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**Study committee proposes elimination of guaranteed appointments**

*By the Rev. J. Richard Peck*

The Study of Ministry Commission is likely to ask the 2012 General Conference to eliminate the United Methodist practice of guaranteeing appointment for elders. (View proposal [HERE](#).)

**Support for the proposal**

The Rev. Debbie Wallace Padgett, pastor of St. Luke United Methodist Church in Lexington, Ky., supports the proposed change.

"The proposal to eliminate the guaranteed appointment for elders has the potential to help the church move toward our mission of 'making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,'" she says.

A member of the Kentucky Annual Conference Board of Ministry and a former district superintendent, Padgett says, "Bishops and their cabinets will do a service for all parties involved by assisting ineffective clergy in other arenas of Christian service."

**A call for safeguards**

Minnesota Area Bishop Sally Dyck suggests present evaluation systems must be improved if guaranteed appointments are eliminated so that "courageous, committed and gifted elders will not be penalized for strategic experimentation, for proclaiming and acting for justice, and for who they are as persons in regards to gender and ethnicity."

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*The Flyer* is published monthly by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women in The United Methodist Church.

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, an agency of the Worldwide United Methodist Church acts as advocate, catalyst and monitor to ensure the full participation and equality of women in the church.

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## Guaranteed appointments

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At present, the study committee proposes each annual conference will determine its own definitions of effectiveness and establish evaluation methods.



Anita D. Wood

### Concern for clergy women in conferences with over-supply of clergy

The Rev. Anita D. Wood, a deacon from the West Ohio Conference, is concerned about woman and ethnic-minority elders in conferences that have more clergy than appointments.

"If churches state preferences for clergy appointments and include a request for preferred gender and race of the clergy being appointed, the question may arise whether the bishop and cabinet will overlook qualified and gifted women and racial-ethnic persons in order to make the appointments," says Wood.

### Opposition to the plan

The Rev. Nancy Grissom Self, who was part of the first two-person executive secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, says, "When the commission was established in 1972, they set as one of its priorities to increase visibility of women clergy in the denomination."

"Women were granted full ordination in 1956," says Self. "By 1971 there were only 371 in all categories. Today, there are 10,404, or 24.6 percent of all clergy. Still there are many local churches who have never heard a woman preach.



Nancy Grissom Self

"Without guaranteed appointments, I fear both women and racial-ethnic pastors will encounter difficulty in being assigned. I believe that would be a grievous loss for the church."

### Women will find a way



Linda Lee

"The oppression, marginalization and abuse of women is a current reality beyond and within the church," says Wisconsin Area Bishop Linda Lee. "Women of color, particularly women of African descent, remain among those most at risk for rejection, mistreatment and neglect and thereby most at risk in the appointment-making process."

But, the bishop is still optimistic about the future. She says women find strength by connecting with God and one another. "Ultimately it is God who crafts the shades and hues of our days and the path we are called to travel. So, I believe women and men will answer and fulfill God's call for their lives no matter what decisions the church makes about the ways in which it can or should be fulfilled."

\* Retired clergy member of New York Annual Conference, J. Richard Peck is the former editor of the Daily Christian Advocate, Newscope, Circuit Rider and the International Christian Digest.

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### WOMEN BY THE NUMBERS

#### Women's leadership in annual conferences

By Craig This

The chart below\* lists the top 10 U.S. annual conferences that have the highest percentage of leadership positions held by women (lay and clergy). This chart looks at only leadership positions because this is where decisions, authority and power are held. Generally, when assessing the overall statistics of an organization, there is a high percentage of women primarily because women are employed as support staff rather than managerial/leadership staff.

Conference	All Leadership Positions Reported	% of Women In Leadership Position
Nebraska	18	83%
Minnesota	35	80%
Western Pennsylvania	28	71%
Southwest Texas	38	71%
Wyoming	17	71%
South Carolina	84	70%
Red Bird Missionary	10	70%
Western North Carolina	20	70%
Wisconsin	28	68%
Central Texas	34	68%
North Carolina	43	67%
Troy	6	67%
Kansas East	30	67%
Pacific Northwest	36	67%

The chart below\* lists the 10 annual conferences with the lowest percentage of women in leadership positions within the conference.

Conference	All Leadership Positions Reported	% of Women In Leadership Position
California-Pacific	72	54%
Kansas West	30	50%
Memphis	24	50%
Alabama West Florida	27	48%
Florida	42	48%
South Georgia	31	45%
Kentucky	43	44%
Northwest Texas	14	43%
Yellowstone	102	41%
Texas	1314	27%

What is the gender balance we seek in our leadership? What other factors (age, race, ethnicity, experience, etc.) need to be considered in determining the mix of leadership? What effects does the mix of leadership have on the future direction of the church?

