



Women on the move - Her Story



Dr Dorothy Marple (left), chairperson of the Commission on Church Cooperation, Christa Held director of Community Development Service of the LWF and the Rev. Gunnar Staalsett, LWF General Secretary LWF Photo Archives

Name: Dr Dorothy J. Marple

Country of origin: USA

Date of birth:

Church: Lutheran Church in America

Period of mandate: LWF Executive Committee member 1977 – 1984

Chair, Commission on Church Cooperation (CCC) 1984 - 1990

Short biography:

Dorothy Marple had also a significant role in the history of women in the LWF. After the LWF Fourth Assembly in 1963 in Helsinki in which “it was clear that they had no intention of including an item in the LWF budget for women’s work”, a continuation committee was formed to prepare the next women pre-assembly meeting prior to the Fifth LWF Assembly in Evian, 1970. The Continuation committee took place in 1965. Margit Lindstrom (Sweden) accepted the position of chairperson and Dr Dorothy Marple (USA) replaced Dr Dorothy Haas (USA) in 1968.

She was an Assembly adviser at Evian where 122 women were delegates, accounting for only 9,6% of the total Assembly participation. Prior to the 1970 LWF Assembly, took place the pre-Assembly Women’s Conference in Bastad, Sweden in 1969. In the WICAS book *The Continuing Journey*, Dorothy Marple tells page 34 what happened with the recommendations of the Bastad conference. “The continuation committee met immediately afterwards in Bishop Lindstrom’s house. Our job as the continuation committee was to take the recommendations from the meeting and sharpen them for the Assembly. The gist was advocacy for a stronger role in the decision-making process of the LWF. Of a total of 73 people involved at that time on the LWF’s 30 executive positions in Geneva, there was only one woman holding a director’s position. At the LWF Dar es Salaam Assembly, Dorothy got appointed as LWF Executive Committee member until 1984 and then for a second mandate as chair of CCC until 1990.

She then accepted a key position at the US National Council of Churches (NCC). She was assistant to the LCA bishop before she was asked to head the Transition Team for the merger of the three Lutheran Churches.