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To honor the Commission's work and ministries toward full participation of women throughout the United Methodist Church, GCSRW offers our commemorative pin. This attractive piece featuring the Commission's logo may also be worn as a pendant. To purchase, please send your name, mailing address and a \$25 check payable to GCSRW, 77 W. Washington Street, Suite 1009, Chicago, IL 60602.

Advocacy for Women

ENDOWMENT FUND

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

A 2012 General Conference Primer: What is it? Why it matters? What's in it for women?
—By M. Garlinda Burton*

NOTE: This is the first in a series of articles and resources that GCSRW will present to help you understand, prepare for and make an impact on the 2012 General Conference, the highest lawmaking assembly of the global United Methodist Church, which will convene in Tampa, Fla., April 24-May 4, 2012.

WHAT? General Conference is our denomination's top law-making body that establishes the order, missional life and budget for the 12-million-member, worldwide United Methodist Church. It meets for 11 days every four years.

WHO? Decision-makers at General Conference will include 988 clergy and laity (494 of each) from around the world. Called "delegates," they are elected by their respective annual (regional) conferences the year before the conference (for the 2012 session, delegates will be elected starting this spring). Only elected delegates have voice and vote; bishops preside over sessions, but cannot vote.

HOW? Any United Methodist may submit a petition to General Conference, and voting delegates review, revise, combine and process thousands of them, working first in legislative committees. Committees then place the petitions on plenary session legislative calendars to be accepted or rejected as church law. Along with individual United Methodists, congregations, annual conferences, official caucuses, agencies and councils may ask General Conference to change, expand or delete all or part of church policies, doctrines, statements, program and mission priorities.

LARGEST DELEGATIONS? Each conference delegation is based on the number of ordained clergy and lay members in the region, the minimum number being two (one layperson, one clergyperson). [READ MORE](#)

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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General Conference primer (continued from page 1)



The largest delegation in the world will represent North Katanga (a province in the Democratic of the Congo), with 52 delegates. The Nos. 2 and 3 delegations in terms of size are also in Africa: Cote D'Ivoire (40 delegates) and Nigeria (30 delegates). Of the 63 U.S. annual conferences, the four largest in membership and, therefore, of delegations are: North Georgia and Virginia, with 26 delegates a piece, and Florida and Western North Carolina, with 22 delegates each. The total number of delegates from the United States will be 606; the other 392 will come from Europe, Africa, the Philippines, and denominations with which the UMC has a historic relationship.

WOMEN'S PLACE? Annual conference will elect their delegates this spring through the fall. At the General Conference session in 2008, women comprised 40% of all delegates (*The Flyer, April-May-June 2008*). However, given that women are 54% of church members,

women were still underrepresented, comprising only 33% of the total number of clergy delegates and 28% of delegates from outside the United States. Laywomen actually lost seats between the 2000 and 2004 sessions. Women in Africa, Europe and the Philippines say that institutional sexism in their regions, as in the United States, means that women are less likely to be named to seats of power.

TO DO? The major work of General Conference is to set church policy and budget and to speak on behalf of United Methodist Christians on the global socio-economic, political and moral issues of the day.

WHAT'S ON THE TABLE? Everything from the rights of women and people of color to be ordained and appointed as clergy in the church, to the job description for your church's lay leaders, is included in *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. And, with few exceptions, *any* provision in the book can be changed by a majority vote. Constitutional amendments require a two-thirds majority in General Conferences and later ratification by annual conferences.

MONEY? General Conference also sets the budget for the worldwide, churchwide mission, ministry, priorities and administration of the denomination. The 2012 General Conference will decide on the allocation and use of their budget for everything from disaster relief and urban ministries, to ministerial education and programs to empower women and address sexism. (The 2009-2012 budget was \$641,897,000, but the 2012 budget is expected to be lower.) The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women receives 100% of its funding through the World Service Fund, the allocation of which is determined by General Conference. (Of the 10 churchwide agencies who in 2010 received a total of \$70,175,743 from the World Service Fund, GCSRW received in 2010 \$847,520 or 1.2% of that allocation.)

