

**Dream on, Sisters! – Worship Presentation – 7/23/06      Marscha J. Chenoweth**  
**“Global Connections – Bolivian Tote Bag”**

Good morning.

I'm sure you have noticed the tote bags we have with us today.

My most meaningful experience at the Dream on Sisters conference was receiving this tote bag, and realizing what it meant for some Bolivian families and what it symbolized for me.

This beautiful Bolivian tote bag, with each color representing a different ethnic group, came from the community of Cochabamba, Bolivia in South America, and was made by Bolivian women there especially for Mix in '06 and given to each of the event's 3,500 participants at registration check-in. A retired missionary to Bolivia helped organize the work of making the bags, and she and two women from Bolivia came to the Mix. You may have noticed in the slide show earlier this morning a photo I took of the two women in their native dress. As part of the Wednesday evening opening of the Mix we had communion during the worship service. It was communion by intinction, and I felt very privileged to receive the cup and the bread from these two Bolivian women.

According to Conference materials we received, the women who made these bags are part of the Women's Sewing Project, a mission project in Bolivia. The bags were made by 55 women in two villages over the course of a year. Most of the women in the sewing project are single parents who work during the day as domestic workers or street vendors. In the evening they gather at the church community center to sew. The money they earn from their handicrafts support comprehensive health care for children six months to 12 years old. Currently two hundred eighty families in the community are participating in this health care program.

While birding in Bolivia in 2004 I had the opportunity to see women in the street markets and in rural areas all across their country, including Cochabamba. I had been deeply moved then by the poor living conditions and the hard work I had seen women and children doing. So I felt blessed this year to be a part of the gathering in Indianapolis which provided some Bolivian women a chance to improve health conditions for themselves and their families. It brought home to me the smallness of this world, and how we are dependent upon each other. These women blessed me with a beautiful tote bag that I will use and cherish, and the funds we provided through our registration fees are giving them the possibility of better health care for themselves and their children. I felt a part of God's world community, and it felt good and just.

This bag says to me: “We are all part of one community. We can all make a difference in someone else's life. We can all make an impact on our world. Our dreams can become reality if we take action together for the good of God's world.”

And that is what I'll treasure from this conference. Dream on, sisters!

Thank you.