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Young Women



# 4

Methodist Way



# 11

Worth Watching

July–September 2007

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## Can we do better in reaching young women?



By Joey Butler

**Membership in the Judicial Council is one of the highest elected offices in The United Methodist Church and a position one would be unlikely to pass up.**

**Yet Amy Valdez Barker did just that.**

Following her nomination to the Judicial Council at the 2004 General Conference, Valdez Barker withdrew her name, stating, “I have been shown that the leaders in this church have ... closed minds when an episcopal leader implies that the Judicial Council isn’t really a place for young people, and closed doors when this is the only place in our church where fresh new perspectives of young people are not welcome.”

Does she have a point? Several United Methodist leaders think so.

“Many churches have trouble empowering youth,” says Julie O’Neal of the General Board of Discipleship’s Division on Young People’s Ministries. “We don’t always encourage young females to become district superintendents, bishops or general secretaries. Too often they’re just made into Sunday school teachers.”

Women under 35 comprise less than 2 percent of elders in the denomination, according to a study conducted by Wesley Theological Seminary.

“For a number of churches across the connection, there aren’t many 18- to 35-year-olds. How can we nurture younger leadership when they’re not there?” asks Sharletta Green, director and campus minister of the Wesley Foundation at Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tenn.



“We must ask what young adults need, not assume we know.”

SHARLETTA GREEN

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# KEY TAKEAWAYS



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

# Passion for the gospel trumps so-called 'diversity fatigue'



Twenty years ago, people of color made up fewer than 4 percent of the editors and reporters at U.S. newspapers. At that time, the American Society of Newspaper Editors set a goal to bring that number to 20 percent by the year 2000. To date, 11.4 percent of reporters and editors are people of color.

When asked recently why they missed the mark, the editors' group pleaded "diversity fatigue." Workers are tired of attending diversity training workshops, and bosses and human resources staff are weary of reminders of historic, institutional bias. They are tired of trying to engage more people of color and women in the workforce. And, as the editors further explained, they are tired of being "guilted" into affirmative action and set-asides.

In other words, 400 years of racism and sexism we have patience with, but 40 years of redressing racism and sexism has worn us out.

Unfortunately, this attitude is also playing well among some leaders in The United Methodist Church. Oh, we use other words, like, "We've got two Asians on the cabinet—we don't have a race issue!" or "The money we spent on that sexual harassment survey would be better spent on church growth!" I attend myriad church gatherings where folks sigh, roll their eyes or leave the room every time the words "sexism" and "racism" are mentioned. And it has even become popular to blame the slight increase and presence of women and people of color in church leadership for the membership malaise. What I usually hear is something like, "People are tired of having diversity crammed down their throats!" or "You can't force people to go to church together."

Maybe not. But what we *can* do is give ourselves fully to Jesus Christ and His message and see each person as a precious child of God. We still struggle with our own prejudices and we may be a little afraid of giving up our privileged seat at the power tables. But we ask God for guidance, and reach out beyond our comfort zones. We certainly don't give in to fatigue, because we know that if Jesus had lost patience with the world's shortcomings, there would have been no Cross and, subsequently, so earth-transforming Resurrection.

"Diversity fatigue" is nothing new; it's just an new euphemism for giving up and giving in to sins of prejudice, guarding privilege and reverting to acceptable levels of misogyny, segregation and fear. I pray that the people called Methodist won't use it as an excuse to abandon our journey to perfection. If we keep pressing, we're sure to get there, for Christ's sake—and ours.

Walk in the Light!

M. Garlinda Burton, General Secretary

## The Flyer

July–September 2007

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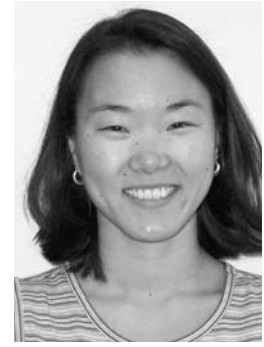
Sharletta Green



Andris Salter



Erin Hawkins



Julie O'Neal

## Young women

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“Young women come with a different kind of excitement about church,” says Andris Salter, a staff executive for the Women’s Division, General Board of Global Ministries. “We as a church are guilty of doing what works for us, not for them. And there’s still too much ‘we’ve always done it *this way*.’”

Salter adds that too often young people have a fresh idea and then they’re stuck with the responsibility of developing it alone.