SEEKING SHARED LEADERSHIP. Women account for more than half of the membership of our denomination worldwide. That means that discipleship, Christian education, mission, caring for the poor and outcast, feeding the hungry, preaching the Gospel story, binding up the broken and witnessing to the goodness of Jesus Christ are commanded of women and men as we express our faith.

REPRESENTING. Women are still underrepresented at most decision-making tables in our church; this reality flies in the face of the biblical assertion in Galatians 3:28 that, "There is neither Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." However, because of the faithfulness of women—and of those men who have stood with us—the United Methodist Church has experienced in the past 40 years a steady increase in women as pastors, lay leaders, teachers, mission workers and decision-makers.

PUSH BACK. In tough financial times, church people—like other people—often hunker down and long for what we perceive as "the good old days." However, justice and full participation of women and people of color as equal partners in church decision-making are relatively new constructs. The 2012 General Conference has some tough calls to make, including:

- ◆ How best can we allocate the church's global financial resources?
- ◆ How do we best encourage, fund and inspire congregations to grow and to reach new people?
- ◆ Whom should United Methodists support as future lay and clergy leaders?
- ◆ Who is qualified to sit on decision-making boards of church agencies?
- ◆ Would doing away with "guaranteed appointments" for clergy negatively affect white women, young people and people of color in pursuing God's their call to ordained ministry?
- ◆ What are the optimum ways to meet the needs and embrace the wisdom and gifts of women and men in the rapidly growing United Methodist Church beyond the United States, particularly in Africa?

To learn more about 2012 General Conference, visit the [official website](#) and watch future issues of *The Flyer* for in-depth coverage.

—M. Garlinda Burton is general secretary of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

WOMEN BY THE NUMBERS

Which U.S. conferences employ the most racial-ethnic women?

By Elaine Moy*

The chart below lists the U.S. United Methodist annual conferences in which 10% or more of their employees are racial-ethnic clergywomen and laywomen. There are 63 annual conferences in the United States. Below are also the U.S. annual conferences with the lowest percentage of racial-ethnic clergywomen or laywomen employees.

| Top annual conferences by % of racial-ethnic clergywomen employed | | Top annual conferences by % of racial-ethnic laywomen employed | |
|---|------|--|-----|
| Conference | % | Conference | % |
| Oklahoma Indian Missionary | 44 % | Western Pennsylvania | 64% |
| Kansas West | 40 % | Wisconsin | 43% |
| Wisconsin | 18 % | Mississippi | 41% |
| Mississippi | 17 % | Southwest Texas | 24% |
| Tennessee | 13 % | Baltimore-Washington | 20% |
| | | California-Pacific | 19% |
| | | Desert Southwest | 17% |
| | | Alabama West Florida | 15% |
| | | South Carolina | 14% |
| | | North Alabama | 14% |

| Lowest % of racial-ethnic clergywomen employed | | Lowest % of racial-ethnic laywomen employed | |
|--|----|---|----|
| Conference | % | Conference | % |
| Pacific Northwest | 6% | Illinois Great Rivers | 4% |
| North Central New York | 5% | Desert Southwest | 4% |
| Western North Carolina | 5% | Penninsula-Delaware | 4% |
| Virginia | 5% | South Carolina | 4% |
| Illinois Great Rivers | 4% | Louisiana | 3% |
| Oregon-Idaho | 4% | Florida | 2% |
| West Ohio | 3% | West Virginia | 2% |
| Iowa | 2% | North Texas | 2% |
| West Michigan | 2% | California-Pacific | 1% |
| Texas | 1% | Iowa | 1% |

Some questions to consider:

- ◆ Do the percentages of racial-ethnic women employees (and the membership of UM congregations) in these annual conferences exceed, equal or fall short of the regions' total racial-ethnic population? (The national population is nearly 40% people of color.)
- ◆ What might this imply with regard to our denomination's efforts to make Christian disciples and be in mission with all people in all places, and to represent the communities in which we minister?
- ◆ Which racial-ethnic communities do the women employees represent?
- ◆ What positions do the racial-ethnic women hold?
- ◆ Which racial-ethnic women communities are missing from the discussions?

