



JANUARY 2012

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women
in The United Methodist Church



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In this issue:

- » Commission encourages delegates to protect gender in Constitution—**Page 2**
- » 40 Years of the GCSRW—**Page 4**
- » Penn State lessons as catalyst for change—**Page 6**
- » Top sexual ethics stories of 2011—**Page 8**
- » Snapshot: Who is at the decision-making table?—**Page 10**
- » Book review—**Page 14**

GENERAL CONFERENCE

Commission encourages delegates to protect gender in Constitution

GCSRW is petitioning General Conference to require the word “gender” in the inclusiveness protections of the Constitution. [read more»](#)

GCSRW 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Opening doors – keeping them open

The Commission's 40 years has nurtured women leaders; confronted discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse and institutional sexism, and lifted up women's issues. [read more»](#)

SEXUAL ETHICS

Penn State lessons as catalyst for change

Learning about how we can prevent child sexual abuse is one of the most critical ministries in which a faith community should be engaged. [read more»](#)

SEXUAL ETHICS

Top sexual ethics stories of 2011

Sexual ethics news last year abounded in sin, grace, deceit and hope. [read more»](#)

WOMEN BY THE NUMBERS

Snapshot: Who is at the decision-making table?

[read more»](#)

BOOK REVIEW

Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer and Sex Changed a Nation at War, A Memoir

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GENERAL CONFERENCE

Commission encourages delegates to protect gender in Constitution

GCSRW is petitioning General Conference to require the word “gender” in the inclusiveness protections of the Constitution

By Linda Bloom

Women must be assured of the opportunity to fully participate in leadership roles within The United Methodist Church.

That is why the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) is petitioning the 2012 General Conference to amend the inclusiveness protections in the church’s Constitution.

Specifically, the legislation requires the word “gender” – meaning male and female – to be added to Paragraph 4 of the Constitution, found in the United Methodist *Book of Discipline*.

While the denomination “has a long tradition of striving for the full inclusion of women at all levels of the church,” explains Tyler Schwaller, GCSRW board member and chair of legislation committee, adding gender to the list of constitutionally protected classes “is essential because the Constitution is the one part of the Discipline that remains absolute throughout our worldwide connection.”

Unfortunately, despite the strides made, it cannot be assumed that gender is a “protected class” within the denomination, says M. Garlinda Burton, the commission’s general secretary.

The lack of opportunity can be obvious – the **Polish church** has yet to ordain a woman, for example – or more subtle. Some U.S. congregations still make it clear they don’t want a female pastor to be appointed to their church, Burton notes.

The representation of women in other key leadership roles lags as well. While 56 percent of church members are women, only 40 percent of General Conference delegates are female and that percentage drops when only Central Conference delegates are counted. Worldwide, women represent only 19 percent of clergy in the denomination.

“There are places in the world where it depends upon the whim of the bishop or the board of ordained ministry whether or not women will be ordained,” Burton explains. “The assumption that every aspect of church leadership is open to women is not an assumption we can make.”

Editor’s Note: *General Conference, the top law-making body of The United Methodist Church, convenes April 24-May 4, 2012, in Tampa, Fla. The FLYER is offering a series of articles to inform, prepare and urge delegates and all church members to consider how actions will hurt or hinder lay or clergy women. A powerpoint presentation on the Call to Action proposals and the potential impact on the ministries of GCSRW is available on our website*



Tyler Schwaller



Garlinda Burton



Meeli Tankler

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Photos by Lindsey Graham

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

The current proposal to allow the central conferences to craft their own versions of the *Book of Discipline* makes inclusion of gender in the Constitution even more important “symbolically and legally” in 2012 to ensure the right of women to serve in leadership positions.

In Europe, it is taken for granted that women have equal access to education and professional opportunities, says Meeli Tankler, a GCSRW board member from Estonia. “However, in the church this equality is not always so self-evident when it comes to clergy roles and positions – and sometimes even to the opportunities to preach a sermon,” she points out.

Including gender in Paragraph 4 would serve as an appreciated but simple reminder “that gender should not be regarded as something that enables or disables a person to follow their calling from God.” Tankler says.

Past legislation to include gender in the Constitution has been voted down because some delegates believed it was an attempt to loosen prohibitions on homosexuality. That is not the case, Burton stresses. “We’re talking about male and female, period.”

The commission is particularly encouraging female delegates to support the legislation. “If we are serious about gender equity as a global church, it is vital that we enshrine this commitment in our global Constitution,” Schwaller says.

Linda Bloom is a United Methodist News Service news writer based in New York.