Green places great importance on campus ministry. “It’s the one place you can start learning your own faith. ... other than your parents’ church.”

Campus ministry takes on even greater significance since young adults often drift away from the church after high school. It used to be common for youth to leave the church in their 20s but come back in their 30s after they started families. Now, it’s more likely they won’t come back at all.

“Let’s face it, church is not as attractive as the real world, especially at 22,” Green says. “We must ask what young adults need, not assume we know.”

O’Neal thinks the church must overcome stereotypes about age and gender. She cites the example of a finance major fresh out of college who would be qualified to head the finance committee, but likely wouldn’t be considered because of her age.

“There’s a systemic mindset of how we view young people: ‘You’re young—


you lead the youth group in the basement with the old couches.’”

“Part of the reason I don’t think young women pursue leadership roles [in the church] is because they don’t see young people, male or female, holding leadership positions,” says Erin Hawkins, associate general secretary with the General Commission on Religion and Race, and one of the youngest United Methodist agency executives. “The church is still very stoic in its stance that no matter how capable or qualified the candidate, top leadership positions in the church are for those 50 and older.”

Pay is also a deterrent. “Do we compensate equally? Do we allow for maternity leave?” O’Neal asks. “If not, young people who may have considered working for the church will go to the corporate world.”

Leadership recruitment really begins the moment a young woman walks in the door. “If a young woman feels she or, most importantly, her children are welcomed, she’ll want to come back,” Salter says. “Eventually, she may seek a leadership role.”

But the bottom line is molding the church to meet young people’s needs, giving them a voice and encouraging them to use it.

“The message is the same, regardless of age,” says Green, “but we must package it differently to speak on their terms.” 

*Joey Butler is managing editor of Interpreter magazine*

# Bishops urge all church members to ‘live the United Methodist way’

## Women’s Commission can play leading role

By Heather Peck Stahl

**United Methodist bishops are calling members to “live the United Methodist way” and to become a community of believers that offers hope to the world.**

To live out this call, the Council of Bishops has joined the churchwide Connectional Table in urging the 10-million-member denomination to live out its unique Christian witness by:

- Starting new congregations around the world to meet the growing, new populations;
- Caring for the world’s children;
- Putting church resources toward stamping out poverty; and
- Focusing our mission efforts to treat preventable diseases, such as malaria and HIV/AIDS.

### What is ‘the United Methodist way’?



Sally Dyck

Bishop Sally Dyck of the Minnesota Area tells *The Flyer* that the call to live the United Methodist way “includes practicing the means of grace which John Wesley outlined for us: prayer, reading Scripture, participating in small groups, fasting, and holy conferencing (infusing debate and dialogue with silent prayer and discernment).

“The means of grace are fundamental and essential to vital Christianity, and a congregation that practices them will be a vital congregation,” says Dyck. The bishop notes that ever since Susannah Wesley—who was instrumental in

her son, John’s, spiritual development—“women have always been major influences in practicing the means of grace.”

Bishop Deborah Kiesey of the Dakotas Area says Christians are called “to a faith that is more than just a deepening of our personal faith, but one that reaches into the world and confronts those things that threaten the lives and spirits of women, children and men. That’s living the United Methodist way.”



Deborah Kiesey

She further says that faithful Christians today must also engage with other people, not just across town but around the world. “We are challenged to understand other cultures, other faith journeys, other societal differences, other community structures and other ways of thinking,” she says.

### Faith includes battling sexism

Right living for individual United Methodist Christians—and for the church corporately—should also reflect commitment to justice and equality for women, Dyck adds.

“The United Methodist way has advocated for the full rights of women in the church. Too often, however, we listen to outside influences that would marginalize women.

“Thirty years ago United Methodist Women, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women [GCSRW] and other biblical/theological voices began leading the church in countering the sin of sexism and gender bias. Although United

Methodists have made progress, institutional bias and individual prejudices still hamper our Christian walk,” adds Dyck.

“The Commission has always spoken on behalf of those who cannot or who are not allowed to speak for themselves,” Kiesey says. “The Commission’s role should remind the church to be inclusive and welcoming and to offer safe spaces for women to tell their stories and grow in understanding of who they are and who they can become.”

