

## Women by the Numbers/ February 2015

### **Beyond the Stained-Glass Ceiling, Part I:**

With a New Year and a new governor of Illinois, the first executive orders he signed aimed to promote racial diversity within the state agencies and contractors with which the state works. Governor Rauner states, "I want to see firsthand in the light of day what is happening in the training programs and apprentice programs in the organizations that contract with the state," (abc7Chicago.com). The order, signed on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, aims to measure how many trade groups include both minorities and veterans within their pipeline of leadership, namely in their training programs, because as Governor Rauner succinctly states, "you can't manage what you don't measure," (Chicago Tribune). This executive order is an intentional way to measure and ensure diversity within state agencies and contractors both in the present and into the future.

In corporate America where 16.9% of board members are women and 14.3% of executive officers are women, corporations are intentionally implementing programs to increase the number of women in their senior leadership by getting more women into the promotion pipeline.

The study, *Unlocking the Full potential of Women at Work*, shows that while the number of women in CEO positions is proportionately lower than the number of men in similar positions, the number of companies taking the intentional step to invest in a more diverse workforce, including women, by creating diversity programs is increasing. These corporations are offering more leadership programs and encouraging women to advance through the leadership pipeline. Corporations are seeing the benefit of training and retaining a diverse work force. As one CEO put it, the benefit is, "getting the best brains to work on the problem" while another said having a workforce that better matches customer demographics is "common sense."

Another study of diversity in corporate America, *Examining the Cracks in the Ceiling*, researched how "companies are hiring, promoting, and investing in a diverse workforce." While their findings show that the pipeline to senior management is "leaky," it does show that companies have a "stronger commitment to workplace equality than ever before." In fact, of the 100 S&P companies surveyed, 95% now offer what the study names internal diversity initiatives. These initiatives include mandatory diversity training for all employees, including senior leadership, and leadership development programs to "help propel talented women and minorities into managerial positions." Out of the 100 S&P companies identified, 63 of them have and make diversity training mandatory, 89 offer programs in management or leadership development, 83 offer mentoring programs, and 79 offer affinity or resource groups for various demographics within their work force. Corporations are not only seeing the benefits of recruiting, hiring, retaining, and developing a diverse workforce, they are now intentionally including diversity programs into the overall structure and evaluation methods within their organizations.

One company taking an intentional step to advance women in the pipeline is Alcoa, a lightweight metals engineering and manufacturing corporation. Alcoa created the Alcoa Women's Network in 2003 to serve

as “a catalyst for the recruitment, development, advancement, and retention of women” within their organization ([www.Alcoa.com](http://www.Alcoa.com)). In addition, Alcoa ties executive compensation and evaluation with diversity, thereby offering incentives to leaders who hire and promote women and other minority groups. For example, in 2013 Alcoa tied “20% of employee variable compensation” to achieving their goals for sustainability, with 10 of that 20% allocated to diversity goals. So, not only are corporations noticing the value of including women in the pipeline to senior management, they believe in it so strongly that they implement diversity initiatives and tie those directly to salaries and compensations.

With both government and corporate America taking intentional steps towards a more diverse workplace, including women in the pipeline to senior management, one wonders what the experience of women is across the United Methodist connection.

Within The United Methodist Church, of the 12 million United Methodist church members, 54% are women with 22% of United Methodist churches being led by a woman. I looked at the websites of each of the top 50 largest member churches within the denomination, and found 1 woman listed as a senior pastor. Many of the churches did include women on their pastoral staff, but in more traditionally defined gender roles of caregiver such as ministers of education, pastoral care, or children and family ministries. With 39% of new clergy being women, these new clergy see that only 27% of their District Superintendents across the connection are women, while an even lower 17% have moved up to the position of bishop within the denomination .

Why are the numbers of women so low and are we doing anything as a denomination to address this lack of women in our leadership roles across the connection? With both governments like the state of Illinois and major corporations like Alcoa seeing the importance of monitoring and hiring a diverse workforce, what do we do as a church to lift up and train women for senior level leadership positions within our churches, board and agencies, and connectional structures? Do women feel they can only move up the pipeline so far before hitting the stained-glass ceiling, and why? What intentional steps like those of Governor Rauner and Alcoa can the denomination take to ensure that our denominational leadership reflects the entirety of our denominational family?

Within the next few months we look in depth at women in the pipeline to senior leadership levels across the denominational connection— in our local churches, annual conferences, and within our boards and agencies— and what intentional steps the denomination can take within each of those aspects of the connection to ensure that women are equipped to go beyond the stained-glass ceiling.

**Next month:** A more in-depth look at the experiences of female clergy in the local church and their movement into and within the senior leadership pipeline.

**Learn more:**

Links to the studies mentioned are listed below:

To read more about Governor Rauner's new initiative:

<http://abc7chicago.com/politics/rauner-signs-executive-order-to-promote-diversity/481979/>

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/politics/ct-bruce-rauner-illinois-governor-met-0120-20150119-story.html>

To read the entirety of the Alcoa Corporation's sustainability efforts, including a creating and retaining a diverse workforce:

[http://www.alcoa.com/sustainability/en/info\\_page/workplace\\_people.asp](http://www.alcoa.com/sustainability/en/info_page/workplace_people.asp)

For more studies regarding diversity in the workplace:

<http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/womenreportnew.pdf>

<http://www.earthday.org/filesfolder/BR10063.pdf>