Join us in worship at General Conference

SUNDAY, APRIL 29, 2012, 10AM-NOON
CONVENTION CENTER, TAMPA, FLORIDA

Worship leader: Cynthia Wilson, deacon, Kansas West Annual Conference

Preaching team:



*Pamela Lightsey,
elder, Northern
Illinois
Annual Conference*



*Debbie
Wallace-Padgett,
elder, Kentucky
Annual Conference*



*Erica Granados
de la Rosa,
laity, Fort
Worth, Texas*



*Carmen Scheuerman,
elder, Pampango
Philippines
Annual Conference*



*Joaquina Nhanala,
bishop of
Mozambique
Annual Conference*

GCSRW 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Opening doors – Keeping them open

40 Years of the United Methodist Commission
on the Status and Role of Women*By Elliott Wright*

Women were few at my theological seminary in the 1960s – 15 at most during the span of those three years. Most planned to become Christian educators or missionaries, two of the church-related vocations available to women. The Methodist Church had approved full clergy standing for women in 1956 and female pastors were still rarities.¹ There was a constant buzz at school about the two women candidates for elder's orders. Even if ordained, professional opportunities were culturally limited in the appointive system; what is more, masculine language dominated theology and male attitudes permeated the structures of Methodism.

Editor's Note: *This is the first of three articles marking the 40th anniversary of the Commission. The second will deal with the value of inclusive language in worship and church life, and the third with how three young adult women view their status and roles in the church today.*

The picture dramatically changed over the ensuing decades. By the half-century mark of full ordination there would be some 12,000 women clergy in the denomination, including bishops. The first woman, Marjorie Mathews, was elected to the episcopacy in 1980. Today, as many women as men attend seminary, and inclusive language in theology and biblical translation is common, if not standard. The shifts in attitudes and practices resulted from a combination of forces, including the civil rights and women's rights movements. In 1972, the church itself claimed its responsibility to promote women's equality by establishing the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW).

Broad Mandate

More than an agency for promoting women clergy, the commission's 40 years has nurtured women leaders; confronted discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse and institutional sexism, and lifted up women's issues. Some of its most significant work has been in the area of education about the value of inclusive speech and outlooks. United Methodist Women, an organization of lay women committed to mission, worked hard for the creation of the commission as a measure of justice.

There was some precedent and great need for such a commission in Methodism. John Wesley, the 18th century English Methodist founder, praised the Christian "call" of women. He permitted women to take major roles in the "classes" he organized. Early Methodist women in England and the United States could pray, witness and "exhort" in public but could not become preachers or qualify as clergy. The 19th century church was not as kind to women as was Wesley. "The woman of the early 19th century had suffered such social and religious repression that she was usually blocked from all formal participation in church life."²

Women turned to the emerging Sunday school as one place they could exercise their Christian call. Wesley also

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

¹ The history of women Methodist preachers and ordination is extremely complex given the many traditions represented by today's United Methodist Church. The Methodist Episcopal Church in 1924 permitted women to become local deacons or elders, but there were no such rights in the ME Church, South. The small Methodist Protestant Church had extended ordination to women prior to the merger of these three denominations in 1939. Full clergy rights were recognized by The Methodist Church in 1956 and reaffirmed in 1968 when that church joined with the Evangelical United Brethren to form The United Methodist Church.

² Robert W. Lynn and Elliott Wright, *The Big Little School: 200 Years of the Sunday School*, Abingdon, 1980, p. 155.

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

promoted a diaconal (service) role for women and in both England and the United States. This practice would be continued by women's home and foreign missionary societies in the late 19th century. Education and service join hands in the enormous work women did in building U.S. and international networks of schools, colleges and medical institutions. Their labors were not always valued, and sometimes resented, by the male church hierarchy.

A Continuing Asset

The Commission on the Status and Role of Women had no easy task getting a foothold, and has always received too few resources to adequately fulfill its mandates. In response, it did what any successful Methodist entity does: It became a valuable, continuing asset by organizing on the local and annual conference levels. It opened doors that had been shut or that women had not realized were there. And the challenge continues beyond the 40th anniversary. A recent study indicates that women clergy today earn less than male counterparts and face uphill struggles in finding equity in pastoral appointments. Gender discrimination is not entirely a thing of the past in congregations or the church at large.

The greatest value of the commission is found in the lives of those influenced by its vision of an inclusive United Methodist community. One of those people is Harriett Jane Olson, chief executive of United Methodist Women. She warmly recalls the significance of annual conference commission work in her professional and spiritual journey.

