

## Advocacy for Women

### ENDOWMENT FUND

Donate to the Advocacy for Women Endowment Fund to fund antisexism ministries around the world, a permanent GCSRW internship, and research about women. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

#### GCSRW Staff:

M. Garlinda Burton  
LeeAnn Goldman  
Erin Kane  
Susan Keaton  
Audrey Krumbach  
Elaine Moy  
Darryl Stephens  
Kentina Washington

[www.gcsr.org](http://www.gcsr.org)  
[www.umsexualethics.org](http://www.umsexualethics.org)

Find us on 

## SAVE THE DATE

### Annual Conference CSRW Training

March 14-16, 2013

Nashville, Tenn.

Registration information will arrive soon.

### In this issue:

- » United Methodist women and racial-ethnic clergy gaining ground, but slowly – **Page 2**
- » Working to keep clergywomen healthier – **Page 5**
- » Is it OK for pastors to date parishioners? – **Page 7**
- » Retiring General Secretary Burton reflects – **Page 8**
- » New ways of getting GCSRW news – **Page 10**
- » Meet our new staff – **Page 11**

### WOMEN BY NUMBERS

#### U.S. women, racial-ethnic clergy still face challenges

The number of women pastors increased by 45% and racial-ethnic pastors rose 22% between 1997 and 2008. But data also shows they face more limited opportunities than male or white clergy.

[read more](#)

### FEMALE CLERGY HEALTH

#### Recognizing the importance of good health throughout a clergy career

Center for Health talks to 15 current and retired woman bishops to find out why clergywomen have more health challenges than clergymen.

[read more»](#)

### SEXUAL ETHICS

#### Is it acceptable for pastors, parishioners to date?

Our understanding of appropriate boundaries in ministry has changed dramatically in the past 25 years.

[read more»](#)

### GENERAL SECRETARY RETIRES

#### Burton ends nine-year stint focused on global justice in the church

“You can hold on so tight to the old ways that you can miss hearing God’s call to a new thing,” M. Garlinda Burton says.

[read more»](#)

### FAREWELL FLYER

#### We’re getting GCSRW news to you in new ways.

[read more»](#)

### NEW STAFF

#### Four new staffers join the women’s commission

[read more»](#)



## WOMEN BY THE NUMBERS

# U.S. women, racial-ethnic clergy increase; still in smaller pulpits, more likely to leave pastoral ministry

By Felicia Howell LaBoy

The good news is that the number of women and racial-ethnic clergy in the U.S. United Methodist church nearly doubled between 1997 and 2008.

The challenge: Women are far less likely to lead churches in the U.S. Southeastern Jurisdiction than in the Western and Northeastern Jurisdictions. Meanwhile, racial-ethnic clergy—women and men—are more likely to spend their careers in small congregations or multi-congregation charges.

These were among the findings in **The State of Female and Racial Ethnic United Methodist Clergy in the U.S.**, a research project developed by the denomination's General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and the General Commission on Religion and Race. The study draws on statistical data collected between 1997 and 2008 and tracks the career trajectories of clergy of color in the U.S. church.

During this period, the number of women pastors increased by 45% and racial-ethnic pastors rose 22% between 1997 and 2008.

This commentary will look at the most revealing trends with regard to female and racial-ethnic clergy, separately, then offer some insights and tools to move forward that are relevant and complementary to the mission of the church.

## Jurisdictional and Large-Church Leadership

Even when one takes into account years of service and seniority, female and racial-ethnic pastors still remain less likely than white men to lead the largest congregations in our denomination in the U.S.. In addition, the appointment of women pastors varies greatly by region and by call. The Southeastern Jurisdiction, percentage wise, has far fewer female pastors than any other U.S. jurisdiction. (Women comprise 20% of female pastors in the Southeastern Jurisdiction, compared with 36% in the Western and 35% in the Northeastern jurisdictions).