NOTE: Percentages are based on reports from annual conferences. Annual conferences NOT reporting include East Ohio, Indiana, Northern Illinois, Susquehanna, New York, Greater New Jersey, Rio Grande, Holston, and Rocky Mountain.

—Elaine Moy of Chicago is assistant general secretary for finance and administration for the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

SEXUAL ETHICS

Why Every Conference Needs a Response Team

By Sue Jamison*



My first experience with clergy sexual misconduct happened 20 years ago when I was asked to fill in for three weeks for a pastor-colleague who was on a “family-in-crisis leave. I stayed at that church for eight months.

The fifth month into my time with them, after my colleague surrendered his ministerial credentials, I learned that he had initiated a romantic affair with a member of the congregation. This information came not from the bishop or district superintendent but from the woman involved; she approached me after I had spoken about my plans to attend a national training event on clergy sexual ethics.

After listening to her story, I immediately called the superintendent and shared what I had learned, only to be told that the bishop and cabinet already knew. I could scarcely contain my anger. This congregation was beating itself, assuming the church members had caused their pastor to have a nervous breakdown. There was no Response Team to help this congregation. As a result of that experience my conference’s first Clergy Sexual Ethics policy was written by our conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women (CSRW), and recommended creation of a Response Team. Soon the bishop named several others and me as our conference’s first team, and we held a training session to begin formulating a protocol. It took some time for the bishop and cabinet to learn how to use the team.

Twenty years later, what is now the Susquehanna Annual Conference has a Response Team of 25 persons trained to support and work with the bishop and superintendents in congregations where misconduct has occurred or been alleged. We have a convener who coordinates cases and writes the official reports that are sent to the cabinet. The team includes clergy and lay men and women with skills and experience that has been critical to our success. Our ministry is one of healing, reconciliation and accountability.

Over the years, our team and our annual conference leaders have learned a great deal about the importance of:

- ◆truth telling
- ◆an apology from a cabinet representative to complainants and congregations for the harm that has been done
- ◆appointing advocates for all parties concerned, so that all people involved have someone with whom they can talk and receive accurate information about the process
- ◆engaging the staff/parish relations committee as leaders in the justice-making and healing processes
- ◆congregational meetings where folks can speak honestly about their feelings in small groups facilitated by response team members
- ◆learning not to take it personally when we become targets for the anger congregations have
- ◆patience in listening
- ◆education of laity and clergy about the abuse of power that is often at the root of the offending pastor’s behavior.

At least twice during my participation on the Response Team, we have invited members of congregations who have been through our process to share their story with churches who were just beginning the process because they know how valuable it was to have the response team in their midst. Now a call to the Response Team is among the first steps taken when a credible allegation of misconduct occurs. We know we make a positive difference in the conference’s ability to respond with compassion and justice, and that healing is possible.

Learn more about [Response Teams](#) or call GCSRW at (312) 346-4900 or (800) 523-8390.

— Sue Jamison is an ordained elder serving in extension ministry with Albright Care Services in the Susquehanna Conference.

JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE

What is a jurisdictional conference?

By the Rev. J. Richard Peck*



A jurisdiction is a collection of annual conferences, grouped by regions, in the United States. There are five jurisdictional conferences, with delegates from each of their annual conferences, that meet once every four years. Each jurisdiction establishes the number and boundaries of its own annual conferences and elects bishops to preside over those conferences. U.S. bishops may serve the same episcopal areas for up to 12 years and, once elected, may serve until they retire. (Bishops outside the United States are elected and assigned by different processes.)

The next meetings of the five conferences is July 17-21, 2012. The North Central Jurisdiction meets for five days (July 17-21). Southeastern and Northeastern Jurisdictions meet for three days (July 18-20). The Western Jurisdictional Conference meets on July 18 (at press time, this conference had not announced an ending date yet). Bishops preside over the sessions.