"As a young adult learning my way into the church, [the commission] was my very first connection at the annual conference level," she says. "I was invited to attend a meeting just as I was thinking about women in the Bible and in theology and the role of gender in shaping how theologians have interpreted the biblical message for centuries. I participated in monitoring at my annual conference session and that was an 'ah-ha' moment for me as I thought about how our language both expresses what we are thinking and influences our thoughts and perceptions.

"I am grateful for my experience with the commission for giving me tools that helped me think about how what I was learning connected to the worship life of my church and kept me engaged, by head and heart."

In these sentiments, Olson speaks for a host of United Methodists.

*Elliott Wright is an author who has written for and about
The United Methodist Church for more than a half-century.*

SEXUAL ETHICS

Penn State lessons as catalyst for change

By Linda Crockett

*No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders.
You will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise. Isaiah 60:18 (NIV)*

The tragedy at Penn State could have – and should have – been prevented. Our focus in the faith community at this moment should turn from “Monday morning quarterbacking” about the bad calls of Penn State officials to looking deeply at our own practices in the congregation to determine what needs to change in light of the terrible, but valuable, lessons from Penn State. It’s about Penn State – but it is so much bigger than that.

Sexual Abuse of Children

Children are at greater risk for sexual abuse than almost any of the other things we routinely educate them about – how to safely swim, cross the street or stay away from promiscuity, alcohol and drugs. Numerous studies show that at least one in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused before the age of 18. And 85% are abused by someone in their circle of trust such as a family member, coach, teacher, church leader, neighbor and babysitter. The offender is one of us – which makes this issue incredibly difficult and heart rending. If a victim does not receive appropriate help, the impact can last for a decade and include medical, psychological and social consequences.

Less well understood are the spiritual consequences. Maya Angelou, the award-winning poet and educator who was herself sexually abused as a child, is credited with remarking that abuse “takes a child who knows nothing, and turns her into a child that believes nothing.” I have talked with countless adult survivors who continue to struggle with issues of forgiveness; with molested children who feel abandoned or punished by God; and with victims of incest despairing over the commandment to honor father and mother when a parent becomes a rapist. It is difficult to feel connected to God if you are being sexually abused by someone at home, at school, or in the church itself.

Education and Mission

Learning about how we can prevent child sexual abuse is one of the most critical ministries in which a faith community should be engaged. Every congregation should hold at least one adult education session every year about an aspect of child sexual abuse, including the grooming process offenders use to engage children. Adult education empowers parents, grandparents - anyone who has a child they want to keep safe from sexual exploitation. In this way, child protection from sexual abuse becomes “missional.”

Laity education also “opens up the space” and gives permission to survivors to tell their stories and seek healing. Unless we talk about this issue most will remain silent. Ask your pastor if she/he ever receives disclosures of abuse. If the answer is “no,” your church has not done its job in creating the conditions that allow people to come forward and disclose what happened to them.

Each congregation must grapple with how the abuse of power represented by child sexual abuse violates not only the child but the community covenant we make with each other. And every congregational, judicatory and denominational official needs to own up to the reality that it is also a grave abuse of power to hold it, and not use it proactively in order to protect the most vulnerable among us. To fail to use our power for good is also a sin.

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Safe Church as Ministry

The “safe church” sees itself as a sanctuary, where one finds protection, security, support, guidance and the presence of God. We recommend that any congregation desiring to claim the words of the prophet Isaiah (60:18) move through an intentional process to create and annually renew its **Safe Sanctuaries** or other “safe church” policy.

A safe church policy should be created over a period of time that also includes developing a theological framework to describe how protecting children is a core part of your mission and community covenant. Each congregation must struggle to articulate its unique understanding of why this is important. A policy not developed by the people will easily become a “dead thing” - a document that sits on a shelf and allows us to feel we can check the box on having complied with our responsibility.

It is way past time we stop wringing our hands, and take action. Let us use the tragic lessons from Penn State as our catalyst for change... and may our communities of faith be in the forefront of prevention, rather than “in the news” for failure to protect. We’ve been there, and done that. Let’s move forward together to make Isaiah’s vision a reality.

Linda Crockett is Director of Clergy & Congregation Care, Samaritan Counseling Center, Lancaster, Pa. To learn more about her ministry with congregations developing safe church policies, see www.scclanc.org.

YOU'RE INVITED!

WHO:

2012 General Conference Delegates

Delegates, as chosen/sent by their Delegation – clergy, lay. Attendees are expected to conduct follow-up educational session(s) in their Annual Conference regarding the Briefing contents.

