While I had participated in “The Sewing Circle,” and WMSA (Women in Missionary Association) in earlier years, it was in 1985 that I became involved with WMSC at the national level. I followed Katherine Swartzendruber (from CMC) as Vice President. At that time Barbara Reber was Executive Secretary Grace Brunner, President. The organization had just added Mim Book (Lapp) as the representative for Business and Professional Women. It was the desire of the Executive Committee to broaden the ministry to include all women in the church. We spent many hours discussing and praying for direction and wisdom as to how this could become a reality. Many younger women worked through the day, and many on the committee knew few women of color. We traveled to several conferences and met with the WMSC leadership, asking questions, listening to concerns, and sharing together. (Just a personal note: it was during this time that I bought a brief case, a suit bag, and learned to navigate airports!)

During this process, there were changes on the committee Marian Hostetler replaced Barbara Reber and Letha Froese became President. Other members were replaced. This slowed the process but the desire and goal remained. Eventually, Rose Covington joined the committee representing AAMA (African American Mennonite Association) and Esther Hinojoso, Hispanic Women. We were not as successful with Native American or other women of color.

Another concern was to have a woman/women represented on Mennonite Church General Board. After much discussion church wide leadership, I was asked to be representative for WMSC (another reason to pack bags). This became an official position as a WMSC representative on Mennonite Church General Board.

It was during this time that the General Conference Mennonite Women and Mennonite Church WMSC began to explore merger between the two organizations. The decision was made and the name of Mennonite Women became the official name. I am not sure of the time frame but there was a name change for magazine from “The Voice” to “The Timbrel.” I remember long discussions about the size of the magazine, the cost of
different types of paper used, black and white versus color. Decisions were often made around funds.

I served the organization for six and a half years. My term officially ended in July after the Mennonite General Board meeting. Terry Plank Brenneman became the new president. I was asked to stay on until my replacement, Ruth Lapp Guengerich, was available, which was until January 1992.

As is true in whatever God asks us to do, the experience was a spiritually growing and stretching one. I did things I had never done before. I was asked to find and contact speakers for our devotional guides, lead retreats, write articles, and serve on subcommittees for Mennonite General Board.

Mennonite Women has continued to change and grow. I give thanks to God for what is happening today. Prayers have been and are being answered… and much more than we envisioned from 1985-1991.