Bishop Linda Lee of the Wisconsin Area admits that the church is still not where we ought to be in overcoming sexism and other forms of discrimination. She urges the denomination to address the “subtle and overt ways sexism, racism, homophobia, ageism and other ‘isms’ continue to be lived out and perpetuated at all levels of the church.” If they are not addressed and healed, she said the denomination will be “building our house on a foundation of sand instead of a foundation of rock.”

And Lee urges GCSRW to keep the social issues particular to women and girls before the church. She said the agency should monitor and address areas where “the institution is still in denial” in order to bring healing and wholeness in “our transition from institution to movement.”

“[We are called] to a faith that reaches into the world and confronts those things that threaten the lives and spirits of women, children and men. That’s living the United Methodist way.”

—Bishop Deborah Kiesey


## Start new congregations

Noting a 40-year membership decline in the United States, the Council of Bishops has suggested a churchwide goal to start at least one new congregation every day—365 a year. Currently, 75 new United Methodist churches are begun each year in this nation. The proposition calls for these new churches to pay attention to new immigrant and refugee communities, to expanding racial/ethnic populations, to new generations of children, and to “those places that have not yet received the Good News of Jesus Christ.”

“Women clergy need to be movers and shakers in the new church start movement,” Dyck says further. “Too often the congregational development movement within United Methodism has focused on men’s leadership, to the exclusion of women. Women, too, can start new churches, as evidenced with Lydia in Acts 16.”

She also expresses hope that women’s sensibilities and gifts will be embraced as the church reaches out to the poor—particularly children—and seeks to eradicate preventable diseases, such as malaria.

The bishop has asked every congregation in Minnesota to have an advocate for children through the “Congregations Concerned for Children,” a program of the Minnesota Council of Churches. Worldwide, she supports advocacy for women to help them eradicate poverty-related diseases and HIV/AIDS.

“Too often women in the United States have focused only on our rights and needs and have not stood in solidarity with women in other countries. [The Women’s Commission] could help us do this more effectively since we are a global church. When women are educated and empowered in developing countries, families do better,” Dyck says. 



Linda Lee

# Why ‘gender’ should be protected in the church’s Constitution

By Bill Wilson and Pat Callbeck Harper

**The constitution of an organization is at the heart and soul of that organization’s life and purpose. So it is with the Constitution of The United Methodist Church, found in the early paragraphs of *The Book of Discipline*. Our Constitution is one of the documents that all annual conferences of our global church must observe. (Other portions of our *Discipline* can be changed as appropriate for different nations.)**

Disciplinary Par. 4, Article IV on “inclusiveness” defines an all-important vision for inclusiveness of the church. It was crafted carefully and prayerfully during the climax of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and as legal racial segregation was abolished in the church. The original words in Par. 4 reflected our priority to equality and inclusiveness based on race and color.

For at least three General Conferences, GCSRW has advocated and challenged the church to refine the vision of inclusiveness by including “gender” in the list of conditions and circumstances that define our denomination’s inclusiveness. Yet, for differing reasons and circumstances—political and cultural—each recent quadrennial General Conference has failed to approve the addition of gender as a protected category or a condition by which the denomination may not discriminate.

Some oppose adding anything to the Constitution for fear that changes would only simplify and dilute the entire section on “Inclusiveness of the Church.” Others have viewed attempts to address gender discrimination as some clandestine attempt to change the current United Methodist prohibitions against same-sex marriage or ordination of homosexuals. Still

other legal types cry foul over what they see as disturbing the historic sanctity of the Constitution.

It is time to move forward! The GCSRW will bring to General Conference 2008 the recommendation to insert “gender” into the list of characteristics on which we will not exclude.

The vision, experiences, history and role of The United Methodist Church are firmly rooted in our being an inclusive Christian community. We have made significant progress in the full inclusion of women, especially those who are historically marginalized in church and society. We are strong ad-

vocates for the full participation of women in the life and leadership of the church.

Yet, even now, in the early years of the first decade of the 21st century, there is cultural evidence that generations are taking steps backward. Therefore, the Constitution of The United Methodist Church must state clearly and directly that discrimination against women, exclusion of women from church leadership, and oppression and exploitation of women of any age, race

The Constitution of The United Methodist Church must state clearly and directly that discrimination against women, exclusion of women from church leadership, and oppression and exploitation of women of any age, race or ethnicity are counter to our understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

or ethnicity are counter to our understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Including gender in the inclusiveness paragraph of our Constitution puts heart and soul into what we profess with our General Conference resolutions, our actions and our stated vision of full inclusion and participation of women in the life and ministry of the church. It empowers us to speak out and act against growing anti-female rhetoric, policies and oppressive abusive behaviors in our world—in the United States and elsewhere.