WHAT:

Briefing on UMC legislation concerning women:

To educate, skill-build and strategize for informing Annual Conferences.

WHEN:

February 17–18, 2012
Noon to noon

Online Registration Required by **January 5, 2012**

WHERE:

Renaissance Airport St. Louis Hotel St Louis, MO

Registration includes: one double-occupancy room for one night and onsite meals during the event, per annual conference. All other expenses are the delegate’s responsibility.



To register: <http://www.eventrebels.com/gcbriefing>



SEXUAL ETHICS

Top sexual ethics stories of 2011

Sexual ethics news last year abounded in sin, grace, deceit and hope

By Darryl W. Stephens

The year began with a hugely successful sexual ethics summit, “Do No Harm 2011,” Jan 26-29, illustrating the strength of our connectional polity in the United Methodist Church. GCSRW and the Sexual Ethics Task Force trained over 300 leaders from 58 annual conferences. Read “Do No Harm” coverage by GCSRW (**February 2011**), the *United Methodist Reporter* (**Feb. 4**) and UMNS (**Jan. 27** and **Jan. 31**).

Sexual misconduct knows no denominational boundaries. The Roman Catholic **Archdiocese of Philadelphia suspended 21 priests** from active ministry because of accusations of sexual misconduct, and Catholics in **Ireland** continue to grapple with past abuses by priests. Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori of the **Episcopal Church** was charged with knowingly ordaining a pedophile. In October, a court ruled that the Minnesota Annual (regional) Conference of the United Methodist Church must pay a portion of a **\$1.4 million settlement** against a United Methodist clergyman found guilty of felony sexual abuse of a congregant.

Why do bad things happen in church? In May, the Roman Catholic Church released a report, “**The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010.**” The “John Jay Report” found that “individual characteristics do not predict that a priest will commit sexual abuse of a minor. Rather, vulnerabilities, in combination with situational stresses and opportunities, raise the risk of abuse.” **Religion News Service** concluded, “The doctrine of the undiluted authority of the bishop, combined with the hierarchy’s track record as a group of crisis managers concerned with protecting the institution, may be the central problem for the bishops revealed by the sex abuse crisis.”

Church can also be redemptive. In March, **Presbyterian leaders in a Virginia congregation** admitted their initial failure to respond adequately to victims of sexual abuse by a former youth pastor. The public apology by the senior pastor serves as a grace-filled, risky and hopeful model for redemption, education and healing for survivors as well as congregations wounded by those who violate the sacred trust of the ministerial office. In June, the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) published a three-part series by GCSRW General Secretary Garlinda Burton challenging the United Methodist Church on **Countering institutional sexism, Politics of language, gender and Misuse of power to keep women in their place.**

Throughout the year, the U.S. society seemed captivated by reports of sexual sin, for both moralistic and voyeuristic reasons, on a variety of topics: pornography and prostitutes (**next door** or **wrong score?**), sexual addiction (**epidemic** or **panic?**), and misconduct by politicians and public figures (e.g., Weiner, Cain, and Strauss-Kahn). In this category, the **Penn State scandal** provided the best **learning opportunities for churches.**

Good sex was also a hot topic in the media, and churches are being challenged to **talk about it.** “What if our kids really believed we wanted them to have great sex?” asks a Philadelphia sex educator in *The New York Times*. *The Christian Century* considered “**sacramental sex.**” GBCS reports that **What young adults need** is “access to information and services about sex and sexuality.” Barna Group concurs: one of the top **Six Reasons Why Young Christians Leave Church** is, “Young Christians’ church experiences related to sexuality are often simplistic, judgmental.”

Several research studies round out our top news stories for 2011. United Nations Women’s first global report

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

offers a comprehensive global review of women’s rights around the world, on issues from gender-based violence to equal pay, from representation in government to post-conflict justice: *Progress of the World’s Women: In Pursuit of Justice*. In the United States, **sexting by minors** may not be as common as you suppose (2%), and the prevalence of **pornography on the internet** might also be lower (4% to 13%). However, **sexual harassment of and by students** is widespread (download the entire report: **Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School**), and the nature of workplace sexual harassment complaints to the **EEOC** has changed in the past 20 years: charges filed by men have increased, use of online technology makes documentation easier in some cases, and the number of claims has decreased during the current recession.

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

Your gift can **Empower Women**
Give to the Advocacy for Women Fund

Learn More, Click Here.

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women receives .001 cents for every dollar that is placed in the offering plate at a United Methodist church (one of the lowest rates in our denomination).