The number of bishops is determined by a formula established by General Conference. Current rules give each jurisdiction a minimum of five bishops. Jurisdictions with more than 300,000 members are entitled to an additional bishop for each additional 300,000 members or fraction thereof. The number of bishops to be elected in 2012 has not been determined. For the next upcoming sessions, bishops must retire if they reach their 68th birthday on or before July 1, 2012. Three bishops face mandatory retirement in the South Central Jurisdiction; two in Southeastern; and two in Northeastern. Other bishops may accept early retirement. ([View chart of retiring bishops.](#))

Assignments of bishops are recommended by a committee on episcopacy composed of one clergy and one lay person from each annual conference in the jurisdiction. Committee recommendations must be approved by the full jurisdictional conference. In rare cases, an Inter-jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy can transfer bishops across jurisdictional lines if the bishops and the jurisdictions consent. All assignments for active U.S. bishops begin on Sept. 1, 2012. Voting delegates also choose from a [jurisdictional pool](#) of laity and clergy representatives from their regions to most churchwide program and administrative agencies.

Make women count at upcoming church elections. Learn more [HERE](#).

The 2011 sessions of annual conferences will elect equal numbers of lay and clergy delegates to the 2012 jurisdictional conferences. Clergy elect clergy delegates and laypersons elect lay delegates. Each annual conference elects twice as many delegates as they do to jurisdictional conferences that there are to General Conference. Because of church membership declines in United States conferences and increases in Africa, 2011 U.S. annual conferences will elect a total of 1,212 jurisdictional conference delegates, 196 fewer than they elected to the 2008 assemblies (North Central – 224 delegates, down 52; Northeastern — 228, down 24; South Central —256, down 40; Southeastern — 440, down 64; and Western 64 delegates, down 16).

Any elder can run. Candidates for the episcopacy are generally nominated by an annual conference or endorsed by organizations, caucuses, or jurisdictional conference delegates. However, jurisdictional delegates may cast ballots for any United Methodist ordained elder from any U.S. region. Candidates for bishop do not have to live within the jurisdiction where they are elected. In 1984, the Rev. Leontine T.C. Kelly was serving as pastor of a church in Richmond, Va.—part of the Southeastern Jurisdiction—when she was elected bishop in the Western Jurisdiction.

Each jurisdiction can establish the percentage of votes needed for election. The *Book of Discipline* recommends at least 60 percent. Voting by ballot continues until someone receives the required number of votes. The record for lengthy elections was established in 1980 in the Western Jurisdictional Conference. In that year, the Rev. Calvin McConnell attended as chair of a Rocky Mountain Conference campaign to elect the Rev. Jamison Jones to the episcopacy. After 47 ballots, however, it was McConnell whom delegates elected to that office.

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

GCSRW WEBSITE

GCSRW.ORG has rolled out a new look

Our official GCSRW website has a new look. Our new website design includes an improved layout and organizational structure for a more user-friendly experience and accessibility for the 1 million visitors who visit our site each month.



GCSRW

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

GCSRW website editor and coordinator Lindsey Graham along with consultant Justin Jackson (assistant webmaster at Drew University) drew inspiration for the redesign from a series of user focus groups, annual conference leaders and the “wish list” of the staff of the GCSRW to create a redesign of the website.

In the coming months, we are considering hosting online chats, webinars, live video and an online community through www.gcsr.org. The hope of the online community is that it will support those who are concerned for justice, and those who are working to surmount barriers of gender, race, class and status. The website is intended to bring together United Methodists and others who want to create programs, study resources and intervention ministries to continue the work of undoing institutional sexism and making the church a safe and welcoming space for all of God's people.

Remember that our [Facebook](#) page has moved. For more information about the GCSRW website, contact Lindsey Graham at lgraham@gcsr.org.



March is Women's History Month

With the 2011 theme, "Our History Is Our Strength," GCSRW offers six (6) reproducible bulletin inserts that take women out of the footnotes of our history, and place them in the main story line. These inserts include women such as such as Kendra Dunbar, executive of the General Board of Global Ministries' Global Youth Network.

In addition, GCSRW offers four (4) bulletin covers, each with a historical photo and a litany on back. These can be used at any time to present material for helping congregations honor women who have played significant roles in our church and in the world as champions for Jesus Christ. The free inserts are available at www.gcsr.org.

THE FLYER

The most frequently asked questions about *The Flyer*: Answered

By Lindsey Graham*



Our official newsletter, *The Flyer*, is an online-only, web-based free monthly publication. In January of 2010, we made the decision to move from a print-based and mailed-format newsletter to an online-only, web-based free monthly publication.