—Craig This is data analyst at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio.

\*Annual conferences NOT reporting: East Ohio, Greater New Jersey, Holston, Indiana, New York, Northern Illinois, Rio Grande, Rocky Mountain and Susquehanna.

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## SEXUAL ETHICS

### Top 10 for 2010: News articles on sexual ethics

by Darryl Stephens\*



The year 2010 offered no shortage of important news on sexual ethics and sexual misconduct in church and society. From reports of suicides of several gay teens and Dan Savage's "It Gets Better" campaign to the [National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior \(NSSHB\)](#) released in October, billed as the most comprehensive study of its kind since the Kinsey Report, to national debate over repealing the US military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, the U.S. media has been awash with issues of sexuality.

Many news items pertain directly to the church. On the negative side are continued revelations about the Roman Catholic Church's failures to address sexual misconduct by priests. On the positive side is an unprecedented two-part segm Oprah Winfrey's shows promoting understanding and healing for men who were sexually abused as children. Here is my "top 10" list of articles pertaining to sex and the church, in chronological order:

- ▶ 1. Release of *Sexuality & Religion 2020: Goals for the Next Decade* by the Religious Institute, Feb. 9. This 48-page report marks the 10th anniversary of the *Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing*. It offers 10 goals encompassing clergy skills, seminary education, congregations, denominations, multifaith coalitions, and public policy advocacy. [Related article](#).
- ▶ 2. "Dear Pope: Call Me -- 10 Steps to Fixing the Sexual Abuse Crisis" by Marie Fortune; April 1.
- ▶ 3. "NOW President Calls for Fundamental Reform to Stop Clergy Sexual Abuse," May 2010. See related article, "[Criminalize Clergy Sexual Misconduct?](#)" by Darryl Stephens, Oct. 10.
- ▶ 4. "United Methodists need to face abuse crisis" by Garlinda Burton, June 14. When asked about the Roman Catholic sexual abuse crisis, GCSRW's General Secretary turns attention back to the UMC to confront its own abuse problem. Burton lists six steps for the church to reclaim its moral authority.
- ▶ 5. "Amid Church Abuse Scandal, an Office That Failed to Act," by Laurie Goodstein and David M. Halbfinger, July 1. Pope Benedict's track record on handling abuse cases is called into question through an investigative report of his career in the curia: "...the future pope, it is now clear, was also part of a culture of nonresponsibility, denial, legalistic foot-dragging and outright obstruction." Today, Pope Benedict's commitment to priestly accountability and reform, "even after nearly three decades of handling abuse cases, is still an open question." See also: "Pew Forum Resources on Catholicism and the Pope: ANALYSIS," June 11; and "[Holding clergy and church leaders legally accountable for child abuse](#)," a one-hour podcast.
- ▶ 6. Continued series of articles on "Sex and the Church" published by the General Board of Church and Society, featuring among other articles, "[Pornography and sexual addiction](#)" by the Rev. Cynthia Abrams, July 9.
- ▶ 7. "[Vatican Equates Women's Ordination with Priest Pedophilia?](#)" by Mary E. Hunt, July 12. A now-released document includes the ordination of women in the same category as sexual abuse by priests. See [coverage by New York Times](#).
- ▶ 8. Bishop Eddie Long tells worshipers, "[I'm gonna fight!](#)" by Gracie Bonds Staples, Shelia M. Poole and Craig Schneider, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Sept. 26. Mega-pastor denies allegations of sexual misconduct, furthering the turmoil in this African American community. The four lawsuits all claim Long, in his role as a church leader, coerced them into sexual relationships. See also: "[The Prior Scandal — An Absence of Accountability](#)" by R. Albert Mohler, Jr., Sept. 27; and "[Why no prayers for Bishop Long's accusers?](#)" by L.Z. Granderson, Oct. 1.
- ▶ 9. "200 Men Step Forward to Speak About Childhood Sexual Abuse," Nov. 5, 2010. Oprah Winfrey leads an historic discussion as 200 men who say they have been molested gather with Tyler Perry for a two-day event on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. The General Board of Global Ministries partnered to produce a [related documentary](#).
- ▶ 10. "[Dutch Panel Found 2,000 Church Abuse Claims](#)" by Stephen Castle, Dec. 9.

