

Grapevine

My vision for Mennonite women

by *Ruth Guengerich, president-elect Mennonite Women USA*



Ruth Guengerich

As early as 1894, Mennonite women across the US demonstrated their desire to be faithful followers of Jesus by using their gifts for Bible study, and to work together to provide money, clothing, and bedding for mission workers. They organized themselves, wrote monthly newsletters, and met monthly to do their work together while continuing to carry out their household duties. These women, our foremothers, set an example that continues to challenge Mennonite women today. The new mission statement of the current organization, MW USA, states our desire to “empower and resource women and women’s groups as we: nurture our life in Christ, study the Bible, use our gifts, hear each other, and engage in mission and service.”

It has been said that “the more things change the more they stay the same.” Women in Mennonite Church USA have many more opportunities today than in the late 1800’s, but we still need to share with each other our personal, emotional, and spiritual needs.

When I was invited to become president-elect of MW USA, I wrote to many of my sisters (including my three biological sisters) and asked for their thoughts. That was over a year ago. These friends affirmed me because they know that I have felt called to work with women’s issues as a professional counselor and within the church.

I desire to see the women in Mennonite Church USA overcome the hurdles that may have limited them in finding their niche within church structures, or that prevented them from finding fulfillment in their daily lives. Sometimes these hurdles are of our own making, and sometimes they are from our church and community.

It is my goal that the organization of MW USA will be a means of empowering women to use their energy in positive ways to serve God, empower others through friendship, and challenge the church to reflect the diversity that we bring. 📌

Following a presentation by Ruth Guengerich, Maria DeLeon speaks with much animation as Susan Landis and Hatoko Inoue and others listen carefully at the MW USA Strategic Planning Retreat March 27–28, 2009 at Amigo Centre in Sturgis, Mich.



Photo by Rhoda Keener