In fact, according to the study's findings, women comprise only 16% of senior-pastor positions in the Southeastern Jurisdiction, and "a female is approximately 45% less likely to be a congregation's pastor in the Southeastern jurisdiction than in the Western jurisdiction."

When we factor in race and gender, the study finds that overall only 40% of racial-ethnic congregations are led

Racial-ethnic pastors  
are most often  
concentrated in just a  
few annual conferences,  
most of which have  
large urban centers

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



## STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

by females. Asian, Hispanic/Latino and racial-ethnic female clergy are between 60 and 70% less likely than White females to be appointed pastor in our denomination.

Although the average age of females entering ministry is slightly higher than males (47 years old versus 45 years old), women are more likely than men to seek ordination as deacons (5.5 to 1, female to male) or licensing as part-time local pastors.

A higher percentage of women than men serve as associate pastors. This disparity is also reflected among the laity in local congregations, especially in racial-ethnic congregations. Although women comprised between 55 and 70% of lay leadership roles in racial-ethnic churches, they were underrepresented on congregational governing bodies such as administrative councils, trustees, finance or staff-parish relations and overrepresented in serving in small group leadership and Christian education roles.

Furthermore, the number of women entering the ministry between 2005 and 2008 is not much greater than women entering the ministry 10 years earlier. The study also reports that after eight years in ministry, women and racial-ethnic clergy are more likely to be appointed to congregations smaller than their first appointments and more likely to move out of pastoral ministry either to extension ministry appointments or to go on leave.

### Racial-ethnic Clergy

The study found that even though racial-ethnic pastors are more likely to be elders rather than local pastors or deacons, they are more likely to be assigned to small congregations or multi-congregation charges

Second, while the numbers of African-American United Methodist pastors within the denomination has stayed relatively consistent, the number of Asian and Hispanic/Latino pastors increased between 1997 and 2008. Racial-ethnic pastors are most often concentrated in just a few annual conferences, most of which have large urban centers.

Cross-racial appointments are still relatively rare in the denomination, with fewer than 10% of racial-ethnic clergy serving white congregations (the U.S. church membership is about 92% white). According to the research, a larger percentage of racial-ethnic clergy (40%) than white clergy currently serve cross-cultural appointments.

### Toward leadership excellence in our future

Women enter the ministry later and are more likely than men to leave pastoral ministry, leaving the denomination with a smaller pool of women with the training and experience the denomination expects of lead pastors in large-membership congregations and its churchwide decision-makers and connectional leaders.

## STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Women enter the  
ministry later and  
are more likely  
than men to leave  
pastoral ministry.



## STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

This also leaves fewer female clergy mentors and role models for younger women in local congregations. If this continues, it may be harder to help young women envision and respond to the Spirit's leading to pastoral and academic leadership within our church. And, while many choose to pursue local-pastor licensing, the denomination should dig deeper to determine if women seek this status because ordination as elder is not as open to them. For example, do women have equal access to financial support for seminary education? Do women exploring ministry have supportive pastoral role models and mentors available to them? Do annual conferences "encourage" women away from the elder track?

Racial-ethnic pastors are less likely to serve larger congregations, in part because they are more likely to serve churches within their own cultural groups, and the denomination has fewer large-membership churches among those groups. What has impeded the denomination from investing in, planting and nurturing large racial-ethnic and multicultural churches? Are racial-ethnic pastors trained, encouraged, resourced and given the opportunity to grow large-membership congregations?

Also, given that most cross-racial appointments occur one way (racial-ethnic pastors to white congregations), denominationally, we must ask how do such appointment enhance growth, expansion, evangelism, outreach and nurture of congregations—and the professional growth of clergy especially in an era of increasing diversity and multiculturalism?

Finally, the findings raise the question: Why do women and people of color end up in small-membership congregations and/or multi-church charges? White men are more likely as a group to start out in small churches but to move "up" into larger congregations. Church size is a marker of career trajectory—larger congregations equal larger salaries, greater responsibility, and increased visibility and prestige.