Adding gender to the Constitution would bolster efforts to eradicate:

- Uneven pay and benefits in local church and conference appointments of women clergy;
- Disparate treatment or denial of women as superintendents;
- Unequal representation of women in key leadership committees and roles in congregations; and
- Disproportionate targeting of laywomen and clergywomen as victims of sexual harassment and abuse from laity and clergy.

The church must stand with the gospel against clergy sexual misconduct, in opposition to male-dominant models of leadership, and where the voices of women are minimized or repressed. ✨

*The Rev. William H. “Bill” Wilson, a member of GCSRW, is director of Connectional Ministries and assistant to the bishop in the West Virginia Annual Conference.*

*Pat Callbeck Harper, a consultant with GCSRW, is an organizational development consultant with expertise in educational, employment and community equity.*

★ Economist and author **Julianne Malveaux** is the new president of UMC-related Bennett College, a historically black women’s college in Greensboro, N.C. She assumed the position in June.

★ **Cathy Cox**, who served eight years as Georgia’s secretary of state, has been named the 21st president of UM-related Young Harris College in Georgia, effective in July.

★ **Harriett Jane Olson**, an executive with the United Methodist Publishing House, has been nominated as chief executive of the Women’s Division, United Methodist Board of Global Ministries. If elected, Olson would join the division in the fall.



★ **Linda Rhodes** is the new director of communications in the Virginia Conference. After nearly 13 years as the communicator for the Northern Illinois conference, Linda joined the Virginia team on April 16.

★ **Vivian McCarthy**, of the Baltimore-Washington Conference staff, was appointed superintendent of the Washington West District. **Karin Walker**, pastor of St. Paul UMC in Kensington, Md., was appointed superintendent of the Baltimore North District. **Ashley Crowder Stanley**, currently pastor of Biltmore UMC, Asheville, N.C., was appointed superintendent of the Asheville District, Western North Carolina Conference. All three posts were effective July 1.

★ **The Rev. Nancy Anne Twichell**, an ordained elder in the Wisconsin Annual Conference, was recently named the director of discernment for field education placement at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Ill.

## One in five general agency board members is a racial/ethnic woman

By Craig This

Racial/ethnic women comprise 20% of the voting membership of the general agencies, according to the 2005 *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) (see Table 1).

However, it should be noted that the category of “racial/ethnic women” includes both racial/ethnic women in the U.S. church and United Methodist laywomen and clergywomen of all races from Europe, Africa and the Philippines. (The current data-gathering methods used by the church do not distinguish between women of color, who are in the minority in the United States, and women in other nations.)

### Looks good on paper, but...

Interestingly, three commissions—General Commission on Christian Unity and Religious Concerns (GCCUIC), GCRR and GCSRW—provide 39% of the racial/ethnic women serving as members of the boards and agencies.

These commissions are charged with working towards greater inclusivity and diversity in the church. Further, the racial/ethnic women comprise anywhere from 25% (GCCUIC) to 51% (GCRR) of the respective commissions. So, not only are these smaller commissions adding to the overall total of racial/ethnic women serving the church, but these commissions show a greater diversity and inclusivity than other churchwide agencies.

**Table 1: Voting Members, Officers and Leaders of General Agencies**

	Total Racial/Ethnic Women Voting Members	Total Voting Members	Racial/Ethnic Women as % of Total Voting Members	Total Racial/Ethnic Women Officers	Total Officers	Racial/Ethnic Women as % of Total Officers	Total Racial/Ethnic Women Leaders	Total Leaders	Racial/Ethnic Women as % of Total Leaders
GCFA (Finance and Administration)	6	53	11%	0	4	0%	0	17	0%
GBCS (Church and Society)	9	59	15%	4	13	31%	4	16	25%
GBHEM (Higher Ed. and Ministry)	10	63	16%	0	1	0%	2	10	20%
GBOD (Discipleship)	9	59	15%	0	4	0%	4	12	33%
UMCom (Communications)	5	29	17%	1	2	50%	2	9	22%
UMPH (Publishing House)	4	39	10%	1	3	33%	0	6	0%
GBPHB (Pensions and Benefits)	5	39	13%	1	6	17%	1	10	10%
GCAH (Archives and History)	2	25	8%	0	3	0%	0	3	0%
GCCUIC (Christian Unity)	11	44	25%	1	4	25%	5	19	26%
GCUMM (UM Men)	1	23	5%	0	4	0%	1	11	9%
GCRR (Religion and Race)	20	39	51%	2	3	67%	6	17	35%
GCSRW (Women's Commission)	15	42	36%	2	3	67%	3	7	43%
GBGM (Global Ministries)	23*	92	25%	2	4	50%	2	8	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>21%</b>

