearer of the Holy.
Create new experiences of the Sacred:
Connected with the Creator of All
Empowered by the vision of Jesus
Energized by Sophia.²
Foster interdependence
Promote sacramentality
Advocate an eco-feminist integrity of creation.
Are open to gifts of other religious traditions
Recognizing church as ever-evolving
In a pluralistic global context.

(continued)

Women-Church Convergence, c/o Susan Farrell
20 Snowflake Lane, Edison, NJ 08820
Office phone: 718-368-4511 Fax: 718-368-4887
email: saf48@verizon.net / www.women-churchconvergence.org

Liturgy

Is rooted in ancient traditions
Celebrates women
Acknowledges sensuality
Incorporates storytelling and the arts in celebration
Ritualizes the sacred in everyday events and life passages
Experiences the sacred as among us
Treasures varied images of the sacred
Values inclusive language
Embodies the richness of diversity.

Community

Is an interdependent discipleship of equals
 Sharing power and decision-making
Is a mutually empowering group
 Which creates and effects ownership among the members
 And values non-violent interaction with all of creation.
Encourages feminist critique of systems in church and society.
Develops and enhances kinship
 Through mutual accountability and ongoing reflection.

Notes

1. The word "kyriarchy" literally means "lordship." It is described by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza as a "neologism ... coined to connote a complex systemic interstructuring of sexism, racism, classism and cultural-religious imperialism that has produced the Western 'politics of Otherness.'" (Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Feminist/Women Priests--An Oxymoron?", *New Women, New Church*, Fall 1995, p. 18).

2. Sophia is the Greek word for "wisdom" and is found throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. In Proverbs, Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon, "wisdom" is personified as a woman who has significant relationships to both humans and the Divine. In recent years, feminist theologians have begun to use the name "Sophia" in place of "Holy Spirit." Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has devoted significant attention to Woman Wisdom and to understanding Jesus as the messenger of Divine Sophia (*Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*, Continuum, 1994). See also Elizabeth Johnson (*She Who Is*, Crossroad, 1992). (Adapted from "Sophia/Wisdom" in *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, Letty M. Russell & J. Shannon Clarkson, Eds., Westminster Press, 1996).

Edited by Ethel Dignan, Rose Mary Meyer, Karen Schwarz and Ginny Williams (RIP). Affirmed by members of Women-Church Convergence, April 1999, Sanibel Island, Florida.

WOMEN-CHURCH CONVERGENCE



Definition and Purpose

Women-Church convergence is a coalition of autonomous Catholic-rooted organizations/groups raising a feminist voice and committed to an ekklesia of women which is participative, egalitarian and self-governing.

Women-Church Convergence:

- is church, a discipleship of equals, moving from a paradigm of domination to one of mutuality,
- works to eradicate patriarchy, sexism and racism in order to transform church and society.
- furthers the Women-Church movement.

Mutual Agreements

We recognize women as free moral agents with authority to take full responsibility for their lives.

Therefore, we agree that:

- Women create policy; develop and provide feminist ministry and feminist theology; act as ministers of sacramental life and administrators as church.
- Women's spirituality and justice work are essential to being church.
- We work for the equal distribution of economic resources in local, national, and global communities, especially for women and children who are marginalized in church and society.
- We work to end economic profit as the primary motivation for development.
- We continue to root out racism in our personal lives and in the structures of church and society.
- We work towards the elimination of heterosexism/homophobia and affirm every person's right and gift to be who they are and love whom they love.
- Women are, and of right ought to be, the primary decision makers in matters of reproduction, sexuality and women's health.
- We work to eliminate all forms of violence, especially against women and children.

Structure

Decision-Making Body

The decision making body of the Women-Church Convergence is made up of one-two women representative(s) from each member organization/group. While discussions are open to those present, each organization/group present at the Convergence meeting will have only one voice/vote in Convergence decisions.

The Convergence will meet at least twice annually.

Coordinating Team

- A group of three, from the Women-Church Convergence, Convergence representatives will function as the Coordinating Team to facilitate the accomplishment of actions and to be a public voice; share information with Convergence members; and coordinate Convergence business.
- The Convergence empowers the Coordinating Team, between meetings, to make necessary decisions which are congruent with our MUTUAL AGREEMENTS and within budgetary limitations.
- The Coordinating Team is accountable to Women-Church Convergence, Inc. through the Women-Church Convergence.
- The Coordinating Team will present a written report at each meeting.
- The Coordinating Team members may be self-nominated or nominated by other members of the Convergence for a two-year term. At least one member of the team continues into the next term. Members may serve only for two consecutive terms. They are eligible to serve again after at least one year's absence from the Coordinating Team.
- Where possible, the team members reflect the diversity present in the Convergence.
- These positions are not salaried. Funds will be available for: fax, phone, postage, stationery, copy costs (no travel).

Part-Time Staff

- The Coordinating Team will research the issues involved in hiring a part-time salaried staff person.

COORDINATORS

- Represent W-CC to the public
- Work with facilitator(s) regarding agenda for each board meeting
- Serve as initial contact with media
- Serve as contact with the women and leadership archives at the Gannon Library
- Deal with correspondence
- Address statements, petitions, advocacy positions, action alerts, needed between meetings

FACILITATOR(S)

- Prior to meeting, gathers agenda items from members and works with coordinators to establish agenda
- Identifies recorder and timekeeper
- Identifies order of speakers
- Assigns appropriate time to each report
- Keeps the group discussion focused

HOMEBASE / CLEARING HOUSE

POINT OF CONTACT

- Acts as the W-CC mailing address
- Provides the site of the W-CC phone and fax
- Forwards information, requests, dues payments to appropriate recipients and/or committees
- Retains the updated membership list information (continued)

- Following each board meeting sends information packet to each member group. Packet includes:
 - minutes
 - committee, coordinator and treasurer reports
 - updated membership list
 - copy of the updated stationery

TREASURER

- Informs members about dues
- Collects and banks dues
- Reimburses members for W-CC related expenses
- Issues semi-annual financial statements at board

LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

- Works with W-CC to decide in a timely manner a geographic location for the next meetings
- Finds and arranges, in discussion with the local hosts, hotel/meeting space and related necessary facilities
- Sends the W-CC members all pertinent information

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

- Sends and receives applications
- Sends new member packets
- Welcomes and mentors new members

MEDIA COMMITTEE

- Acts as contact for all media-related events and information
- Initiates media releases flowing from W-CC semi-annual board meetings

PENTECOST LITURGY COMMITTEE

- Guides the annual Pentecost Women's Eucharist celebrations
- Prepares and distributes packet/liturgy information
- Works with media committee to coordinate media

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

- Identifies women who have contributed to the life of the W-CC, either through membership and who have been participant-witnesses in the growth of women's role and influence in the body of church
- Invites them to be interviewed
- Is responsible for the taping, transcribing and housing of the resultant material until the material is housed in the Women and Leadership Archives, The Ann Ida Gannon, BVM, Center for Women and Leadership, Loyola University, Chicago