



6

Black Women



12

Women to Watch



14

How to Vote?

April–June 2007

Volume 38, Number 2

www.gcsr.org

To transform the world, church must end sexism and racism

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women said Feb. 24 that a commitment to justice for all and continued efforts to exorcise sexism and racism are needed if the denomination is to meet its goals to attract a racially diverse membership, develop new—and revive existing—congregations, recruit lay and clergy leaders, and address world poverty and disease.



The 45-member commission, meeting at Myrtle Beach, S.C., Feb. 22–24, affirmed “in spirit” a proposed four-pronged mission emphasis, by which the United Methodist Council of Bishops and worldwide Connectional Table would set the course of the work and life of the 8.5 million-member denomination in the next four years.

However, the church’s women’s justice organization reminded denominational leaders that the church’s “primary task” of “making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” must include working to end worldwide racism and sexism, beginning in the hearts of each church member and in the “bones” of each congregation.

The bishops, the executives of churchwide agencies, and the Connectional Table have proposed that the church at all levels work together to transform the denomination—and the world—for the better through leadership development, starting new congregations, addressing global health concerns, and tackling root causes of poverty.

“A congregation that doesn’t invite and welcome people from other races can’t transform the world.”

M. GARLINDA BURTON

Members of the women’s commission say those strategies should include:

- Ministries with the poor that address systemic political and social concerns and recognize that most of the world’s poor are women and children;

continued on page 16

KEY TAKEAWAYS



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

‘Making disciples’ must include basic justice-making



Recently, the United Methodist Council of Bishops, the 12 churchwide program and administrative agencies, and the new Connectional Table agreed on a solid direction for our denomination: making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. And we plan to ask the 2008 General Conference—and each annual conference, local church, and seminary—to affirm four programmatic and funding emphases, namely:

- 1) calling and cultivating superlative lay and clergy leadership;
- 2) starting new congregations (and breathing new life into existing ones);
- 3) reducing deaths by malaria, a preventable disease exacerbated by poverty;
- 4) helping children escape poverty and its long-term effects.

“We [must] continue to exorcise the demons of sexism, classism, and racism.”

While I believe these ambitious goals offer a much-needed focus, I am concerned that in our zeal to find a point of unity, we don’t lose sight of what true discipleship requires. Namely, that we continue to exorcise the demons of sexism, classism, and racism that have undercut our effectiveness and dulled our voice as a Christ-called community.

We need to examine how a congregation that isn’t “ready for a woman preacher” is also unlikely to welcome young professional women. And how our “new congregational development” usually means reaching out only to white, suburban families with money, while ignoring burgeoning Latino neighborhoods or inner-city dwellers or poor rural communities.

For all the good things we do in Jesus’ name, we still too often sacrifice great leadership, could-be-dynamic congregations, and cutting-edge ministries on the altars of racial privilege and misogyny.

This is not the time to choose between discipling and battling our own institutional (and personal) race, gender, and class biases. And as we set the course for our work in the coming years, we must confess our sins and invite God’s intervention, innovation, and grace into our hearts and lives. We will be effective in claiming the world for Jesus Christ, not only by planting and cultivating, but by pulling out church weeds that stunt justice and dignity for women and men of all incomes, colors, and circumstances.

You are the Light of the world!

M. Garlinda Burton, General Secretary

The Flyer

April–June 2007

The Flyer is published four times yearly by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) in The United Methodist Church. Primary distribution of The Flyer is through the Annual Conference Commissions on the Status and Role of Women and Response Teams. Women outside the United States, please ask your bishops’ office to make sure you get The Flyer.

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.

GCSRW Officers

Bishop Mary Virginia “Dindy” Taylor, President

Eva Thai, Vice President

Dianne Spencer, Secretary

Staff

M. Garlinda Burton

S. Kim Coffing

LeeAnn Goldman

Elaine Moy

Communications/Web Coordinator

Heather Peck Stahl

flyer@gcsr.org

General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, 77 W. Washington St., Suite 1009, Chicago, IL 60602, 312.346.4900

gcsr@gcsr.org

For confidential inquiries and support re: clergy/lay professional misconduct, harassment or abuse, call us toll free at 800.523.8390.

Subscription/change of address

Individual subscriptions of The Flyer are \$15 (US) annually. Send a check with your mailing address, email address and phone number to: The Flyer, GCSRW, 77 W. Washington St., Suite 1009, Chicago, IL 60602. Direct change of address information to the above address.

Permission to reprint is not required; a credit line is requested. This publication is on file with the Women’s Collection, Special Collections Department, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL 60201.

Printed on processed chlorine-free recycled paper using soy inks.

Monitoring as ministry: Why counting speakers matters

By Pat Callbeck Harper

A monitor is observing a meeting of the annual conference trustees, noting how much each member participates. Her report shows that, while men make up 70% of the trustees present, they get up to speak on the conference floor 95% of time.