\*Total racial/ethnic women includes 1 multi-racial and 5 women from Central Conference.



# e numbers

“I was encouraged by many mentors who helped to prepare me for success and to encourage me along the way to see my gifts.”

> Erin Hawkins, *associate general secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race, Washington, D.C.*

The four biggest United Methodist program boards (General Board of Discipleship, General Board of Church and Society, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and General Board of Global Ministries) provide 43% of the racial/ethnic women serving as members of the boards and agencies. These boards are charged with the educating and training of lay and clergy leaders, worldwide missions and social justice.

The General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) has 11% racial/ethnic women serving as members of the board. The Council manages financial and administrative concerns for the denomination.<sup>1</sup>

(The Connectional Table, not a general agency, is a group that brings together bishops, staff executives and presidents of general agencies, and representatives from caucuses and conferences from around the world to help guide the mission and ministries of the church. Currently it has 18% racial/ethnic women on its board. See Table 2 for more details.)

Racial/ethnic persons currently comprise 31% of the population in the United States. Religion and Race and GCSRW have representation above parity (51% and 36%, respectively); women of color comprise 25% of members on the Global Ministries and

<sup>1</sup> *General Conference determines the make-up of GCFA as the members voted to serve GCFA are voted on by the standing General Conference. If the racial/ethnic make-up of GCFA is to change, then it follows that the racial/ethnic make-up of General Conference will have to change.*

Christian Unity agencies. The remaining agencies have percentages of between 5% and 17%.

A high percentage of racial/ethnic women serving in two or three general agencies does not provide the diversity that is needed at all levels of the church. Such diversity would help the denomination better understand the context and culture of the various racial/ethnic groups that it is reaching.

## Underrepresented as officers

While racial/ethnic women comprise 20% of the membership of the agencies, they comprise 26% of the officers and 21% of the leaders (see Table 1). Again, however, the numbers are misleading.

The two commissions (Religion and Race and GCSRW) charged with monitoring racial and gender inclusiveness have racial/ethnic women as officers (67% each). Women of color comprise 50% of the officers for both Global Ministries and Communications. The percentage of racial/ethnic women officers is 33% for the UM Publishing House, 31% for Church and Society, 25% for Christian Unity, and 17% for Pensions and Benefits. The remaining five agencies have no women of color as officers.

The percentage of racial/ethnic women in leadership positions (comprised of chairpersons of committees and task forces) is 21% overall.

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“I would advise women to... attend educational conferences or workshops, and take advantage of training opportunities provided by general agencies.”

> Joyce Jordan, *affirmative action officer for the General Board of Discipleship, Nashville, Tenn.*

## General agency board members

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### Beyond labels and stigmas

The program boards exert broader influence and manage more churchwide resources in the areas of church and society, equipping laity in leadership, church-related higher education, professional ministry and global missions. The commissions, however, are more narrowly focused on addressing racism, sexism, ecumenical and inter-faith concerns, church history and men's ministries.

However, according to the ¶705.3i, *The Book of Discipline 2004*, "it is recommended that the membership of each of the general agencies seeks to be inclusive based on gender, racial and ethnic persons, age, persons with disabilities and size of church. In order to ensure adequate representation of racial and ethnic persons (Asian American, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders), it is recommended that a jurisdiction's membership on each general



"There are many good people across our connectional church who have never sat with a Native American or heard their story."


> Sylvia Collins, GCSRW board member, Rowland, N.C.

agency be at least **30 percent racial and ethnic persons** and incorporate one-third clergy, one-third laymen and one-third laywomen."

To achieve this level of diversity, annual conferences are urged to elect an inclusive slate of people from which general agency members are chosen. The jurisdictional nominating committee then nominates the persons to serve on each of the general agencies from the names they are given from the annual conferences.

