

## Fourth Annual ACLC Women in Ministry Conference Empowers Women

Toren Davis  
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Colorful tulips stood like apt pupils amid tables of focused guests, as the Fourth Annual American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) Women in Ministry (WIM) gathering began promptly on April 21, at Life Center Church, Chicago, Illinois. This year's conference focused on the role women play in bringing about change in societies and was entitled, "**Women: God's Heralds of Good News for the Family, the Community, the Nation, and the World.**" It also emphasized the importance of families and the values they can promote to raise individuals who serve the world. The conference sought to bring healing and greater levels of understanding to the approximately 100 participants who came from several midwestern states.

The conference was supported by the Illinois Chapter of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) and Love Train Ministry. **This year, the ACLC National team was represented by ACLC National Co-Chairman Dr. Michael Jenkins; ACLC Women In Ministry National Co-Chairwoman Min. Reiko Jenkins; ACLC National Co-Chairman Archbishop George Augustus Stallings Jr.; ACLC National Co-President Archbishop Sulanch-Lewis Rose; Reverend Marilyn Kotulek; and Senior Pastor of God's Ministry International Dr. Patra Kidwell.**

The program started with two presentations by speakers that Women in Ministry selected, who focused on what is of value in societies and how to build on those common values that are shared across cultures, races, religions, and time. Each discussion was followed by table discussions. **Reverend Mama Joy Sigur-Ramsa, Founder of Melody of Joy Institute,** gave the first presentation, which addressed "God's Original Ideal," and identified positive qualities in society that can be built upon. The second presentation was given by **Dr. Patra Kidwell,** which was titled, "What Went Wrong."

A dynamic youth choir, **the Wade Smith Singers,** gave an energetic performance of two powerful selections which energized guests for the program's second half. Guests next experienced the throaty and full alto voice of a **local evangelist, Mrs. Rita Pritchett,** singing "Amazing Grace."

**The National Co-Chair of the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC), Archbishop George Augustus Stallings,** paid tribute to Reverend Angelika Selle as having been an inspiration to him through her ethics and their shared experience at different junctures in their ministry.

Finally, the **WFWP Illinois Chairwoman, Ms. Kathryn Davis,** introduced the keynote speaker, **WFWP USA President Mrs. Angelika Selle,** which brought the crowd to their feet, followed by appreciative applause.

Mrs. Selle addressed the topic, "Peace Starts With Me, What's Next?" which stirred the mindset of the attendees. Speaking from the heart, without using notes, she began, "**Everyone has the power to do something. You take responsibility on your own without a boss, and make your own job description.**"

She discussed her numerous past experiences prior to becoming WFWP USA President in 2010, which allowed her to share a common understanding with the ethnically, denominationally, and professionally diverse group of women and men present in the audience. Not only is she the President of WFWP USA, but she had also been an editor, a writer, and an ordained minister. She also touched upon some of the developments that she initiated in the NGO's history.



A married male participant expressed his gratitude for the varied perspective that Mrs. Selle presented: "My wife asked me to come... and as I read over the program, my interest perked up. I am sick of listening to people who only know about one thing. **We are not one [dimensional] people. I am political, social, semi-religious, and concerned about my family and my wife.** I want to listen to someone who has experiences and solutions in all those areas."





Mrs. Selle spoke of the **co-founder of WFWP, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon**, as being a truly enlightened woman who had stepped up to her role. Women's purpose and value is intrinsic because it was put there by the Creator and all they need to do is claim it. She shared about the vision and mission of WFWP stating, **“We are experiencing a cosmic springtime, a new era of the heart with women stepping up as healers and leaders of heart, who lead by example. This leadership of the heart is where all are equal because on the heart level all are the same. If we don’t change our hearts from the inside out, then how can we bring change? Intellectually, it is not working and we are not the same. Our vision is utilizing the feminine heart to lead, not the feminist heart, because we are not against men.”**



“The world can no longer marginalize women, because we are the ones leading the family. The mother’s heart opens the door. In the individual and in the family, there is a war going on inside, and so there are 7.5 billion wars going within these levels. This is why we say peace starts within me and moves out from me. We must become the peace we want to be and live our own message. **This is why Gandhi said, ‘There is no path to peace, peace is the path.’**”

The conference closed with a photo opportunity and attendees lingered gleefully, chatting and embracing each other.



## Participant Reflections

One guest, **Mrs. Christina Christodoulou, Founder and President of Cyprus Association of Prenatal Education (CAPE, <http://www.omaep.com/en/cyprus/>)**, commented, "The pleasure was mine to attend this conference. The message was so uplifting and informative. People like Mrs. Selle are rare and I am feeling incredibly blessed that I have met you." (*Please see below for more of Christina's reflection*)

**Mrs. Ruby O'Connor** stated, "I never get tired of going when I am going somewhere. I always feel alive and valuable when I come to any event that uplifts people. I am just happy right now...I love you; thank you so much."

"I was affected by the idea that Eve, or any woman, does not have to tolerate or listen to words that tear her down or take away her purpose," added, **Reverend Patra Kidwell**, a presenter at the conference.