This meeting of the annual conference trustees illustrates one of the practices of “monitoring for diversity.” The volunteer is a member of the annual conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women, and she’s monitoring a conference committee that, in the past, has been dominated by men. Today, however, women make up 30 percent of the membership.

However, appointing more diverse members is not enough to ensure inclusiveness, so the monitor checks for *parity*: Is the committee interaction shared by men and women in proportion to their representation on the committee? She also monitors the meeting’s *environment*: Are the presence and contributions of women welcomed and affirmed?

We sometimes hear “inclusiveness” and “diversity,” and “parity” and “proportionality” used interchangeably in our church. But they are not the same.

- > **Parity** is participation comparable, or *proportional*, to representation in the entire group, conference, or mission field.
- > **Diversity** is the extent of inclusion of people of diverse backgrounds, cultures, communities, genders, races, nationalities, ages, etc., as members, leaders, volunteers, staff, clergy, and laity.

> **Inclusiveness** is not only the inclusion of diverse individuals, but going beyond fair representation to a commitment to incorporate the needs and experiences of the church’s diverse communities and ministry fields into the design, operations, programs, and culture of the Church.

Parity and *proportionality* are indicators of progress toward *inclusiveness*, not its equivalent. You might hear, “Our congregation is mostly white, so our committee chairs can be all white.” This may be proportional based on the congregation. But the context for measuring parity is comparing church membership to that of the surrounding community or mission field, which may be richer and more diverse in racial, ethnic, cultural differences.

Why should we strive for inclusiveness? The more inclusive The United Methodist Church becomes, the more effective we become in serving our increasingly diverse and global communities. If our churches, leaders, and members look more like our communities, our decisions and outreach will be more on target in discipleship and mission. 🦋

Pat Callbeck Harper is an organizational development consultant with expertise in educational, employment, and community equity. She has consulted with the General Commission since 1992.

Source: *Inclusiveness at Work: How to Build Inclusive Nonprofit Organizations*, Katherine Pease. The Denver Foundation: Denver, Colorado. 2005.

Worth Repeating

“ Human diversity makes tolerance more than a virtue; it makes it a requirement for survival. ”

— Rene Dubos



Should General Conference delegates represent demographics of the church or world?

By Craig This

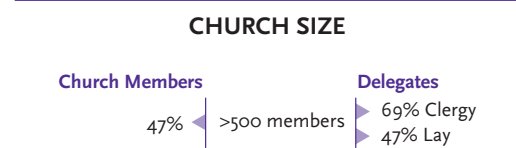
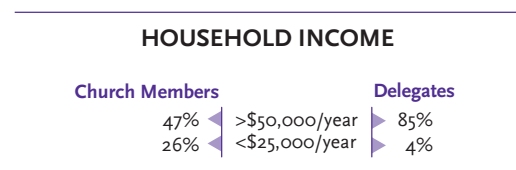
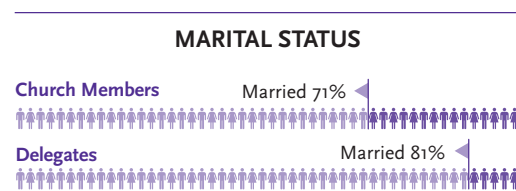
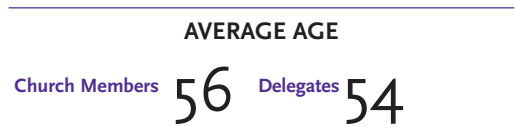
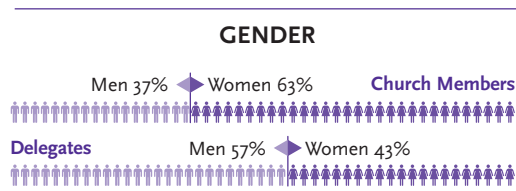
This spring and early summer, annual conferences will elect delegates to the 2008 General Conference to be held in Fort Worth, Texas. The General Conference is the official decision-making body of The United Methodist Church; and, as such, it will decide the ministry and missional directions for the 2009–2012 quadrennium.

The General Conference serves as a representative body intended to reflect the membership of The United Methodist Church across various demographics including age, race/ethnicity, gender, church size, and annual conference size. It is often argued that the 1,000 delegates to the General Conference should be divided proportionally; that is, the 1,000 should look like the proportions found in the church.

Annual conference membership proportions are legislated by *The Book of Discipline*. But how proportional is the representation for the other demographic factors?

Let's review the demographics of the 2004 General Conference delegates in terms of inclusiveness:

- **RACE/ETHNICITY:** The United Methodist Church is 93% white and 7% racial/ethnic. The delegates to General Conference were 79% white and 21% racial/ethnic.
- **GENDER:** The United Methodist Church is 37% male and 63% female. General Conference delegates were 57% male and 43% female.



(Of the General Conference delegates, clergy were 65% male and 35% female and laity were 49% male and 51% female).

• **AGE:** The average age of United Methodist members is 56. The average age of General Conference delegates is 54.