To increase the participation of women of color, U.S. jurisdictional conferences should expand their criteria for choosing agency representatives. For example, what criteria (if any) are being used to nominate the board members? Is it consistent across each of the general agencies? Are there trends of who is serving on which agencies? Do we need to reevaluate how we place people? How can each of the general agencies fulfill its mandate if they don't have a diverse board to help guide them into what the church can become?

### Conclusion

If The United Methodist Church wishes to reach out to the diverse communities around the world, it must become diverse itself in every area. And, to do that, the general agencies, as well as other leadership areas of the church, must become more diverse. Greater diversity in the general agencies will enable the general agencies to draw on this strength of diversity and reach out to the entire world, not just a few select people. 

**Craig This** is a faculty member of the Department of Sociology, Geography and Social Work at Sinclair Community College.

### Table 2: Make-up of the Connectional Table

- > **Eleven of the 61 members (18 percent) are women of color from the United States, Africa and the Philippines.**
- > Five women (8%) are there by virtue of the church offices they hold: Three racial/ethnic women are general secretaries or presidents of general agencies. (A total of 26 general secretaries/presidents are assigned to the Table.)
  - > **Racial/ethnic women occupy 3 of 5 membership slots allotted to the official churchwide ethnic caucuses.**
- > Of the 30 Table members elected by their regions, 6 (or 20%) are racial/ethnic women.
- > **Only 1 woman is among the 7 members from outside the United States.**
- > Five of the 25 members elected by U.S. jurisdictions are racial/ethnic women.



# Women Worth Watching



## Gayle Crabtree, Survivor and Advocate

One night in 1995 at work at a Chattanooga, Tenn., motel, United Methodist laywoman Gayle Crabtree was raped and beaten.

She filed charges against her attacker and helped police and prosecutors put him in jail, but there were no rape crisis centers in her community to help with her spiritual and emotional healing, so she sought help among an Internet-based support community of sexual assault survivors. After six months, with encouragement from friends online, she created a web page where she told her story.

“I was unprepared for the flood of messages from other survivors, like myself, who live in towns with no places to go for support,” says Crabtree, the wife of a United Methodist pastor and a mother of two. “I decided to add more links and helpful information to my website, and in 1996, my homepage, ‘HopeforHealing.org,’ was born.”

The website offers chat rooms, forums and group discussions led by trained



volunteer moderators. Crabtree says 3,179 members joined the first rape-recovery forum and 10,510 joined the second.

In April 2002, Crabtree received the national “Daily Points of Light Award” for her website. The honor is given by the nonprofit Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network. She says the site has had 14 million hits and is often the first website people go to find help after sexual abuse or domestic violence.

Crabtree is the author of *Does God Still Love Me?* (Lulu.com, October 2006), available at Amazon.com, which answers frequently asked questions from survivors of sexual and domestic violence.

At the Hope for Healing office, Crabtree hangs a “Hope Quilt for Victims of Sexual or Domestic Violence.” Any survivor may submit a square (or have a square made for them) to be added to the quilt. The continually evolving quilt may be viewed from the website.

In addition to her work with Hope for Healing, Crabtree also helps people in her community of Strawberry Plains, Tenn., where she says about half the people live in poverty.

For more information, call Gayle at 865.933.8769 or visit [www.hopeforhealing.org](http://www.hopeforhealing.org).

**Q What is your favorite hymn?**  
“Cuando el Pobre,” *United Methodist Hymnal* No. 434.

**Q When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?**  
An astronaut.

**Q If money were no object, what would you like to do?**  
Travel! I’d love to meet all the amazing people I’ve talked with through the years.

**Q Do you have any words of advice?**  
Serve God first, your family second and let the rest take care of itself.



# Clergywomen and laywomen unite

Last January, the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference held its first retreat where clergywomen and laywomen talked frankly about what binds them together and what sometimes causes friction among them.



*Oregon-Idaho participants dance around the ribbon quilt they made as a symbol of unity.*

“We were hearing throughout the conference concerns from clergywomen who didn’t feel supported by laywomen and laywomen who didn’t feel supported by clergywomen,” explained Bonnie McOmber, spiritual growth mission coordinator of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference United Methodist Women (UMW) and chairwoman

of COSROW (bjdlmcomber@cableone.net).

