

# WMU urged to ‘Go Forward’ from Baltimore

June 13, 2014

BALTIMORE (BP)—Echoes of history with a continued challenge to “Go Forward” permeated the [Woman’s Missionary Union](#) missions celebration and annual meeting in Baltimore.

The meeting culminated a yearlong celebration of WMU’s 125th anniversary. This year’s theme, “Go Forward,” was based on the personal motto of Annie Armstrong, WMU’s first corresponding secretary, from Exodus 14:15.



Native Praise, a choir from 23 Native American churches and 15 tribes from Oklahoma, sings during the Woman’s Missionary Union Celebration June 8 at the Baltimore Convention Center. (BP photo by Bill Bangham) “These words represent our legacy of missions education, mission action and missions passion through the work of WMU,” national WMU President Debby Akerman said.

Participants toured five areas in Baltimore related to Armstrong, heard re-enacted monologues of two other former WMU executive directors and

received challenges to surrender, sacrifice and serve.

The tour included the first WMU headquarters, Armstrong's home church and its new location, her gravesite and a stop at Federal Hill Park, where her original home was located.

Rosalie Hunt, author of [\*We've a Story to Tell, 125 Years of WMU\*](#), and outgoing recording secretary, depicted two former Baltimoreans who served as WMU executive directors, Ann Baker Graves and Kathleen Moore Mallory.

Graves, known as the "mother of Woman's Missionary Union," inspired and motivated Baptist women in post-Civil War America to organize, give, pray and go so the gospel could be taken into all the world and—in particular—China.



Wanda Lee, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union, welcomes family and friends of 95 International Mission Board and North American Mission Board missionaries at a combined commissioning service. (BP Photo by Bill Bangham)Mallory was editor of *Our Mission Fields* magazine, which later

became Royal Service, and was the first woman to speak before the Southern Baptist Convention.

Akerman, in her address, introduced the WMU emphasis for 2014-16: "All For You: Surrender, Sacrifice, Serve" based on Mark 8:34.

"When we think about the growing lostness and encroaching post-Christian culture across North America, it is time to talk seriously" about surrender to God's empowering, Akerman said.

Continuing ministry in the dark world of human exploitation, this year WMU will address a new social issue through Project HELP: Post Traumatic Syndrome Disorder.

"PTSD is not just a military issue," Akerman said, noting PTSD potentially can be the result of any kind of sudden or long-term trauma, including battles of wars, school and mall shootings, terrorist attacks, hurricanes and tsunamis, fires and car wrecks, home invasions and abductions.

"We cannot cure it, but we can 'go forward' to light the way with for understanding PTSD and bringing the Christ comfort to those whose lives have been short-circuited by trauma," Akerman said.



Rosalie Hunt,

recording secretary of the national Woman's Missionary Union, speaks about celebrating the past. (BP Photo by Matt Miller) Taylor and Susan Field, who have served as missionaries on the Lower East Side of Manhattan 28 years, spoke on "upside-down living." They started their ministry at East 7th Street Baptist Church, later called Graffiti, and have helped it grow into a communitywide ministry and center for church planting.

"With all due respect, I believe we serve an upside-down Savior," Field said, setting forth the counter-cultural principles they have put into action at Graffiti—embracing simplicity in ministry and looking for big changes rather than big numbers.

In business sessions:

- Ginger Smith, director for the three Baptist Centers of Houston, received the Dellanna West O'Brien Leadership Award.
- Akerman was re-elected as president, and Linda Cooper from Kentucky WMU was elected recording secretary, replacing Hunt.
- Wanda Lee presented two gifts to Hunt in appreciation for her

service—an archived original copy of the 1914 WMU prayer calendar written during Kathleen Mallory's years of service in Baltimore as well as a small gold pin with WMU's emblem.