• **MARITAL STATUS:** 71% of United Methodists are married while 81% of the delegates were. Single and divorced rates are similar (10% and 4%, respectively). Interestingly, 14% of United Methodists are widow/widowers while 4% of the delegates were.


• **HOUSEHOLD INCOME:** 47% of United Methodists have household incomes of \$50,000 or greater while 85% of the delegates do. Further, 26% of the United Methodists have household incomes of \$25,000 or less while only 4% of the delegates do.

- **CHURCH SIZE:** 47% of United Methodists come from churches with 500 members or more. However, 69% of clergy delegates and 47% of lay delegates come from churches with 500 members or more.

While the church may applaud itself on its ability to create a representative democracy, does the church exist for itself or for the world? To whom is the church to minister: itself or the world? According to *The Book of Discipline*, the church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world.

What does the world look like? For one thing, the world looks much younger and

racially diverse than the church. While the average age of United Methodists is 56, the average age of a U.S. citizen is 35. While the delegates are 21% racial/ethnic, the racial/ethnic make-up of the United States is 31% racial/ethnic.

How, then, can The United Methodist Church reach out to these different groups? Do we continue to elect delegates that “look like the church?” Do we elect delegates that give us proportional representation? Or do we elect delegates that help us reach out into the world, to minister to the needs and concerns of the world? 



Advocacy for Women ENDOWMENT FUND


Karen Alley
Collette K. Andersen
Anonymous
Samuel H. Aguirre
Grace Ann Beebe
Garlinda Burton
Clare J. Chapman
Claflin University
(honorarium)
Kim S. Coffing
Joe B. and Louise P.
Cook Foundation,
Desert Southwest
Annual Conference
Robert Diggs
Linda Dunseth
Fran Eldredge
Annie L. Fairley
Charlotte Fitzsimons

General Board of
Discipleship (honorarium)
Barbara Goodman
H. Sharon Howell
Tomisene Ingram
Elaine and Matthew
Moy Johnson
Natividad T. Lagaso
Linda Lee
Nancy L. Leonard
Elizabeth Lopez
Marge L. Mayer
Margery Mayer
Raquel Mull
Carolyn H. Oehler
Brolin Parker
Amory Peck
Peninsula-Delaware
Annual Conference

Debbie Pitney
Almeda C. Riley
Andris Y. Salter
Kay Scarbrough
John R. Schol
Ann B. Sherer
Dianne Spencer
Lisa Stofan
Tara Sutton
Lola J. Turnbull
Don and Sandy Williams
Ron and Sue Zimmerman

 *In Honor of...*
All Ordained Deacons
in Celebration of
10 Years in 2007
Erlina Aguirre
Maggie Ball
Carol Blowers
Claudette Bryson
May Chun
Clementine Coraham
Roby Correa

In-Sook Hwang
Rebecca Innerst
Marion Kline
Linda Lee
Carolyn Oehler
Kathy Sage
Nancy Self
Ann Marie Sherer Trammell
Western Pennsylvania
Women Clergy
Sharon Zimmerman

 *In Memory of...*
Shirley Cundiff Bethea
Louise Patterson Cook
Georgine Escalona
Lizzie Isom
Nancy Leonard (her
grandmothers)
Betty Jackson Monroe
Clara Hunnicutt Patterson
Maribeth Peck
Helen Peterson
Annie Flora Salter

thank you 2006 donors

Lay-clergy tensions, lack of meaningful cross-racial pulpit assignments still stifle black women pastors

By M. Garlinda Burton

Openness to black women as United Methodist pastors and laity in leadership has improved a lot in South Carolina, one of the last areas of the denomination to abolish official racial segregation in the early 1970s.

Members of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women meeting Feb. 24 heard from a panel of the state's clergy and laity that opportunities for African-American women have expanded to include two on the annual conference cabinet.

However, black women still face challenges of lack of cross-racial pulpit assignments, racist stereotyping, and resistance to women pastors—often by lay women, the panelist told the 45-member commission, which met in Myrtle Beach, S.C., Feb. 22–24.

Of the 780 pastors serving churches in South Carolina, more than 19 percent (155) are women. And nearly one-fourth (24 percent) of those women pastors are African-American.

“Black women are now represented at almost every level of work and life in South Carolina,” said Evelyn Gethers Burwell, a member of New Francis Brown UMC, North Charleston, S.C. “Our unique gifts and approaches to leadership are being recognized, and we are pushing for more and more inclusion of women and people of color.”

“I spent the first few years as a pastor validating my presence and proving that I could be as effective a pastor as any man,”

said Robin Dease, who has served for nine years as pastor of Wesley UMC in Johns Island, S.C.

Judge women leaders by skill

“Women, especially black women, are penalized if we're not ‘nice’ enough,” said the Rev. J. Jeannette Cooper Dicks, pastor of Cumberland UMC in Florence, S.C.

