

Reflections on National Seminar 2007

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This summer, I met with over 200 United Methodist Women from all over the country to learn about various issues of social justice. National Seminar 2007 was a great, once-in-a-lifetime experience. I grew spiritually and intellectually and was challenged to go forth in action to make a difference in my local church and community. The issues highlighted during this conference were Immigration, Health Care, Public Education, Community Food Security, Economic Justice, Environmental Justice, and Militarism, Peace, and National Security. It was excellent to learn about these topics that are relevant to our society today, because I believe that God desires to bring justice and restoration into our broken world.

During National Seminar, I concentrated on Community Food Security. This issue group addressed hunger and the basic right for all people to have affordable and nutritious food. We took a field trip to the local Farmer's Market, in Nashville, Tennessee, where we met a coalition of organic farmers and food security advocates. We also had the opportunity to meet an inspiring man named Shaun, who runs an organization called "Good Food for Good People". Shaun is a genuine man of faith who dedicates his time and energy into bringing about social change. It was an awesome experience to help glean left over produce, knowing it would be delivered by truck to a low-income neighborhood. I felt that in doing so, we were fulfilling a major goal of National Seminar, which is to be the hands and feet of Christ in bringing about social justice.

There are many other meaningful and fun events that took place during my week at National Seminar. Every morning we had an interactive Bible study and engaging time of praise. We had the choice of participating in one of three "action" events, such as standing up for immigrants' rights, or attending a vigil for low-wage workers in Vanderbilt University. It was encouraging to meet the other young women present, who share a common hope and compassion for others. We bonded over meals, discussions, and making beautiful crafts. Although I was unsure of what to expect on my first plane ride to Tennessee, by the last night of our square dance party, I was sad to leave my new friends.

I am so thankful to have built connections with the Christian women leaders at this conference. I learned a great deal just by listening to their stories. After attending National Seminar, I gained a sense of responsibility and a need to know more. Now I have a plethora of resources to get involved. And I know that I am not alone. I have

formed friendships with the other young women, who are now my fellow partners in this mission to bring the gospel of peace on earth. □

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* Tiffany is currently the Youth Representative for the New York Conference of the Korean United Methodist Women. Tiffany has been participating in various UMW events since 2006, including the KUMW National Training Event in May 2007 and National Seminar in August 2007. She is thankful for the opportunity to learn more, and serve better through the UMW, and is eager to see where God will take her.