GCSRW wants to help our readers to distribute and print our monthly online newsletter, *The Flyer*. As a way to support and further this ministry, we have prepared some questions to help you as the reader access and print *The Flyer* to share with others.

Q. How do I print the current edition of *The Flyer*?

A. Starting with the March 2011 edition, all subscribers will be able to print and access, *The Flyer* immediately. A PDF file attachment will be included in the email containing, *The Flyer*. To access the PDF, download Adobe Reader to view and print

PDF files. For more information regarding Adobe Reader go to: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

Q. How do I print past editions of *The Flyer* to share with church leaders and Annual Conference CSRW's?

A. Did you know that the very first edition of *The Flyer* was published in June of 1978? All past editions of *The Flyer* from 1978 to present are available for print in PDF form on our website: www.gcsr.org under the News and Events Tab. To access the PDF, download Adobe Reader to view and print PDF files. For more information regarding Adobe Reader go to: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

Q. I want to read the online-only, web-based free monthly publication of *The Flyer*, how do I do that?

A. First, are you a subscriber and supporter of *The Flyer*? (If unsure, skip to the next question.) If you know you are an official subscriber and supporter of *The Flyer*, you should be receiving an email from lgraham@gcsr.org containing, *The Flyer* the first of each month. Click on the hyperlinks that indicate, to "Read More" and you will be directed to each available article.

Q. How do I sign up to receive *The Flyer*, as an online-only free monthly publication?

A. To subscribe to *The Flyer*, visit either www.gcsr.org or <http://theflyer.gcsr.org> to sign up to receive the online-only, web-based free monthly publication. Please enter your first name, last name, and email address and at the first of each month look for an email from lgraham@gcsr.org containing, *The Flyer*. Be sure to check your spam box!

For further subscription help and technical inquiries regarding *The Flyer*, contact Lindsey Graham at lgraham@gcsr.org.

—Lindsey Graham is the website editor and coordinator for GCSRW and a faculty member in sociology at Davis and Elkins (W.V.) College.

Jurisdictional conference

(continued from page 5)



Make women count at upcoming church elections

The U.S. United Methodist Church has a laity membership of 7.8 million people, 54% of them women. Yet, women comprise only 13 bishops leading the church in the United States. And only two of the 19 active bishops serving outside the United States are women.

Five ways to make an impact:

◆**Run—or prod others.** Urge women, people of color and people 15-29, who have demonstrated a commitment to inclusion and Christian social justice, to run for a delegate's seat. Any United Methodist ordained or lay member is eligible. (Deadlines vary—and they're coming up **soon**—so contact your annual conference office for information.)

◆**Back good people.** Connect with your conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women to find out who in your area is running for election, and strategize with other groups to propose and support candidates who speak, live out and lead in the spirit of Christian justice and diversity.

◆**Ask questions.** Ask candidates for election how they personally have worked to tear down walls of gender or racial or other bias, and their views on addressing sexual harassment and misconduct in the denomination. Delegates to jurisdictional conferences often get “dibs” on positions on agencies and/or are elected bishops. So check track records before giving your vote.

◆**Study the issues.** Where should The United Methodist Church stand on sexual violence as a tool of war in Sudan? Which communities are best for planting new congregations? Should congregations reject a pastor because of her gender or ethnicity? Bishops and board members must answer questions like these as they set the missional and financial agenda for the worldwide work of the church. Even if you're not a delegate, you and your congregation can let candidates know what you think. So prayerfully study the issues facing the church.

◆**Say "yes" to women's interests.** We've made so much progress, thank God, in confronting sexism in The United Methodist Church. But our work is not done. Women are underrepresented in almost every area of leadership and ministry. Women in Africa, Europe and the Philippines, for instance, say they are still barred from teaching, leading and learning in many of their communities. U.S. congregations still are challenged in keeping young women—and men—active and engaged. Support delegates and episcopal candidates who will vote our interests and justice for God's women in the United States and around the world.

—By M. Garlinda Burton, general secretary of GCSRW.