“We're judged by our color and personality more than our gifts for ministry. We're still expected to ‘grin and skin’ to make ourselves acceptable to men and white people,” she added.

She compared the treatment of black women in the church to racial and gender dynamics in secular U.S. politics. “The media and others judge Hillary Clinton by her looks and personality and [Barack] Obama by his racial and national background and his name. The other candidates—white men—are judged by their experience and gifts. It's the same in the church.”

Encourage mutual support

Other women admitted that racism and sexism are continuing chal-

lenges, but also said getting laywomen and clergywomen to support one another is also a problem. “Until recently, the only way a woman could be a leader in the church was



Panelists with South Carolina Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor (far right).



Rosetta Ross (left), professor and S.C. clergywoman, leads GCSRW members in Bible study.

to be a support person to the male pastor. It is hard, I'm sure, when a woman pastor comes in and she's the 'queen bee,'" said Connie Barnes, pastor of the three-church Brookgeen (S.C.) Parish.

Laywoman Pearl Thomas, a retired teacher and member of Wesley UMC in Charleston, urged her clergy sisters to be more open with laywomen and to develop models of sharing leadership when possible. "Laypeople are sort of left behind in terms of defining our ministry in the church and the world," she said. "Pastors need to help us find our voices and our passions, so that we don't wait to be asked before we pitch in at the church."

Push for cross-racial appointments

Along with fostering more dialogue and "sister-circles" of support among black clergywomen and laywoman, and mentoring younger women into church leadership, the panelists also encouraged the women's commission

to push for cross-racial appointments and support for financially or spiritually struggling congregations.

"There are no black women currently assigned to white churches, so we are still not challenging racism like we should," said Cooper. "And we are not helping churches get ready for a pastor from another culture."

She recommended more emphasis on racial sensitivity training for laity and clergy and interracial pulpit exchanges as a way to start. "I'm talking about basic things, like which jokes you shouldn't say and how to be hospitable."

Dease said laypeople in congregations should also be invited into honest dialogue about the church's history and its future. "We need to talk about why women and people of color were not allowed to be in leadership and then figure out how we're going to push ourselves to be more inclusive. ✨"

Subscribe, Support!

Support women in the church

The Flyer invites you to subscribe and show your support for women in The United Methodist Church. As one of the communication tools of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, *The Flyer* offers its readers updates on women's issues and resources for annual conference and local church women's groups. Your subscription includes four issues of *The Flyer* per year. Make checks payable to GCSRW, 77 West Washington St., Suite 1009, Chicago, IL 60602.

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Annual Conference

- \$15, one year
- \$25, two years
- \$35, three years

- New
- Renewing



Racial/ethnic women constitute one-fourth of general agency workforce

Twenty-seven percent (or 516 of the 1,942) of individuals employed by the general agencies of The United Methodist Church are racial/ethnic women (see Table 1).

While racial/ethnic women do hold some of the executive, professional, and managerial positions in some of the general agencies, most of the positions they hold are in the administrative and clerical support area. In fact, 59% (or 303) of all the positions held by racial/ethnic women in the church are administrative and clerical positions (see Table 1).

The findings for this report come from the 2006 *Council, Board, or Commission Annual Members Profile* jointly conducted by the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCRR) and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW).

Racial/ethnic women employment numbers low

The number of racial/ethnic women employed across the general agencies of the church is low. With the exception of the administrative and clerical (36%), technical (24%), and manufacturing (29%) categories, racial/ethnic women com-

prise 20% or less of the total number of persons employed for each category (see Table 1).

When the percentages by category are displayed within the racial/ethnic women population only, the numbers drop even more. Racial/ethnic women hold 19% of the total executive positions across the general agencies. However, of the total number of racial/ethnic women employed, only 5% hold executive positions.

The number of racial/ethnic women employed overall in the general agencies is even more dismal. Only black women register double-digit percentage points at 19%. The remainder of the racial/ethnic groups have less than 5% of the total number of employees across the general agencies.

Does intersection theory explain this?

So, why are racial/ethnic women employed at lower rates than other groups and why do racial/ethnic women find themselves mostly in the administrative and clerical positions? One answer might be *intersection theory*. Intersection theory is a sociological theory that argues that the interplay of race, class, and gender often results in multiple dimensions of disadvantage.

continued on page 10

Table 3: Racial/Ethnic Women Employed by General Agency by Level *

	GCFA <i>Finance/Administration</i>	GBCS <i>Church and Society</i>	GBOD <i>Discipleship</i>	GBHEM <i>Higher Education and Ministry</i>	GBGM <i>Global Ministries</i>
Executive	0/9 (0%)	0/1 (0%)	1/12 (8%)	1/6 (17%)	14/42 (33%)
Managerial	2/11 (18%)	1/5 (20%)	8/61 (13%)	2/13 (15%)	29/92 (32%)
Professional	3/4 (75%)	2/9 (22%)	11/40 (28%)	1/10 (10%)	22/43 (51%)
Technical	0/2 (0%)	1/2 (50%)	13/40 (33%)	0/1 (0%)	3/12 (25%)
Administrative and Clerical	5/15 (33%)	3/4 (75%)	12/31 (39%)	10/30 (33%)	112/162 (69%)
Manufacturing and Service	0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	4/11 (36%)
Total	10/41 (24%)	7/21 (33%)	45/184 (24%)	14/60 (23%)	184/362 (51%)