With women making up more than half of the church’s total membership, it’s clear that the Advocacy for Women Fund—which provides research, scholarships, skill development, theological studies, and salary support for pastors outside the United States—is vital.

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WOMEN BY THE NUMBERS

Snapshot: Who is at the decision-making table?

By Craig This

Introduction

A total of 602 U.S. delegates were elected to the 2012 General Conference of The United Methodist Church. As legislated by 2008 *The Book of Discipline*, half of the delegates are laity and half are clergy. Furthermore, the number of delegates representing each jurisdiction and each annual conference is proportional to the jurisdiction and annual conference's membership (See Table 1 and Table 2). The Southeastern Jurisdiction has the most delegates with 220 and the Western Jurisdiction the least with 32.

Highlights

- » 44% of the U.S. delegates are female
- » 149 laywomen (50% of laity) and 117 clergywomen (39% of clergy) delegates
- » 58 of the 59 annual conferences delegations have at least one female delegate
- » 22% of the U.S. delegates are people of color
- » 45 clergymen of color (15% of clergy); 29 clergywomen of color (1% of clergy)
- » 34 laymen of color (1% of laity); and 27 laywomen (1% of laity) delegates
- » 14 annual conference delegations do not include any people of color

Gender

Forty-four percent or 266 of the delegates are women and 56% (or 336) are men. One jurisdiction, Western, has more female delegates than male (see Table 2). When aggregated by gender and status (lay or clergy), the largest percentage of U.S. delegates are clergymen at 31% and smallest percentage is clergywomen at 19% (see Table 3). The laity is almost evenly divided between men (152) and women (149).

Table 1: Delegate Status by Annual Conference and Jurisdiction

Annual Conference	Clergy	Laity	Total
North Central Jurisdiction			
Dakotas	1	1	2
Detroit	4	4	8
East Ohio	7	7	14
Illinois Great Rivers	6	6	12
Indiana	9	9	18
Iowa	7	7	14
Minnesota	3	3	6
Northern Illinois	4	4	8
West Michigan	3	3	6
West Ohio	9	9	18
Wisconsin	3	3	6
Total	56	56	112
South Central Jurisdiction			
Arkansas	6	6	12
Central Texas	6	6	12
Kansas East	2	2	4
Kansas West	2	2	4
Louisiana	5	5	10
Missouri	7	7	14
Nebraska	2	2	4
New Mexico	1	1	2
North Texas	6	6	12
Northwest Texas	2	2	4
Oklahoma	9	9	18
Oklahoma Indian Missionary	1	1	2
Rio Grande	1	1	2
Southwest Texas	4	4	8
Texas	10	10	20
Total	64	64	128
Northeastern Jurisdiction			
Baltimore-Washington	7	7	14
Eastern Pennsylvania	5	5	10
Greater New Jersey	5	5	10
New England	5	5	10
New York	5	5	10
Peninsula-Delaware	2	2	4
Susquehanna	7	7	14
Upper New York	8	8	16
West Virginia	5	5	10
Western Pennsylvania	6	6	12
Total	55	55	110
Alabama-West Florida			
Florida	11	11	22
Holston	7	7	14
Kentucky	6	6	12
Memphis	2	2	4
Mississippi	7	7	14
North Alabama	6	6	12
North Carolina	9	9	18
North Georgia	13	13	26
Red Bird Missionary	1	1	2
South Carolina	9	9	18
South Georgia	5	5	10
Tennessee	4	4	8
Virginia	13	13	26
Western No Carolina	11	11	22
Total	110	110	220

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Table 2: Delegate Gender by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Female		Male		UMC Total
North Central	51	46%	61	54%	112
Northeastern	54	49%	56	51%	110
South Central	49	38%	79	62%	128
Southeastern	92	42%	128	58%	220
Western	20	63%	12	38%	32
UMC Total	266	44%	336	56%	602

Table 3: Delegate Status and Gender by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Clergy					Laity					UMC Total
	Female		Male		Total	Female		Male		Total	
	#	%	#	%	Total	#	%	#	%	Total	
North Central	22	20%	34	30%	56	29	26%	27	24%	56	112
Northeastern	24	22%	31	28%	55	30	27%	25	23%	55	110
South Central	21	16%	43	34%	64	28	22%	36	28%	64	128
Southeastern	42	19%	68	31%	110	50	23%	60	27%	110	220
Western	8	25%	8	25%	16	12	38%	4	13%	16	32
UMC Total	117	19%	184	31%	301	149	25%	152	25%	301	602

Table 5: Delegates' Race/Ethnicity by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-Racial	Native American	Pacific Islander	White	Total	R/E Total	R/E %
North Central	13	5					94	112	18	16%
Northeastern	29	5	1	1			74	110	36	33%
South Central	16	1	6	1	4		100	128	28	22%
Southeastern	35	2	3		2		178	220	42	19%
Western	4	6				1	21	32	11	34%
UMC Total	97	19	10	2	6	1	467	602	135	22%

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Thirty-two of the 59 annual conference delegations (54%) have a percentage of their female representation equal to or greater than 44%, which is the overall percentage of U.S. female delegates (see Table 4). All but one annual conference delegation has some representation of women with the lowest percentage being 25%.