The United Methodist Church must examine why and how white male clergy are able to move to the leadership of larger congregations, so that these processes may be replicated for the full inclusion of female and racial-ethnic clergy. Also, given that many of our larger congregations have been grown by male clergy leadership, we need to develop processes that help identify gifts and graces in female and racial ethnic clergy and devise creative leadership models (i.e., co-pastorates) that allow for them to be mentored in these environments.

If our denomination is going to appeal to a variety of persons, then we will have to address seriously and quickly the issues this study raises. We cannot simply have a "colorblind" and "gender-blind" approach to clergy and lay leadership in our denomination. We will have to be bold in naming issues of discrimination and rectifying them – publicly. Also, we have to work hard to help our congregations do the same.

*Felicia Howell LaBoy, a 2010 UMC Women of Color Scholar, is assistant professor of evangelism in the Heisel Chair and director of the urban center, United Theological Seminary. She spent 13 years in urban pastoral ministry.*



## FEMALE CLERGY HEALTH

# Recognizing the importance of good health throughout a clergy career

By Susan Keaton

The life of a pastor may be spiritually rewarding and emotionally fulfilling, but it isn't always the healthiest.

Being on call constantly and available to people in need of comfort, spiritual guidance or support can stress a pastor's schedule, home life and soul. Doughnuts and coffee hours on Sunday mornings and church potluck dinners can challenge attempts to maintain a healthy diet. Night and weekend work interferes with family time, friendships or relaxation.

The stresses can be greater for women clergy, who might be struggling against cultural norms, attempting to "establish" themselves in the vocation while feeling they are living in a fishbowl. And despite changing gender roles, women still tend to take on more of the home and family care responsibilities, which makes it even more difficult to achieve a work/life balance.

"It's not that men don't have some of those stresses, but in terms of family care, they tend to have a little less," said Bishop Sally Dyck, leader of United Methodism in the Chicago area, one of 15 active and retired female bishops who took part in a focus group conducted by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits' Center for Health last Spring.

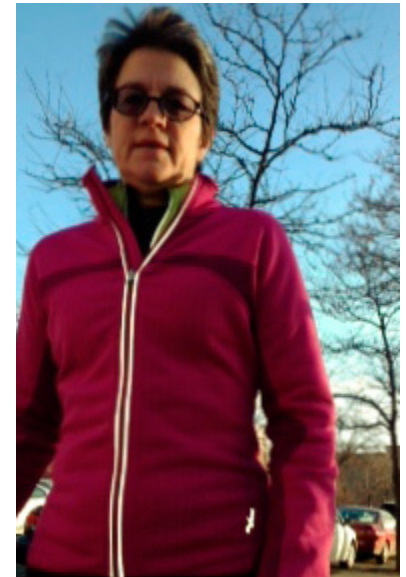
"Women by nature tend to be wonderful caregivers and focused on the needs of others, and sometimes we are so busy focusing on the needs of others that we are not focusing on our own," agreed Bishop Mary Virginia "Dindy" Taylor of the Holston Conference. Taylor was GCSRW president from 2005 to 2012.

It's an issue that could cost the church many excellent clergy if it isn't addressed.

"Even though it has been 50 years since women were ordained, we are now clearly seeing differences in professional practice emerge that show specific effects on the health of our female clergy," said GBPHB General Secretary Barbara Boigegrain.

The center's 2012 Annual Clergy Health Survey revealed some of the differences in health of clergywomen and clergymen, finding that women reported more occupational stress than the men. Clergywomen also exercise less and take fewer vacation days than do clergymen. The desire to get the perspective of women clergy, particularly those in leadership, to help better address those issues led the Center for Health to seek the focus group's specific insight.

Anne Borish, manager of the Center for Health Research and Information led a discussion during General Conference 2012 with the 15 women bishops about the differences in health and health concerns at different stages of the clergy career.