\*Darryl W. Stephens is assistant general secretary of sexual ethics and advocacy for GCSRW.

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## SALARY STUDY

### Leaders respond to salary study

By Kristin Knudson\*

The study on Salaries for United Methodist Clergy in the U.S. Context, released last fall by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM), is raising more questions and concerns from church leaders as the data is examined and extrapolated.



Rosetta Ross

The study was commissioned in response to a previous examination of Racial and Ethnic Minority Clergywomen in The United Methodist Church released in 2004 by Higher Education and Ministry. Conducted by Jung Ha Kim and the Rev. Rosetta Ross, this study suggested that the wider examination of clergy salaries be undertaken.

In looking at the report of the current study, Ross questions a statement in the document that indicates "blacks of either gender earn 9% less." She asks, "Does this mean the study does not account for differences between male and female salaries of persons of color? Or differences between salaries of women of color and those of white male pastors? If not, and I assume such differences exist, this study would be deeply flawed in its specific lack of attention to the salary status of racial-ethnic clergywomen."



Sally Dyck

Bishop Sally Dyck also expressed concern in the area of racial-ethnic clergy data. "Racial-ethnic clergy have suffered the most during the past decade in terms of the gap in salaries," she says. "Many times racial-ethnic churches are in communities that struggle to provide economic support for their pastors."

Dyck expressed some of the unique challenges of the various racial-ethnic communities over which she presides in Minnesota. "Many racial-ethnic churches are [serving] immigrants who not only have the lowest paying jobs in the community but also send money back home to their families," Dyck notes. She adds that it's a challenge for the bishop and cabinet in those situations to balance the conference's equitable compensation mandates and the reality that paying a pastor that amount among an immigrant population can cause tension and ill will.

Dyck was not surprised that the survey indicated that churches with larger memberships pay larger clergy salaries. She recalls the recent Sustainability Advisory Group Report that indicates that it takes a congregation of approximately 125 contributing members to sustain a full-time pastorate. The report further states that approximately 80% of U.S. congregations have fewer than 125 members. "While bishops and cabinets need to look carefully at who is being appointed to larger congregations in terms of gender and race, [perhaps we] need to focus on women and racial-ethnic clergy who are growing congregations beyond 125 members?" [READ MORE](#)

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## Leaders respond to salary, status study

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Ross feels that it would be significant to compare the status of clergy women's salaries in the 1980s with clergy women's salaries today. "There is a kind of feminizing of the pastoral profession in recent years—notwithstanding the majority of United Methodist pastors continue to be male," Ross says. "The numbers of women in seminaries have increased at substantial rates. A question that I have in regard to this is what is the meaning of the salary data over the last 10 years in view of the numbers of women entering ministry as compared to men?"

Ross also finds that salary gaps between men and women are most sharply seen when the number of congregations in a charge and the size of a single congregation are considered. "It is not a comparison of apples and apples to consider the salary of a pastor serving a two-, three- or four-point charge as equivalent to the salary of a pastor, earning the same, but serving a single congregation," Ross says. "First, are women disproportionately appointed to serve multiple-point charges [with] two or more churches? How does this vary by race and ethnicity? And second, what changes are occurring or have occurred in the numbers of women who are appointed to larger, higher salaried congregations? How has this changed over time? How does this vary by race and ethnicity?" Ross notes.

Another area of the study that piqued Bishop Dyck's interest was the notion that clergy are reluctant to negotiate salaries and yet have found themselves in the position of receiving an average 20% increase over the past decade, or 2% per year. "I'm curious how that compares with other comparable professional groups. Is it higher or lower?" she wonders.

As the denomination continues to digest the information brought up in the salary study, both Dyck and Ross agree there is more to be done with regard to salaries for clergy.

Given the economic recession, Dyck wonders if clergy salaries can be expected to increase at the same rate while many parishioners are living with less. "Clergy need support in learning to raise money; to teach and preach stewardship as well as negotiate salaries," Bishop Dyck says. "How are we helping them, specifically women and racial-ethnic clergy, do this?"

Ross recommends that bishops, annual conferences, Boards of Ordained Ministry, and the denomination conduct ongoing comparative analysis of salaries based on a complex set of categories. "Doing this would help ensure the provision for comprehensive longitudinal data for making more full assessments of salary changes, improvements, differences," she says. "The church should lead the society in determining ways to both acknowledge and overcome historic injustices. Research such as this is very important in providing the data needed to identify and develop good remedies for such issues.

*\*Kristin Knudson is a freelance journalist living in Baltimore.*

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