People of Color

One in five U.S. delegates or 135 (22%) is a person of color (see Table 5). The largest percentage of people of color is African Americans/Black with 97 delegates (or 71%) of the people of color representation. In

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Table 4: Delegates' Gender by Annual Conference (Ranked)

Annual Conference	Female	Male	Total	Female %
Dakotas	2		2	100%
Desert Southwest	2		2	100%
Oregon-Idaho	2		2	100%
West Michigan	5	1	6	83%
Kansas West	3	1	4	75%
Memphis	3	1	4	75%
Pacific Northwest	3	1	4	75%
Rocky Mountain	4	2	6	67%
California-Pacific	5	3	8	63%
Eastern Pennsylvania	6	4	10	60%
Greater New Jersey	6	4	10	60%
Western No Carolina	13	9	22	59%
Western Pennsylvania	7	5	12	58%
Detroit	4	4	8	50%
Iowa	7	7	14	50%
Minnesota	3	3	6	50%
Northern Illinois	4	4	8	50%
Wisconsin	3	3	6	50%
Baltimore-Washington	7	7	14	50%
New England	5	5	10	50%
Susquehanna	7	7	14	50%
Arkansas	6	6	12	50%
Louisiana	5	5	10	50%
Nebraska	2	2	4	50%
New Mexico	1	1	2	50%
Oklahoma Indian Missionary	1	1	2	50%
Rio Grande	1	1	2	50%
Red Bird Missionary	1	1	2	50%
Alaska Missionary	1	1	2	50%
Yellowstone	1	1	2	50%
Virginia	12	14	26	46%
Florida	10	12	22	45%
Upper New York	7	9	16	44%
East Ohio	6	8	14	43%
Holston	6	8	14	43%
Mississippi	6	8	14	43%
Illinois Great Rivers	5	7	12	42%
Central Texas	5	7	12	42%
Kentucky	5	7	12	42%
New York	4	6	10	40%
West Virginia	4	6	10	40%
Indiana	7	11	18	39%
Oklahoma	7	11	18	39%
North Carolina	7	11	18	39%
South Carolina	7	11	18	39%
Tennessee	3	5	8	38%
Missouri	5	9	14	36%
North Georgia	9	17	26	35%
North Texas	4	8	12	33%
Alabama-West Florida	4	8	12	33%
California-Nevada	2	4	6	33%
Texas	6	14	20	30%
South Georgia	3	7	10	30%
West Ohio	5	13	18	28%
Peninsula-Delaware	1	3	4	25%
Kansas East	1	3	4	25%
Southwest Texas	2	6	8	25%
North Alabama	3	9	12	25%
Northwest Texas		4	4	0%

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

two jurisdictions—Northeastern and Western— a third of their delegation are people of color. However, 14 (or 22%) of the annual conference delegations report 0% people of color (see Table 6). While it might be argued that the delegations without people of color are too small for diversity, there are other annual conferences as small or smaller that achieved diversity.

Women of color have a greater percentage of the overall female representation than the men of color have of the overall male representation (see Table 7). However, in terms of numbers, the men of color (79) outnumber the women of color (56).

To put things in perspective, there are 257 white males to the 135 males of color, which is almost a 2 to 1 ratio. Further, there are 13 legislative committees, if the jurisdictional delegates were divided evenly among the committees, on each committee there would be 4 women of color, 6 men of color and 35 white persons. The strength of the 3 to 1 ratio of whites to people of color in the overall U.S. delegation is clearly viewed here, demonstrating the diminished representation of people of color in the committees.