*Bishop Sally Dyck on an early morning run.*



*Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor*

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

## Women pastors in the spotlight

Many times attention to circumstances unique to a woman's experience can be good, said Taylor, whose husband, Rusty, also is a clergy person. As a young pastor, she found her parishioners "very excited" to share the news that their pastor was pregnant, knowing it would be surprising to those who had no prior experience with a female clergy person. And raising their two daughters was a shared family responsibility with which the congregation could identify, she said.

But many women in the spotlight of being a congregation's first female pastor, or lead pastor, or district superintendent or bishop might find the attention stressful, the bishops noted.

If a woman is single, she may come under even greater scrutiny. And sometimes physical appearance issues such as weight or age can receive undue attention. Young clergy women are trying to develop an adult persona while older parishioners may see them as immature, even childlike, they observed.

Mid-career, clergy women continue to experience the stress of proving themselves as they advance to larger churches or higher positions of responsibility. And even if they are not the first woman in that appointment or position, a bad experience with another woman in that role can be generalized to all women in a way that does not happen with men in the same position, the bishops said.

Later in their careers, women can face the stress of being seen as a "token," chosen for leadership because they are women rather than selected for individual gifts or skills. An all-consuming career can make it difficult for women to develop and nurture personal friendships outside of the vocation, too. Also, women at this stage may have ended child-rearing responsibilities but are now finding themselves primary caretakers for elderly parents.

Throughout these career and personal stages, eating well, exercising and being in general good health can help clergy maximize energy and deal with the stresses of church work.

## Fitness as plus for leadership

"Leadership requires us to be as fit as we can be," Dyck said. "I don't think people appreciate what an important factor good health is."

Taylor said she found it important to develop outside interests and friendships, making it an "intentional and deliberate thing" to take care of her own health. As an example, she and her husband enjoy horseback riding.

Dyck started running for exercise in 1998 with her husband as he recuperated from surgery. She found it gave her more energy and helped her focus her pastoral work. As a bishop, she still runs several times a week, three to six miles at a time, and also regularly walks to and from her office in downtown Chicago.

"The focus group identified the need for more education, support and services for women entering ministry, starting in seminaries," Borish noted. "They need to have their eyes wide open."

Taylor said such attention can only help young women become even better religious leaders.

"You need to do things that are healthy, and just letting people know that early on is very valuable in the long term," she emphasized.

*Susan Keaton is communications director for the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.*



## SEXUAL ETHICS

# Dating in the Parish – Attitudes, Ethics and Church Law

*By Darryl W. Stephens*

### Should pastors date parishioners?

In past generations, the answer was a resounding “yes!” What better place than the church for finding a suitable pastor’s wife? (And pastors were almost always men). Today, this question presents an ethical dilemma.

More than 34% of U.S. United Methodist clergy believe “it is morally OK for a single pastor to date one of his/her parishioners,” according to a survey of more than 1,200 clergy conducted by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women during the past two years.

Since 1996, the denomination’s **General Conference** has identified the situation of a pastor engaging “in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant” as sexual abuse (“Sexual Misconduct within Ministerial Relationships,” *The Book of Resolutions 2008*, pp. 134-5).

Our understanding of appropriate boundaries in ministry has changed dramatically in the past 25 years. What was once considered an amorous relationship between two consenting adults is now understood to be an abuse of power.

Recently, the church’s nine-member “supreme court,” called the Judicial Council, affirmed this understanding in a concurring opinion to **Decision 1228**.

Dating, romantic or sexual relationships between clergy and their parishioners “are never appropriate because of imbalance of power,” Council members asserted.

