



Conference Poet Laureate

Penning & speaking Spirit stirrings among the conferees

Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri



Evening Worship Day 1 – RADICAL

Reflection inspired by the conference planning process, the rain storm that came through Green Lake, & public words shared during the first half of the evening gathering of the RRR Conference.

Looking Back to Look Forward

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2020 would be the year
100 years after the vote granted
40 years following the first women-in-ministry gathering

American Baptist women and their advocates
would celebrate? *Yes!*
would truth-tell? *Yes!*
would preach, teach, process, protest, proclaim
And take steps forward for further progress
Yet it was not meant to be

Like all else,
Pause.

and pray.
Postpone,
and pray.
Pivot,
and pray.
And continue to plan.

And look at you
Look at us now
here
forty years following the birth of this divine project
aside the lake
being poured on
already

right at the start
as if to radically mark this monumental point
in our varied travel journeys to this sacred ground.



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Aside this lake
Together ... finally
Together ... in person, again
Together ... receiving the pouring out of all those
called and gifted by God.

I can't help but recall the Good Word proclaimed...
*That God will pour
will pour out
will pour out God's Holy Spirit
on sons and on—
daughters—
on all people.*

So what say the Spirit about what we are here to do?

You have heard it said:
Name the obstacles
Break down barriers
Expand perspectives
Cast broader vision
Redeem fraudulent 'facts'
Inuit faith
Fetch the lasting truths and bring them forward
Honor the cloud of —trailblazers—
Celebrate the firsts, seconds, and thirds, and breaking ceilings
and nurture the still-not-yets.
You have heard it said:
We are here to dream...

To see each other soul-to-soul
taking one another ahead, by faith

Radical. Redeemed. Ready.
Ready or not
it's pour—ing.

and...

the shine shall not be dimmed.

Let's go!



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Evening Worship Day 2 – REDEEMED

Inspired by Psalm 22 & the expressions of RRR leaders & conferees on the first evening & morning plenary sessions of Day 2. Scripture quotes taken from The Message, vs. 1, 29-31.

Call to Worship

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“God, God...my God!”

Why have you called me country miles away?
to celebrate your ever-present power upon our foremothers?
to recall the battles won and the praises donned on you?

Oh how my spirit wishes to be so sweet

yet I come to worship in vulnerability, and honesty, and humility
still steeped in the never-ending war
never to crawl back into the invisible margins of pre-existence
because my hands are melted to the pole
of obedience
and disobedience

scorned, despised,
lonely, unrecognized,
neck bruised by a tire
weighted by lies mis-codified
tired, by right
right to say yes
yes to my breasts
swelled with wisdom unexpressed
where are the mouths that will taste that you, God,
who placed me here, is Good?

It was you, right, God?
who cradled me when I left my mother’s womb?

So, do not be far from me.
Assure me that you
hear my cries
receive my service
provide for my needs
anoint my presence
will meet me when I wait
will lead me when I don’t



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delight in steps I have taken
on the path that you enblazen
Assure me that you have been here all along
listening

For in the midst of the congregation I shall praise you
nevertheless
I will tell of your call to my brothers
I will tell of your promise to my sisters
I will punctuate my testimony with hallelujahs
For you have done it before
and will do it now
Your angels will continue to appear and prophesy and
make it plain

Come, all you in this gathering, for worship
Come, let us drink our fill
that we may not quit

From all corners of the earth and tongues of women
Let us lift our pain through our praises
and imagine—

“All the power-mongers are before God
—worshiping!
All the poor and powerless, too
—worshiping!
Along with those who never got it together
—worshiping!

“Our children and their children
will get in on this
As the word is passed along
from parent to child.
Babies not yet conceived
will hear the good news—”
that God does what God says.

Come and worship
all ye who are ready to be radically redeemed.



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Evening Worship Day 3 – READY

Inspired by the expressions of RRR leaders & conferees throughout the week in the various plenary sessions, and Ebru, a Turkish art form taught by artist Vesile Yilmaz at an Awakening session.

Prayers of Confession and Anticipation for Communion

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Introduction:

As the table is being prepared for us
I invite you into a time of preparation of self
a time of examination as the Apostle Paul instructed us to do
lest we step to the table in an unworthy manner
but rather let us dine awake
having received holy discipline that leads to eternal glory.
So we will take some moments of personal confessions...
right where you are
just as you are
you and God, source of creative redemption.

After some moments

I will lift up confessions that have been named, suggested,
or may be just beneath the surface among
the community we have nurtured in these days.

Let us pray.

God of wounds healed
we bow asking for your mercy
and immeasurable love
as our hearts release
our own conscious confessions

[time for silent prayer]

God, forgive me

when my decision to remain silent caused or deepened
wounds upon another

when I've assumed or accused the destitute for causing their
own plight



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when I've given my hand in rejection to a sister's divine
authority

when I've called another by a name not their own

when I have failed to show up, especially when I feared
not having others to hide behind

Forgive me
for measuring myself by all things but Christ alone

Forgive me
for offering public gestures of affirmation knowing full well
the inconsistencies in my heart

Forgive me
for squirming at the definitive proclamation that
Black Lives Matter! [Full stop]

And forgive me
for diminishing someone into my limited imagination, stunting
her impact and her worship

Lord, I confess, at times
I try to control everything
I close my ears to your many tongues
I have declined you when you have chosen me
I have coveted another's gift
I have willingly cycled back away from your fullness

We confess with trust in your creative redemptive power.

Thank you, God
Thank you, Jesus
Thank you, Spirit

So now
with our ghost images now cleared
we await the invitation to the table
anticipate the redemptive power
of the bread and the cup
for we are ready...



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Radical.
Redeemed.
Ready.  Celebrating
Ministering
Women
40years American Baptist Women in Ministry

Green Lake Conference Center, Wisconsin

as fresh canvasses

ready to be found
to offer our wounds to the service of others
to live into the fullness of my name

ready to shift my freed scarred hand
from the pole
to the column
placing my handprint into the herstory for all time

we are
ready to dismantle racism
ready to feed the thousands
ready to level up
ready to widen the table and turn it over if needed
ready to activate my preparation
ready to forever offer my true and proper worship with all my authentic
 radiantly imperfect beauty
ready to be restored
ready to be enough
ready to be abundant
ready for the overflow
ready to break the dam of containment and protection
 and bust forth
 swing wide our arms
 and full selves
 to embrace
 everything
 everything
 everything
 you, God,
 are ready to be
 for me
 for us.

We are positioned.

We are ready.

Because of Christ
In the name of Christ
We pray. Amen.



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The following page was provided to the conferees by the Poet Laureate, inviting them to also pen how the Spirit was stirring within them. The writing worksheet is offered now to anyone for use in your own personal reflection time, with hope that when you are ready, you will share your writings with others as your witness to God's power at work within you and as an encouragement to others.

Spirit to Pen

WRITE YOUR SPIRIT STIRRINGS INTO A POEM

the invitation

During this time of personal reflection, you are invited to *craft your thoughts, feelings, and spirit stirrings into a poem.*

Feel free to write using *free-verse* (not bound to a set pattern, meter or rhyme) *or try* to distill the core of what you want to capture by trying one of the following *short-form poems.*

However you explore poetry today, may the Holy Spirit that saturates our shared gathering stir your soul and guide your pen...

A few types of short-form poetry

| cinquain

- 1 stanza, 5 lines
- # of syllables in each line:
1st->2; 2nd->4; 3rd->6; 4th->8; 5th->2

| 6-word story

- 6 words, any number of syllables per word, any punctuation
- each word can be independent or can form phrases or sentences.

Some writing prompts

- Topics: Vocational call journey; ministry passions; themes among the communities in which you minister; cloud of witnesses; unspoken realities; God's voice; joy & pain, sunshine & rain
- Words: descriptive, unexpected, raw, rhymed, reflective, precise

| haiku

- 1 stanza, 3 lines
- # of syllables in each line:
1st->5; 2nd->7; 3rd->5
- often about nature

| nonet

- 1 stanza, 9 lines
- number of syllables per line:
1st->9; 2nd->8, decrease by 1 for each line until 9th->1

Samples

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Marie Onwubuariri

Radical. Redeemed. Ready.

see her

generous gifts

instilled and imparted

no fraud, all competence and fruit

she leads

convictions...disagreements.
listen...empathize...breakthrough.
coproduce.

God answered

In asking, I sought

thru pen, persons, places, shifts.

In yielding, I heard.

sheroes

brave bold blazing forging foremothers
paved thru truth-telling, triumphs, tears
charged by conviction of call
disciplined for progress
with new, emerging
leaders in mind
we are they
our time
now

Now give it a try. Use the back of this sheet, the provided post-its, or your own pages...