

Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer."
(Amos 7:8)

MFSA NCC—The Plumb Line

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Annual Conference 2019

In the wake of General Conference 2019, one annual conference after another voted for delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference 2020 who are against the "Traditional Plan" and favor removal of discriminatory language in the *Book of Discipline*. The NC Annual Conference followed this trend with only one member of the delegation who is known to have favored the "Traditional Plan." Further, the NC Annual Conference passed legislation that rejected implementation of the "Traditional Plan" and that favors removal of the discriminatory language; passing this legislation required very little debate. Legislation was also passed to form a task force that will help pastors minister to LGBTQIA folks who have been hurt.

This year's Gayle Felton Love Thy Neighbor was one of the best attended yet. Bishop Charlene Kammerer was the speaker. She talked about sacred resistance, particularly against the policies of the current administration in DC. This resistance can also be applied against the Traditional Plan.

At the lunch we awarded the Jimmy Creech Award for Prophetic Ministry to the Reverend James YoungHan Kim, pastor of Shady Grove United Methodist Church. He received the award for his ministry for the poor, his stance against racism in a hostile environment and even poking at the United Methodist Church in its inclusion of racial minorities. The Reverend Albert Shuler, pastor at New Creation United Methodist Church was awarded the Gayle Felton Drum Major for Justice Award for his long fight for open itineracy and racial inclusion in the North



inclusion in the North Carolina Annual Conference. Henry Jarrett, President of Methodist Federation for Social Action-North Carolina Conference chapter was also given the Gayle Felton Drum Major for Justice Award for his long standing fight for full inclusion and social and economic justice.

Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry 2019

Gospel Power vs. Institutional Sin

This year MFSA NCC scheduled the Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry due to the specially called General Conference in St Louis. And we decided to try something different and have a training event focused on how people can become advocates for justice centered on specific issues. We were fortunate to have in our midst someone who does this sort of work in their professional life, Brian Heymans, the chair of conference Board of Church and Society.

Held on September 14 at Epworth United Methodist Church in Durham, Brian presented a case study about housing and

red lining. Red lining has been used to deny groups, particularly racial and ethnic minorities, loans and services that they were otherwise eligible for to prevent them from getting into certain neighborhoods. Brian presented a case study of how this was done and of how groups can work together to address this situation in a just manner.

It was a fabulous day, learning about individual power, relational power of collaboration, and institutional power (that can only be broken down when we organize relationally, sharing or many points of view and bits of varied information).

Brian gave some staggering studies of how institutions have done our sinning for us over the centuries, allowing good Christians to feel okay about what we didn't know or feel responsible for. "It's just the way things are, after all. Right?" And "so long as it doesn't affect me, it doesn't really matter."

But then he led us through a simulation game where each table had bits of information about a community problem. But no one seemed to be able to effect change or get to the root of the problem until one brave whistleblower shared some inside info. Then the pieces seemed to fit in a new light.



We finally realized that our poor neighbor's issue are all tied up with our own problems!

Each group would have gone on fighting an impossible uphill battle with City Hall if we hadn't gotten together to share our separate concerns.

What a novel approach! America, take note. UMC, look at this! We ate the Body of Christ. Needing all our parts to work together.

We have more relational power than we knew! Let's get together and solve these problems!

We really are our brother's keeper. And he is our keeper too!

Better together. To God be the glory!