

Gathering Scholarships



BY THERESA UNDERWOOD



Scenes from the 2003 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women

David Young

Are your calendars marked for the 2006 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women on July 7–11, 2006?

Once you have that date noted, make sure you mark Tuesday, November 1, 2005, as the deadline for mailing your scholarship application form.

Four hundred scholarships will be available to United States residents,* totaling \$200,000. Each scholarship, worth \$500, covers the \$315 registration fee and \$185 in travel/housing costs. For the 2003 Churchwide Gathering, \$120,000 in scholarships were available. The 2006 Churchwide Gathering has an additional \$80,000 of aid available. Be sure to apply!

Apply for the scholarship yourself or share the form with someone new to Presbyterian Women or with someone who has not been to a



Gathering. The Churchwide Gathering is an excellent opportunity to strengthen old relationships and build new ones. Many people find strengthened relationships after a Gathering, such as

- ❖ mother and daughter
- ❖ grandmother and granddaughter
- ❖ grandmother, mother and (grand)daughter

- ❖ partners in mentoring programs
- ❖ new and old members of PW
- ❖ members of racial ethnic dialogues

Additional forms are available on the Gathering Web pages, www.pcusa.org/pwgathering, or through Patricia LongFellow, PW program assistant, plongfel@ctr.pcusa.org, 888/728-7228, ext. 8015. PW moderators in the synods and presbyteries also have copies of the form. Applicants being awarded scholarships will be notified by January 1, 2006.

Theresa Underwood serves on the Churchwide Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women as the financial secretary.

*Recipients of scholarships to the 2003 Churchwide Gathering and voting representatives to the 2006 Churchwide Gathering are not eligible.

Creation!



BY JANICE CANTRON

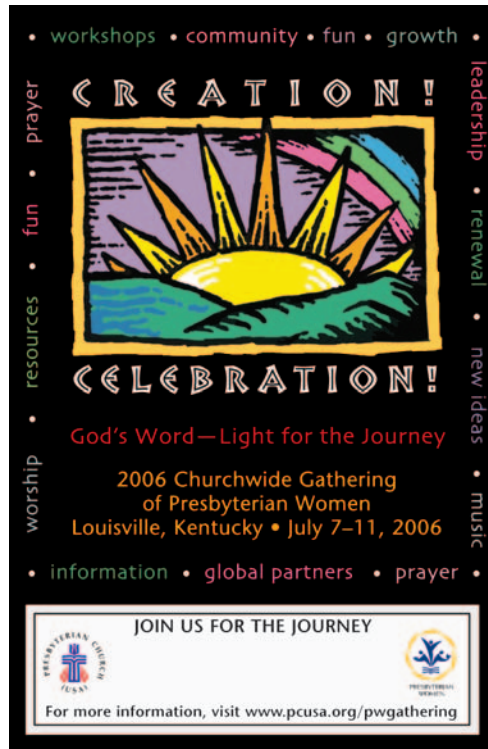
Creation is the first word of the theme for the 2006 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women. This gives us a wonderful place to start looking at the Gathering. We begin at the beginning, at the foundation and core of our Reformed heritage—God is the Creator of all that is, and therefore sovereign over all things. The inviting landscape of the logo, with its huge sun rising in the sky over lush hills, graphically reminds us of the beauty of God’s creation and of how lovingly God has made us part of it.

Creation from Chaos

Our Gathering scripture tells us, “In the beginning . . . God created the heavens and the earth” (*Gen. 1:1*). There are several words in Hebrew that mean “to make,” in the sense of shaping and forming from materials that already exist, but only one word, *bara’*, means “to create” in the sense of bringing into existence something utterly and totally new. *Genesis 1*

and the rest of the Old Testament uses the latter word. Scriptures record God alone as the One who actively creates in this sense.

Some Bible scholars say that *bara’* held a more mundane meaning in ancient Hebrew as well—to separate the cream from dairy products. They maintain that the underlying image of creation in *Genesis 1* is of God separating out the “solids” of created matter from the watery chaos. Even more, they suggest, the word implies that what God pulls out and makes solid is the best of the best. Whether



The 2006 Churchwide Gathering promotional poster will be available online at www.pcusa.org/pwggathering. Use the white space to write the names of those going to the Gathering or to promote your next PW meeting.

this interpretation is accurate or not, the Hebrew text certainly teaches that God’s creation is abundant in its wholeness and goodness, because it stems from God’s deepest care.

Creation and Renewal Through Christ

John 1:1–4a adds to the creation story, saying, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life. . . .”

John stresses that Jesus, the Christ who came into the world fully and completely as a human being, was

also fully and completely God—and always had been. Jesus, the Word of God, fully participated in God’s creative activity at the beginning of time and has continued to be an integral part of God’s ongoing creative presence in the world ever since.

Genesis 2:1–4a closes the Bible’s opening account of creation. The highlight of these verses is that on the seventh day God rested. We tend to think this means creation was finished on the sixth day, with the seventh being God’s day off. That is not the intent of the text, however. The seventh day was the culmination of creation, God’s great gift to us. Thus we read, “God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it” (*2:3a*). In the words of Jesus, “The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath” (*Mark 2:27*).

We need to remember that God built time for rest and renewal into creation for our sake, because God built the *need* for rest and renewal into us. Through God’s unceasing acts of re-creation, God replenishes, transforms and makes us whole. For Presbyterian Women, the Churchwide Gathering is a gift of time wherein we can come together to worship the One who made us, grow together as the Body of Christ, and be refreshed by the Holy Spirit.

Thanks be to God!

Janice Catron is pastor of John Knox Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky.