

## National Council of Churches, USA Young Women's Leadership Experience UN Commission on the Status of Women

*"We have learned three new languages – the language of the Ecumenical Movement, the language of the United Nations, and the language of Gender Equity Financing . . ."* expressed one young exhausted but exhilarated participant.

From February 22 – 26, 2008, seven young women between the ages of 21 to 28 years old participated in the first **Young Women's Leadership Experience** facilitated by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC). The group received intensive orientation about the NCC, Ecumenical Women at the UN, Non-governmental

Organizations (NGO's) at the UN and the history of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). On Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup> they attended the opening of the 52<sup>nd</sup> CSW and heard the historic speech of the UN Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon as he launched a global campaign to end violence against women. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon declared:



From left to right: Amber Dixon (Disciples of Christ), Ann Tiemeyer (NCC – Women's Program Director), Ariel Adamson-Strauss (United Methodist and Episcopal), Emily Rupp (United Methodist), Barbara Phillips (Intern at NCC with Women's Ministries), Ruth Alerte (American Baptist), Mikka Seon Joy McCracken (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), Megan Acedo (Presbyterian Church, USA)

*"This is a campaign ... for women and girls who have the right to live free of violence, today and in the future. It is a campaign to stop the untold cost that violence against women inflicts on all humankind. We know that gender inequality is hampering progress toward the Millennium Development Goals – our common vision to build a better world in the 21<sup>st</sup>*

*century....And we know that when we work to eradicate violence against women, we empower our greatest resource for*

*development: mothers raising children; law-makers in parliament; chief executives, negotiations, teachers, doctors, policewomen, peacekeepers and more. And so my campaign to end violence against women will continue until 2015 to coincide with the target date for the Millennium Development Goals."*

To get the text of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's speech go to:

[http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/sttments\\_full.asp?statID+193](http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/sttments_full.asp?statID+193).

The overall theme of the 52<sup>nd</sup> CSW was *Financing for Gender Equality*. The NCC young women attended several side events held at the UN Church Center which expanded their understanding of gender equal budgeting and gender architecture (within the UN and Church organizational structures). Through the support of Ecumenical Women at the UN, they also explored the theological implications of the Monterrey Consensus commitments. To learn more about Ecumenical Women and their unique role and voice at the UN CSW and through the year go to [www.ecumenicalwomen.org](http://www.ecumenicalwomen.org).



National Council of Churches, USA and World Student Christian Federation delegations to the 52<sup>nd</sup> CSW after leading worship at the Church Center at the UN on

On Tuesday morning, in partnership with the delegation from the World Student Christian Federation, the NCC young women lead worship at the Church Center with the Biblical text of the Syrophoenician Women (Mark 7:24-30) and the theme of "A World of God's Inclusion at stake through Human Exclusion." The worship experience included dance, music, personal stories and prayer from many traditions as we named and remembered many Biblical women who made a difference.

In her message during worship Emily Rupp, an NCC young woman studying geography and the spread of malaria in Africa, called upon all the women and men of faith delegates to the 52<sup>nd</sup> CSW to not just accept the crumbs under the table, but to strive for gender equality!

The NCC young women finished their 5 day program by attending the final session of the NCC's Governing Board meeting being held at the Interchurch Center. After being introduced to the group they sat in on the discussion about the role of the Church in this year of elections. Discussion included the NCC's *Christian Principles in an Election Year*, which can be found at <http://www.nccusa.org/electionyearprinciplesguide.pdf>. The NCC General Secretary, the Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon, took time to join the group for a lunch discussion where he encouraged them and all young people to continue to engage in leadership through the ecumenical movement.

Each of these brilliant young women will be posting their reflection on this *Young Women's Leadership Experience* on this website during the upcoming month. We wish to thank the United Methodists and each of these young women's individual church communions for their grant support that made this first Young Women's Leadership Experience possible. The dream is to expand the program to engage young women ages 18 to 30 in a variety of events in the ecumenical movement.



The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer, Program Director for Women's Ministries of the NCC, is building a data base of young women interested in participating in future Young Women's Leadership Experiences. If you would like to be included in the pool of *interested* and *interesting* young women are receive updates about opportunities, please send an email to [atiemeyer@ncccuas.org](mailto:atiemeyer@ncccuas.org) and request an application for the young women's leadership experience data pool. Upcoming events that the NCC hopes to send a delegation to include the Women, Faith and Development Alliance Summit (<http://www.wfd-alliance.org>) and the 2008 Ecumenical Women's Gathering (<http://www.gathering08.org>).