* Number of Racial Ethnic Women Employed/Total Number of Employees (Percent of Racial Ethnic Women of Total Employed)

e numbers

Table 1: Summary: Racial/Ethnic Women Employment

	Total Number of Racial/Ethnic Women Employed by Level	Total Number of Men & Women Employed by Level	Racial/Ethnic Women as a Percent of Total Employed by Level	Percent of Total Racial/Ethnic Women
Executive	28	145	19%	5%
Managerial	87	491	18%	17%
Professional	60	311	19%	12%
Technical	21	85	25%	4%
Administrative and Clerical	303	852	36%	59%
Manufacturing and Service	17	58	29%	3%
Total	516	1,942	27%	100%

Table 2: Racial/Ethnic Women by Level

	Asian	Black	Hispanic/Latina	Native American	Pacific Islander	Total
Executive	2	22	3	1	0	28
Managerial	11	58	12	4	2	87
Professional	9	35	12	2	2	60
Technical	4	14	3	0	0	21
Administrative and Clerical	28	222	46	5	2	303
Manufacturing and Service	0	15	2	0	0	17
Total	54	366	78	12	6	516
Percentage of Total Employees	3%	19%	4%	1%	0%	27%

GCAH <i>Archives and History</i>	GCORR <i>Religion and Race</i>	GCCUIC <i>Christian Unity</i>	GCUMM <i>UM Men</i>	GCSRW <i>Status and Role of Women</i>	GBPHB <i>Pensions and Health Benefits</i>	UMCOM <i>Communications</i>	UMPH <i>Publishing House</i>
0/1 (0%)	0/1 (0%)	0/4 (0%)	0/1 (0%)	1/1 (100%)	8/41 (20%)	2/12 (17%)	1/14 (7%)
0/1 (0%)	3/5 (60%)	0/0 (0%)	0/3 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	15/64 (23%)	3/13 (23%)	24/223 (11%)
0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	0/1 (0%)	1/2 (50%)	2/27 (7%)	6/27 (22%)	12/148 (8%)
0/1 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	0/1 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	1/14 (7%)	2/12 (17%)
0/1 (0%)	3/4 (75%)	2/4 (50%)	0/2 (0%)	0/1 (0%)	53/101 (52%)	12/27 (44%)	92/470 (20%)
0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	0/0 (0%)	13/47 (28%)
0/4 (0%)	6/10 (60%)	2/8 (25%)	0/8 (0%)	2/4 (50%)	78/233 (33%)	24/93 (26%)	144/914 (16%)

For more detailed information, including breakdowns by racial/ethnic group, please visit www.gcsr.org.

General agency workforce

continued from page 8

In other words, the combination (or intersection) of both race and gender forces racial/ethnic women to face greater challenges than a man or white woman.

This appears to be the case with racial/ethnic women being employed by the general agencies of the church. The intersection of being both racial/ethnic and a woman creates greater disadvantage in obtaining jobs within the church, very much like it is outside the church in the secular world.

Why is that, though? Why should racial/ethnic women face the same struggles, the same disadvantages when working for the church as the secular world? Shouldn't it be different working for the church? Shouldn't the church be setting the example?

Conclusion

Yes, the church should be different. In fact, General Conference has charged the church to be different. In Par. 2012 of the 2004 *Book of Discipline*, the General Conference, through GCSRW, challenges "The United Methodist Church, including its general agencies, institutions, and connec-

tional structures, to a continuing commitment to the full and equal responsibility and participation of women in the total life and mission of the church, *sharing fully in the power and in the policy-making at all levels of the church's life.*" (*The Flyer* has added italics for emphasis.)

The employment data for racial/ethnic women in the general agencies of The United Methodist Church shows that this is simply not being done. Further, relegating racial/ethnic women to administrative and clerical positions, which tends to inflate the number of racial/ethnic women employed by the church, does not meet the criteria of sharing fully in the power and in the policy-making of the church. The church must make a more concerted effort to appoint racial/ethnic women to executive positions in the general agencies in order to share in the power and in the policy-making of the church.