Annual conference policies are not consistent on the issue. Some conferences ban clergy from dating within the parish under any circumstances. Other conferences discourage but allow the practice, with certain safeguards in place. Many conference sexual ethics policies are simply silent about clergy dating. **See more on guidelines on writing sexual misconduct policies.**

Clearly, a zero-tolerance policy does not reflect current attitudes of clergy and Cabinet members. In another survey of 200 U.S. district superintendents, GCSRW learned that 29% believe “it is morally OK for a single pastor to date one of his/her parishioners.” It is clear that the persons receiving, investigating and, in many cases, resolving sexual misconduct complaints are not of one mind on this issue.

The United Methodist Church must engage in a frank discussion about the morality of clergy dating within the parish. How is this behavior similar to or different from breaches of fiduciary duty by other professionals, such as lawyers, doctors, teachers and social workers? Who is put at risk when clergy date within the congregation?

*Darryl W. Stephens is assistant general secretary for sexual ethics for GCSRW.*



## GARLINDA BURTON RETIRES

# As she ends nine-year stint, Burton focuses on global justice in the church

By Susan Keaton

Increased numbers of clergywomen and female bishops. A “bursting forth of lay people” into the life of the church. A new urgency on addressing sexual misconduct in congregations. Engaging young women, women of color and women from the denomination’s Central Conferences.

M. Garlinda Burton is proud of the accomplishments of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women during her nine years as its General Secretary. But rather than sitting back and enjoying those successes, she has spent her last weeks in the job focusing on the work still ahead.

“You can hold on so tight to the old ways that you can miss hearing God’s call to a new thing,” she mused recently, perhaps reflecting as much on her own life as that of the Commission she has led for nearly a quarter of its 40 years.

A new general secretary is expected to take the reins at GCSRW early in 2013. Burton retires Dec. 31, 2012, but in the last days of November she was taking part in preliminary discussions with members of the General Commission on Religion and Race on how the two agencies can continue their joint work begun in the past four years. This work has pushed the Church toward full inclusion and leadership of people under 35, U.S. women and men of color, and the empowerment of women in Africa, Europe and the Philippines.

Burton said both agencies—along with the entire denomination--need to expand their work to deal with global issues of race, gender or class in United Methodism worldwide.

“The main decision-makers in this church are primarily white, male and over 50 years old, and they are based in the United States,” Burton said. “If we are going to remain a pliable, relevant instrument of Christ in this world, we must build churches with, listen to and make room for new voices and faces around our leadership tables.”

The desire to make room for new leadership and new energy is one reason she decided to retire after 31 years working for the church, first at the *United Methodist Reporter*, then United Methodist Communications and finally at the women’s commission.

“I think some of us need to just not make a place for, but stand aside for, younger women,” she said, because the church needs younger people to take leadership positions to help it grow.

That’s not to say that generations past have helped make tremendous strides for the cause of justice and diversity in the church, she adds.

“I’ve seen women being elected bishop, including the first African woman,



‘If we are going to remain a pliable, relevant instrument of Christ in this world, we must build churches with, listen to and make room for new voices and faces around our leadership tables.’

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 9





## STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

the first Latina, the first Filipina, the first African-American bishop,” Burton said. She also has seen laywomen claiming more power and voice in what was once a “totally clergy-centric” church.

Traveling to Zimbabwe and the Philippines recently for the largest-ever gatherings of clergywomen there, Burton heard from women pastors how they often feel isolated and how basic human justice issues are not being met. For example, she said, deaconesses in Philippines are doing the work of clergy without receive comparable salary and benefits, she said.

In 1972, The United Methodist Church created the General Commission on the Status and Role of women to help identify and correct institutional sexism and gender bias and to advocate for equal participation for clergy and lay women in all areas of church life. Today about 20 percent of UMC clergy are female, and men and women attend seminary in roughly equal numbers.

Burton said GCSRW has played a pivotal part in helping the church open up to women. And while when she started at GCSRW it had an image of being run by and designed to advocate for only white clergywomen, “I think that I have helped extend the commission’s reach to include a lot of different kinds of women,” including lay women, women of color, and women outside the U.S., she said.