**Min. Fannie Smith, WFWP Board Member and Schools of Africa National Coordinator**, shared her testimony of the experience:

"The collaboration and unity of ACLC Women In Ministry and WFWP ignited a sisterhood never before

seen in Chicago! This was a joint effort to bring good news for the family, community, nation, and world. Attendees not only crossed city lines to attend, but women from diverse cultures and economic means joined in the discussions. Mrs. Angelika Selle, President of WFWP, the keynote speaker, brought the true essence of our founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's love and goals for all women as we prepare to fight for the greatest institution of all: the family! My deep appreciation to all ACLC WIM leaders and Love Train Ministries for including us in this Godly triumph."



*Archbishop Sulanch Lewis-Rose (L) and Mrs. Christina Christodoulou (R)*

**Reflection from WFWP Illinois Advisor Patricia Fliginger:**

"This weekend's event embodied that special quality of true love, through the support of: Reverend Kunihiro Sagisaka (Chicago's ACLC Coordinator), FFWP District Pastor Jeff Schmidt, and all our local Clergy including Evang. Greta Myers (Coordinator of ACLC Women In Ministry, Chicago and Founder of Love Train Ministry), Reverend Sigur-Ramsa, Min. Fannie Smith, Reverend Etta Ellis, Carrie Tonkumoh, Sadako Maeda, and many others. We are so grateful to Pastor T.L. Barrett and First Lady Cleo Barrett of Life Center C.O.G.I.C. and Sister Joan Barrett for the use of their church fellowship hall and hospitality.

The highlights of the program included special presentations by Reverend Sigur-Ramsa and Dr. Patra Kidwell, interactive discussions, and musical performances by the youth choir of Holy Trinity and a solo by Evang. Rita Pritchett. We prayed in unity and shared a toast, creating a loving and hope-filled atmosphere. **Everyone felt a new sense of commitment towards their families and communities.**"

**Reflection from Glovinia Williams of the Collegiate Training Institute:**

"Angelika, what a pleasure to hear you speak in Chicago, at the ACLC Women In Ministry Conference. After you presented, **I was inspired and more encouraged 'to live for the sake of others.'**

For several years, throughout the United States and abroad, I have been actively involved in various aspects of women's ministry. With that being said, I would like to inquire: how can I contribute and become active in WFWP USA?

Your words of wisdom from Reverend Sun Myung Moon for us to **'choose Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon as an example'** resonated in my heart and the hearts of those in attendance.

What a fine example you set before me and all those in attendance, as you edified Reverend and Mother Moon and encouraged us to: **'pray every night, think to the future, establish God's way, lead by example, and follow their proven example of how to build the Kingdom of Heaven.'** Again, wow!"





*Reverend Patra Kidwell one of the presenters*

**Reflection from Mrs. Christina Christodoulou, continued from above:**

"I am very grateful and thankful for the chance I had from the ACLC Women in Ministry to attend the seminar and meet so many wonderful and amazing people. I feel incredibly blessed for that.

I would like to thank WFWP Illinois Chairwoman Mrs. Kathryn Davis for inviting me to the seminar and making me a part of such a beautiful event. People like Mrs. Davis are rare, and I am very lucky that I have met her.

**I was inspired and enlightened that the goal of Women in Ministry is to reflect the heart of God by ministering to rebuild the family, restore the community, and renew the nation and the world. Women of all faiths will, [together], teach the heart of God and the true values of marriage and family to the family, the community, the nation, and the world.**

I found the seminar informative and worthwhile. I remember Archbishop George Augustus Stallings' profound message, encouraging everyone to live lives that are consistent with their faith in God. **This life of faith, he explained, necessitates that people treat others as their own brothers and sisters, because everyone is a child of God. Archbishop Stallings also emphasized that the Kingdom of Heaven is something that is built through our own work within our marriages, families, communities, and the nation.**

I would also like to thank WFWP USA President Angelika Selle for your speech. It was an enormous privilege both to be in the seminar but to also have been given the opportunity to learn all the beneficial things from WFWP Founder, Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon, who has dedicated her life to the quest for peace. She and her husband, Reverend Sun Myung Moon, have reached out to some of the world's most painful places, bringing a message of hope and peace, with a motherly heart, and encouraging reconciliation and new beginnings.

What I keep in my mind from your speech is that **women's responsibility in the quest for world peace involves the deepest elements of human existence: the heart of God, the suffering of humanity, and the meaning of human history.**

I liked your explanation that **WFWP's approach to creating a world of peace revolves around our core focus on marriage and family; there is no sustainable peace without sustainable families.** As cultures throughout the world wrestle with social breakdown, resulting in shattered families, WFWP brings to light the beauty and primacy of marriage and of the bonds of love within the family unit. This inspiration gives rise to a variety of WFWP projects, as we take substantial steps toward a hopeful future for a broad and great human family.

I would like to acknowledge the importance of couples taking a sacred vow to preserve their lifelong marriage commitment and to raise children to live for the sake of God and other people, as global citizens.

**Peace is so much more than an absence of conflict or crime. Genuine and sustainable peace includes true bonds of love and fosters joy, creativity, and true freedom.**

Finally, I would like to thank WFWP Middle East President Dr. Zoe Bennett, who introduced me to WFWP a long time ago and with whom I've been working for more than 7 years, organizing amazing events for peace in Cyprus. Dr. Bennett has taught children, teachers, and professors how to create peace and how to shape our character, and that the role of women is to prevent violence and discover ways to create peace.

Thank you again for your hospitality and a pleasant day. After moving to the US, I would be honored to help spread the peace in the world. I am looking forward to helping the mission of WFWP in the USA.