Why? So that we, the church, can model and show the world a community that is built on love and respect for *all* individuals, regardless of their race and sex. To show the world that racism and sexism are not the standards by which we live and work. To show that full and equal participation of all persons, regardless of race and sex, is how God intended us to live and work. ✨

★ OVATIONS AND KUDOS

- ★ **Lyn Powell**, lay leader of the North Georgia Conference since 2004 and the first woman to hold that position, has been tapped to deliver the laity address at the 2008 General Conference. She served as a delegate to the 2004 General Conference and is president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders.
- ★ Senator **Hillary Rodham Clinton** (D-N.Y.) and Representative **Sheila Jackson Lee** (D-TX) sponsored—and the president signed into law—legislation requiring that a statue of Sojourner Truth be placed permanently in the United States Capitol to honor her contribution to our nation's history.
- ★ **The Rev. Karen Onesti**, pastor of Masonville-Rancocas UMC in Mount Laurel, N.J., donated her left kidney to her

friend Andrew Bossov, a rabbi at Mount Laurel's Adath Emanu-El synagogue.

- ★ **Lauren Nelson**, a member of Centenary UMC in Lawton, Okla., was recently crowned Miss America.
- ★ **Heather Peck Stahl**, a freelance editor and journalist in Nashville, Tenn., and former associate editor of *Interpreter* magazine, has been contracted as GCSRW's director of communications.
- ★ **Bishops Minerva Carcano** and **Linda Lee** are to speak at Youth 2007 in Greensboro, N.C., July 11–15, 2007. Sponsored by the General Board of Discipleship's Young People's Ministries, more than 10,000 youth from across the globe will gather for the largest quadrennial youth event of The United Methodist Church.

Who should speak for us at General Conference?

By Pat Callbeck Harper

Within the next few months, annual conference members will elect delegates to the 2008 General Conference. Every voting member of each annual conference has an important role in deciding upon these delegates.

What makes a good delegate to General Conference? Consider the following traits and suggested questions to ask candidates:


- ✓ **Stamina, high energy and the ability to manage lots of information.** Delegates spend long hours reading, studying, listening, and sharing with other delegates. Effective delegates have experience and skills in shaping policy.

Ask: How do you maintain good energy; and what skills would you use to manage lots of information in long meetings?

- ✓ **Strong speaking and listening skills.** Effective decision making in legislative committees and subcommittees depends on quick thinking and clear speaking. It is even more dependent on discerning, engaged listening.

Ask: What is your experience with speaking out in intense committee meetings; and how will you make sure your concerns, suggestions, and opinions are heard? What listening skills do you rely on the most in controversial situations?

- ✓ **Experience in seeking and maintaining inclusiveness in processes and programs.** Delegates will benefit from experiences in diverse communities and programs, especially the global church.

Ask: What does the term “an inclusive church” mean to you? What is your experience in the global United Methodist Church? 



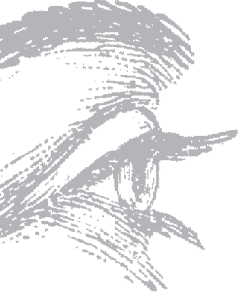
Want to know how to become a delegate to General Conference or to a general agency board member? Visit the GCSRW website this spring to learn how: www.gcsr.org.

GCORR seeks top executive

The General Commission on Religion and Race is looking to fill the position of the General Secretary. All applications must be received no later than May 22, 2007. Contact Kimberly Dixon Harris, Treasurer/Human Resource Manager, 100 Maryland Avenue, NE, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20002 -5620; 202.547.2271; kdixon@gcorr.org. Or visit www.gcorr.org.

‘Palm cards’ available

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women has published “palm cards” to help annual conference members vote for General Conference delegates who will support women’s issues. The free resource fits into the palm of your hand and includes thought-provoking questions about the candidate’s position on Christian social justice, commitment to inclusiveness of all people, and eradicating sexism. For more information, visit www.gcsr.org or call 312.346.4900.



Women Worth Watching



**The Rev. Lynn Scott,
founder of Sabbath Way, LLC**

The Rev. Lynn Scott began the “presence-oriented” Sabbath Way, LLC, ministry in August 2005. The ministry invites laity, clergy, individuals, and communities to be “intentional about being attentive to the Holy and Sacred in everyday life.” Through Sabbath Way, she offers spiritual direction/guidance, retreats, workshops, and consulting.

“The church does not give time to being presence-oriented. We say it is the essence of who we are and what we do, yet our time and resources are given toward activity,” explains Scott. “Sabbath Way’s vision is to tend to our life in God that we might be the presence of God in the world.”

While Scott served the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry Division of Ordained Ministry from 1990 to 2000, she helped train annual conference members in sexual ethics. She also helped partner with other agencies to have a systemic church response to sexual abuse and harassment. She coauthored the book, *Living the Sacred Trust: Clergy Sexual Ethics*. In 2005 she became a member of the Connectional Table.

Currently Scott is on the Congregational Response Team for the Wisconsin Annual Conference and attends Hope UMC in Eau Claire, Wis. In 2006 she developed content for a GCSRW-

sponsored website specifically for victims and survivors of clergy sexual misconduct.

“When boundaries are crossed, when sacred trust is violated, the core of what we believe the church ought to be in the world is shaken and sometimes destroyed,” she says. “How can I do anything less than be in the places of brokenness, the violations of sacred trust, companioning the church and individuals toward healing?”