Conclusion

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church represents the “highest level of decision making in the church.” Over the two-week period that it meets in 2012, it will approve

Table 6: Delegates’ Race/Ethnicity by Annual Conference (Ranked)

Annual Conference	African American/Black	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-Racial	Native American	Pacific Islander	White	Total	R/E Total	R/E %
Oklahoma Indian Missionary					2			2	2	100%
Rio Grande			2					2	2	100%
New York	5	1	1				3	10	7	70%
California-Nevada	2	2					2	6	4	67%
California-Pacific	1	3				1	3	8	5	63%
Baltimore-Washington	6	1					7	14	7	50%
Greater New Jersey	3	2					5	10	5	50%
Peninsula-Delaware	2						2	4	2	50%
Eastern Pennsylvania	4						6	10	4	40%
New England	3	1					6	10	4	40%
Northern Illinois	2	1					5	8	3	38%
Southwest Texas	1		2				5	8	3	38%
Louisiana	2		1				7	10	3	30%
Texas	5		1				14	20	6	30%
Mississippi	4						10	14	4	29%
South Carolina	5						13	18	5	28%
Florida	4		2				16	22	6	27%
Western No Carolina	4	1			1		16	22	6	27%
North Georgia	6		1				19	26	7	27%
Upper New York	4						12	16	4	25%
Kansas East	1						3	4	1	25%
Kansas West					1		3	4	1	25%
Tennessee	2						6	8	2	25%
Pacific Northwest		1					3	4	1	25%
North Carolina	3				1		14	18	4	22%
East Ohio	2	1					11	14	3	21%
Missouri	2			1			11	14	3	21%
Virginia	4	1					21	26	5	19%
Illinois Great Rivers	2						10	12	2	17%
Indiana	3						15	18	3	17%
West Michigan	1						5	6	1	17%
West Ohio	2	1					15	18	3	17%
Central Texas	1				1		10	12	2	17%
Oklahoma	2	1					15	18	3	17%
Rocky Mountain	1						5	6	1	17%
Iowa		2					12	14	2	14%
Susquehanna	1			1			12	14	2	14%
Detroit	1						7	8	1	13%
South Georgia	1						9	10	1	10%
Western Pennsylvania	1						11	12	1	8%
Arkansas	1						11	12	1	8%
North Texas	1						11	12	1	8%
North Alabama	1						11	12	1	8%
Holston	1						13	14	1	7%
Dakotas							2	2	0	0%
Minnesota							6	6	0	0%
Wisconsin							6	6	0	0%
West Virginia							10	10	0	0%
Nebraska							4	4	0	0%
New Mexico							2	2	0	0%
Northwest Texas							4	4	0	0%
Alabama-West Florida							12	12	0	0%
Kentucky							12	12	0	0%
Memphis							4	4	0	0%
Red Bird Missionary							2	2	0	0%
Alaska Missionary							2	2	0	0%
Desert Southwest							2	2	0	0%
Oregon-Idaho							2	2	0	0%
Yellowstone							2	2	0	0%

STORY CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

STORY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

not only a budget but more importantly the mission and ministry of The United Methodist Church for the next four years. This summary provides but a snapshot of who is at the table to make those decisions. The question though is whom do these decision-makers represent? And what mission and ministry will they approve? Do they represent the demographic membership of The United Methodist Church that exists today or do they represent the church that God is calling all Christians to be? Will it be a mission and ministry of the status quo or a mission and ministry of “making disciples for Jesus Christ?”

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

Table 7: Gender and Status by Race/Ethnicity and Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction Race/Ethnicity	Female										Male						UMC Total	R/E Totals					
	Clergy		Laity		Total	R/E Clergy		R/E Laity		Clergy		Laity		Total	R/E Clergy			R/E Laity					
	#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		#	%		#	%				
North Central Jurisdiction																							
African American/Black	2	15%	5	38%	7					5	38%	1	8%	6					13				
Asian	3	60%		0%	3					2	40%		0%	2					5				
White	17	18%	24	26%	41					27	29%	26	28%	53					94				
Total	22	20%	29	26%	51	5	23%	5	23%	34	30%	27	24%	61	7	21%	1	3%	112	12	11%	6	5%
Northeastern Jurisdiction																							
African American/Black	6	21%	6	21%	12					7	24%	10	34%	17					29				
Asian	2	40%	1	20%	3					2	40%		0%	2					5				
Hispanic		0%		0%							0%	1	100%	1					1				
Multi-Racial		0%		0%							0%	1	100%	1					1				
White	16	22%	23	31%	39					22	30%	13	18%	35					74				
Total	24	22%	30	27%	54	8	33%	7	29%	31	28%	25	23%	56	9	29%	12	39%	110	17	15%	19	17%
South Central Jurisdiction																							
African American/Black	4	25%	1	6%	5					8	50%	3	19%	11					16				
Asian		0%		0%							0%	1	100%	1					1				
Hispanic		0%	1	17%	1					3	50%	2	33%	5					6				
Multi-Racial		0%		0%						1	100%		0%	1					1				
Native American		0%	3	75%	3					1	25%		0%	1					4				
White	17	17%	23	23%	40					30	30%	30	30%	60					100				
Total	21	16%	28	22%	49	4	19%	5	24%	43	34%	36	28%	79	13	30%	6	14%	128	17	13%	11	9%
Southeastern Jurisdiction																							
African American/Black	9	26%	6	17%	15					10	29%	10	29%	20					35				
Asian	1	50%		0%	1					1	50%		0%	1					2				
Hispanic	1	33%		0%	1					1	33%	1	33%	2					3				
Native American		0%	1	50%	1						0%	1	50%	1					2				
White	31	17%	43	24%	74					56	31%	48	27%	104					178				
Total	42	19%	50	23%	92	11	26%	7	17%	68	31%	60	27%	128	12	18%	12	18%	220	23	10%	19	9%
Western Jurisdiction																							
African American/Black		0%		0%						2	50%	2	50%	4					4				
Asian	1	17%	2	33%	3					2	33%	1	17%	3					6				
Pacific Islander		0%	1	100%	1						0%		0%						1				
White	7	33%	9	43%	16					4	19%	1	5%	5					21				
Total	8	25%	12	38%	20	1	13%	3	38%	8	25%	4	13%	12	4	50%	3	38%	32	5	16%	6	19%
UMC Total	117	19%	149	25%	266	29	25%	27	23%	184	31%	152	25%	336	45	24%	34	18%	602	74	12%	61	10%

