



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet

Kumja Lim

Oh, mercy, mercy me

Ah, things ain't what they used to be, no, no, no

Where did all the blue skies go?

*Poison is in the wind that blows from the north and south and east. **

Marvin Gaye sang the truth in 1971 and today Kumja Lim spends a good deal of her life describing that truth. As a deaconess, registered nurse, an environmental advocate and a director with the United Methodist Women's Division, she combines her medical and environmental passion by teaching congregations and special groups about environmental contamination and related diseases.



"When you talk about the environment, it's very serious. A lot of people have cancers and children are born with neurological problems that are related to contamination in this world. So, I talk to people about chemical contamination and ways to avoid or minimize those problems."

She has studied landfills of plastics and other chemicals that affect human hormones and cause infertility. It is the cause of many children today who have adult medical problems.

Her interest began as she looked around her own Korean community. Many people were diagnosed with diseases related to liver cancer. Her mother, brother and youngest sister died from liver diseases related to the wide spread of DDT in many Asian countries.

Later, she met a professor researching hepatitis in Asian communities and volunteered to help him to translate his findings for the Korean population. "I found out that even after DDT was banned in the United States, the chemical



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was still distributed to many Asian countries,” continuing its damaging effects. She says there are around 200,000 chemicals active in our world, and 2,000 additional chemicals show up annually; yet today only two percent of those are tested for contaminants.

She is a member of the United Methodist Women Green Team** and encourages groups to begin their own green team. She says her goal is “teaching, teaching, teaching” and her hope is that “we become the model.”

Deaconess Kumja Lim attends Saint Andrew UMC in Highlands, Colo.

Kumja Lim’s Suggested Resources:

- » **The Weather Makers: How Man Is Changing the Climate and What it Means for Life on Earth**
by Tim Flannery
- » **The Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficient Disorder**
by Richard Louv
- » **This Moment on Earth: Today’s New Environmentalists and Their Vision for the Future**
by John Kerry and Teresa Heinz Kerry
- » **Silent Spring**
by Rachel Carson
- » **The Story of Stuff**
A fast-paced, 20-minute animation of the consumerist society, narrated by Anne Leonard, to view online or download. It exposes the connections between a huge number of environmental and social issues, and calls us together to create a more sustainable and just society. Includes footnoted script, credits, blog, etc. www.storyofstuff.com

***“Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)” was the second single from Marvin Gaye’s legendary 1971 album What’s Going On.*

***The United Methodist Women Green Team advocates for environmental justice, the fair treatment and involvement of all people—regardless of race, ethnicity or economic status—in the decision-making process on environmental public policies. Visit <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/environmental>*

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MARCH IS WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH!

For the 2009 Women’s History Month project, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women honors women who have taken the lead in the environmental or green movement. As we rethink how we live, we understand more and more that taking care of the earth and reversing some of the damage our civilization has done to the earth is inextricably connected to our commitment to God. It’s more than changing light bulbs, switching from paper and plastic to reusable bags, and recycling. It is recognizing that God has entrusted us with the world’s resources, with the condition that we use them according to God’s directions and to God’s glory.



The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women was established by The United Methodist Church in 1972 to advocate the full inclusion of women in the life of the denomination and to monitor the Church at all levels for gender bias. The Commission offers training at district, annual conference and churchwide events on organizing and empowering women to find their voices and ministries in the Church; works with bishops, superintendents and other church leaders to understand and eradicate institutional sexism; and educates church laity and clergy on dealing with professional sexual misconduct. For more information and resources, visit the Commission’s website at www.gcsrw.org, or call (312) 346-4900.

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