What is your favorite hymn?

“Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart” (*United Methodist Hymnal*, #500) and “What Does the Lord Require of You?” (*The Faith We Sing*, #2174). Between these two hymns, rests the essence of my life in God.



When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?

When I was in fifth grade, I wanted to work with special education children. I lived around the corner from a classmate whose younger sister was mentally challenged; and I found her to be a delight.




If money were no object, what would you like to do?

Alleviate the suffering of women in the world. Establish a women’s leadership institute for the main-line Protestant churches. Build a small retreat center for the hospitality of others and a hermitage where I could live and work.



Do you have any words of advice?

How we treat one another, how our relationships are lived, defines the church. My disappointment is now that many women are “in the door,” we are not still using our voices or actions to challenge the inequalities. To be “in the door” is a privilege; to think that this is the end is a tragedy! 



Retreat, luncheon, monitoring among Louisiana's plans for annual conference

In the year following the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, the Louisiana CSRW continues its practice of holding a luncheon during annual conference sessions.

That gathering serves as a means to rally support as well as report on the commission's work during the year and plans and issues for the coming year.

Selling tickets weeks in advance, the Louisiana commission welcomes all conference members to the luncheon and offers special recognition to women who are entering the ministry. Averaging 85 men and women in attendance, the annual event features a guest speaker and a presentation of the Sojourner Truth Award. The honor is given to a woman in the annual conference who exemplifies the characteristics of Sojourner Truth, such as advocacy on justice issues, service in the community, and faith in action, says Chairperson Rachel Scott.

A month prior to the luncheon, the Louisiana commission co-sponsors a clergywomen's retreat, where members advertise the luncheon and promote CSRW issues. The luncheon is also publicized at the annual conference trainings in each district.


Other ministries of the Louisiana commission include:

- Monitoring conference sessions for inclusiveness of all groups, especially women and people of color. Scott says that while their results have been on a small scale, they hope to improve monitoring for more impact.
- Establishing/revising policies on sexual misconduct for the conference. The commission also helps train district members on sexual



The Rev. Marva Mitchell (second from right) was the 2006 Sojourner Truth Award recipient. Congratulating Mitchell are (from left) Rachel Scott, Eva Baham, and Bishop Hope Morgan Ward.

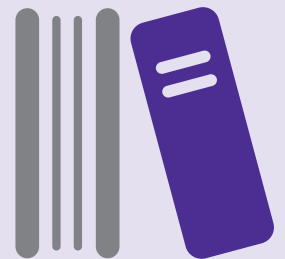
misconduct prevention and education. They also work closely with the conference response team.

- Hosting a booth during the annual conference, with women's literature, copies of *The Flyer* newsletter, sexual misconduct information and general information about the commission.
- Planning to survey clergywomen and clergy spouses of their needs, and then take action to meet those needs. 

Women leadership study to be available

A six-week study curriculum for Sunday school classes on the genesis of women's ordination in United Methodism will be available this spring on the GCSRW website.

Coauthor and facilitator of the study, the Rev. Lynn Scott, says the free study resource will help laypersons better understand the call of women throughout history and may serve as "a resource for clergywomen to share ecumenically and a starting point for local churches to move toward receiving their first clergywoman."



General Conference delegates and the role of conscience

Should General Conference delegates vote as their conscience dictates or should they vote only as the majority of their annual conference members would vote?

By J. Richard Peck

In 1954, shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court (*Brown vs. Board of Education*) decision to eliminate segregation in public schools, members of First Methodist Church of Coleman, Texas, feared there would be efforts to integrate Methodist schools.

The official board of the Coleman Church instructed Central Conference Texas members from that church to vote against “any relaxation of the practice of racial segregation in Methodist institutions...”

A member of the Texas Annual Conference asked Bishop William C. Martin to rule on whether an official board has the authority to instruct a conference member to vote in any specified manner on matters coming before an annual conference.

The bishop ruled that an official board may not instruct its lay member or reserve lay member how to vote at an annual conference session. The Judicial Council agreed with the bishop (Decision 109).

It seems clear that members of annual conference are to vote their conscience and a local church may not tell them how they should vote on any given issue.

Invisible votes

There was a time when voting at General Conference was done by raising hands or standing. During those years, an annual conference delegation and media representatives from their home states were aware of how conference members voted on crucial issues. On occasion these votes were reported to home churches.

Today, however, voting is done with electronic keypads. Only those sitting next to delegates



are able to monitor their neighboring delegates' voting records.

Judicial Council rules

In 1987, the North Carolina Annual Conference passed a requirement that delegates to General and jurisdictional conferences submit a record of their votes to conference pastors and churches. The legality of that legislation was referred to the Judicial Council. The nine-member council harkened back to the 1954 decision and ruled there was no difference between annual conference members and General Conference delegates.

Annual conference members need not report their votes, the council ruled (Decision 592).