BOOK REVIEW

Mighty Be Our Powers

How Sisterhood, Prayer and Sex Changed a Nation at War, A Memoir

By: Julie Schubring

Leyman Gbowee leads us on a personal journey through the terrible conflict of the Liberian civil war until the bittersweet victory at the end. She also interweaves the history that led to this war, as well as the church's involvement or lack-there-of. It is a gripping tale that will be hard to put down.

Gbowee encouraged and rallied other women to join in the fight to take back their country after two decades of war and civil unrest. Since the majority of the country's leaders were men and the discussion to end the war was going in circles, Gbowee helped organize and then led the Liberian Mass Action for Peace, a coalition of Christian and Muslim women who sat in public protest, confronting Liberia's ruthless president and rebel warlords, and even held a sex strike. Gbowee helped lead her nation to peace and emerged as an international leader who changed history.

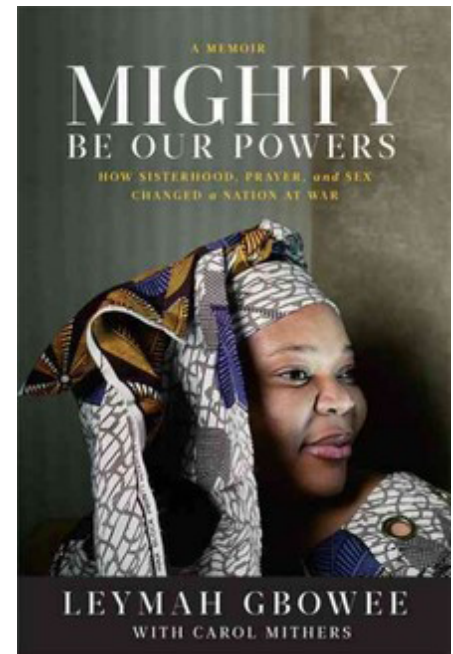
Listen to these words from Gbowee that highlights the struggle and the delicate balance of inclusivity.

We created WIPNET [Women in Peacebuilding Network] identity cards, and the women wore them proudly. They were especially important to women coming from the displaced persons camps. Each day, they were able to leave behind the poverty and limbo of their lives to do something that mattered. Wearing WIPNET t-shirts, with ID cards hanging around their necks, they were transformed from being no one to women of importance, acknowledged by everyone who saw them as they trudged down the road. (pp. 148-149)

This book is intended for women everywhere, whether you have personally been affected by war or some other tragedy. This book is also for the men of the world who join in this struggle alongside these brave women, and can serve as a guide for moving forward in gender discussions.

Gbowee recently received the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize along with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, president of Liberia, and Tawakkol Karman of Yemen. The book can be used by study groups of all ages.

Julie Kathleen Schubring is a student at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill., and is a commissioned Bishop W.T. Handy Young Adult Missionary.



Gbowee. *Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex Changed a Nation at War*, A Memoir. New York: Beast Books, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-9842951-5-9. 245 pages. 25.99 USD Hardcover. Additional Resource: Also available as an e-book.