She is proud that GCSRW began tackling sexual ethics in the denomination even before sexual misconduct among clergy was well known. Under her leadership, the agency set up a website ([umsexualethics.org](http://umsexualethics.org)) that provides information, complaint procedures and help for victims and survivors of clergy sexual misconduct. The agency also has trained clergy, laity, social workers, counselors and bishops on how to recognize and adjudicate complaints and how to support victims.

Burton said she has few regrets about her time at GCSRW. A trained journalist and author, she wishes she had taken more time to write, blog and reflect. (“It seemed there was never time to sit down on ponder! I had so much hands-on work to do!”) She would have liked to have spent more time and focus on women outside the U.S., particularly those in Eastern Europe and French-speaking Africa, but she’s glad she got that work started. And she had hoped to help move the church farther along in embracing members of the LGBTQ community as full participants in the life of the church.

But there simply wasn’t enough time for everything. She decided to retire and to seek a new career path mainly because she wants to be in one place so she can spend time with family and friends.

“I have loved this work so much, but I have missed many birthdays and weddings and graduations because of my travel schedule. I want to be present more for the people I love and to worship and work more at my local church (Hobson United Methodist Church, Nashville, Tenn.).

“For me, feminism has been about choices, to give women options,” she said. “I felt it was time to change my lifestyle, so I gave myself permission to change gears.”

*Susan Keaton is communications director for the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women*



# Saying goodbye to THE FLYER

We're expanding our digital media in response to your requests

After 34 years of publication, we're phasing out THE FLYER newsletter in favor of expanding our websites and our use of social media.

Launched in 1978 as the official information vehicle for the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, The Flyer (which went from print to digital in 2010) has reflected the denomination's often turbulent journey toward confronting our own institutional sexism and embracing the voices, leadership and sensibilities of all women.

In the first issue in July 1978, the newsletter (which morphed from bimonthly to quarterly to monthly) included congratulations to the Rev. Minerva Carcaño (now bishop of the Phoenix area) as the first woman ordained in the Rio Grande Annual Conference, as well as the former Southern New England Conference's push for use of gender-inclusive language during annual conference worship.

"The Flyer is a time capsule, which charts the history of and continuing struggle for full and equal treatment for women in the United Methodist Church in every corner of the world," said M. Garlinda Burton, who has been the Commission's chief executive officer since 2003.

In more recent years, the newsletter has featured more articles about GCSRW's expanding work in addressing ministerial sexual misconduct and the popular "Women by the Numbers," which tracks the progress of women in United Methodist leadership.

Burton said the decision to discontinue the now-online newsletter was largely influenced by increasing traffic to the official websites, [www.gcsrw.org](http://www.gcsrw.org) and [umsexualethics.org](http://umsexualethics.org), and a growing demand for more frequent and interactive communications via social media. Also, Burton said, with the expansion of the Commission's work outside the United States, she hopes to emphasize more culturally specific resources, rather than depending on a "one-size-fits-all" newsletter.

Current subscribers of The Flyer are urged to register for news updates on the GCSRW website and to follow the Commission on Facebook ([facebook.com/GCSRW](http://facebook.com/GCSRW)) and Twitter (@GCSRW).





NEW STAFF

# Meet the new GCSRW Staff

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women has expanded its staff with several hires in recent weeks:

**Erin Kane** right, is our part-time director of research and monitoring. Erin is completing work on a master's degree in social justice and community development at Loyola University Chicago.



**Susan Keaton**, left, started work in mid-October as GCSRW's first communications director. Susan was a reporter and editor for most of her career, including nearly 13 years at the *Chicago Tribune*.



**Audrey Krumbach**, lower right, will be our Director of Gender Justice and Education beginning early in 2013. She has a master of divinity degree from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and spent four years as a community organizer for Reconciling Ministries Network.



**Kentina Washington**, lower left, is our new office assistant. A third-year student at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, she is considering chaplaincy as her ministry vocation.