Delegates are to vote their convictions

Bishop **WILLIAM BOYD GROVE**, a five-time delegate to General Conference (1968, 1970, 1972, 1976, and 1988), says, “Delegates are elected on the basis of people’s judgment of their thoughtfulness and wisdom. People generally vote for delegates who will support their own views. However, General Conference



Grove

delegates do not need to take polls of conference members before they cast their votes.”

Bishop Grove was elected in 1980 and served the denomination’s West Virginia and Albany, N.Y., areas before retiring in 1996 and serving as the ecumenical officer for the Council of Bishops.

Improve delegate orientation

Asked how well we instruct our General Conference lay delegates about the role of conscience, **CAROLYN MARSHALL**, four-time secretary of the conference (1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004), said, “I don’t think we do a good job of orienting our delegates.”



Marshall

Elected six times as a lay delegate, Marshall says that for many United Methodists, General Conference is a single issue assembly, and conference members “must pass a litmus test” in order to get elected. “The pressure is phenomenal,” she says. “Sixteen years ago I received a message to delegates saying, ‘Homosexuality is against the word of God and so are we.’” With her usual sense of humor, she remarks, “I don’t know why they were against the word of God.”

“General Conference is too much like a political campaign,” says the former secretary. “There is some pontification about prayer, but most delegates think they should vote as instructed. If anyone finds out they have not voted ‘correctly,’ they will not be re-elected.”

Voted her conscience, not re-elected

ANGELIN JONES SIMMONS, pastor of 600-member Johns Island Parish in the South Carolina Annual Conference, was a delegate to the 1996 General Conference in Denver but was not re-elected in 2000 or 2004.



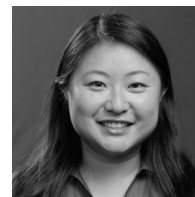
Simmons

“No one said anything to me, but I believe I was not re-elected because I voted for non-discrimination against those with alternative lifestyles,” says Simmons. Asked how others knew about her votes, she says, “I’m quite vocal about my feelings.”

She believes she was also not elected to jurisdictional conference because she announced her support for a particular clergywoman for the episcopacy.

Conference, GCSRW sessions helpful

EVA THAI, California Pacific Annual Conference GCSRW vice president, said, “My home conference did a good job orienting General Conference delegates about the entire process and GCSRW provided helpful information about gender, race and social-justice issues.”



Thai

Thai is a graduate of the University of California at Long Beach and a M.Div. candidate at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Ill. ✂

The Rev. J. Richard Peck is a retired clergy member of the New York Annual Conference and the editor of the Daily Christian Advocate for four General Conferences. He has attended 10 General Conferences.

Sexual ethics website launches in April



United Methodist policy and procedure information and help for victims with complaint procedures regarding sexual abuse and misconduct is now available online. Developed by GCSRW, the website, umsexualethics.org, offers definitions, complaint procedures, explanations of the church’s policies and guidelines, and links to related ministries, such as Safe Sanctuaries (a program of the General Board of Discipleship) and ecumenical websites. For more information, contact gcsrww@gcsrww.org.



General Commission on the Status and Role of Women
in The United Methodist Church
77 West Washington, Suite 1009, Chicago, IL 60602

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Evanston, IL
Permit No. 198



For better health for women and a healthier environment for our children,
our newsletter is printed on chlorine-free, acid-free recycled paper using soy inks.

Transform the world

continued from page 1

- Deliberate efforts to include women's expertise, styles and perspectives in developing effective lay and clergy leaders;
- Recognition of young women, women of color, and poor women as gifted and essential to the growth and effectiveness of the church's life and work;
- Countering sexism and sexual misconduct in the church through dialogue and training about power dynamics and the rights and responsibilities of leaders;
- Respect of cultural contexts of communities and churches, in concert with a commitment to cross-racial and interracial evangelistic and discipleship opportunities;
- Financial and other resources allocated to empower ministries in rural and urban poor communities, as well as middle- and upper-income suburban areas;
- Involving women and people of color at all levels of planning, ministry, and leadership development;
- Christian education that stresses the sacred worth and gifts of all people.

Legislative proposals

Commission members—women and men from across the denomination—began work on legislative proposals for the 2008 General Conference. Among the agency's planned recommendations to the churchwide assembly were:

- ✓ To add "gender" to the list of protected categories in the United Methodist Constitution, alongside existing categories of race, nationality, and age;
- ✓ To expand the definition of sexual misconduct to include abuse of Internet and other pornography;
- ✓ To require sexual ethics training for all United Methodist seminary students, candidates for ordination, clergy, and lay employees of the denomination.

"A congregation that doesn't invite and welcome people from other races can't transform the world," said M. Garlinda Burton, top executive for the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. "A 'disciple' who rejects a pastor just because she's a woman is not following Christ."

"United Methodist Christians have nothing transforming to offer the world if we continue to cling to sexism and racism and refuse to allow women and people of color equal access to power and decision-making offices in the denomination," Burton added. 