The two-day “Shared History, Shared Future” event supported by the conference COSROW and UMW allowed laywomen and clergywomen a chance to understand and respect each

other’s roles and “come together as women in ministry and explore what that means” says McOmber. S. Kim Coffing, associate general secretary of GCSRW, served as a facilitator.

The 43 participants discussed their shared history and explored where women are—and still are not—in terms of church life, witness and leadership. Topics included “How has being a woman affected your ministry?” “What are the challenges you face as a woman in ministry?” and “What are the challenges you face in your district?”

The women worshipped together and recounted the importance of the United Methodist Women and the Commission on the Status and Role of Women, as well as milestones in the ordination of women in the United Methodist Christian tradition. ✨

*This regular feature in The Flyer offers ideas for programming, monitoring and advocacy for your conference or district Commission on the Status and Role of Women or related ministries. If you have a success story from your Commission, please let us know; send details to Heather Peck Stahl at flyer@gcsw.org.*



## EUROPEAN CLERGYWOMEN’S CONSULTATION

By Pat Barrett

In February 2007, more than 50 United Methodist clergywomen from 12 countries gathered in Germany for the second-ever European clergywomen’s consultation. A colleague and I were privileged to attend as representatives of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Co-organized by Bishop Rosemarie Wenner and Ingeborg Dorn, a pastor from Germany, the three-day consultation was centered on the theme “True Nourishment: Spirituality in Our Daily Living.” There, we supported one another and discussed barriers to leadership, including gender discrimination.

The wide diversity of this gathered community was evident. Some women were pioneers, having served in pastoral leadership for some time; some came from countries where no other women are pastors; still others live in countries where The United Methodist Church is the only denomination to ordain women.

Meetings were conducted in German and English and some translated into several other languages.

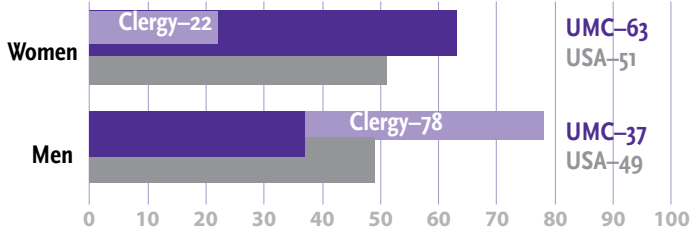
In such a context, we couldn’t take meaning or understanding for granted. When we slowed ourselves down in order to speak and hear more fully, both content and community were enriched. It seemed to us that when we took time to truly hear one another, more people spoke and fewer people dominated.

**Pat Barrett** is assistant general secretary of the Division of Ordained Ministry.

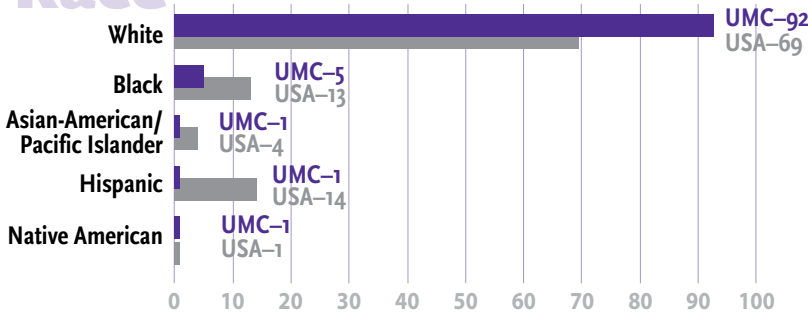


# How has U.S. church membership kept pace with total citizenry?

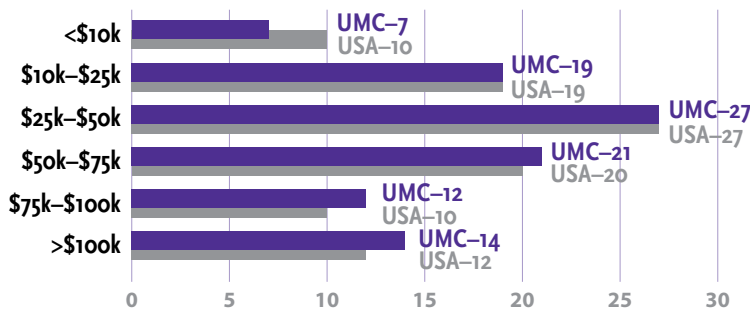
## Gender



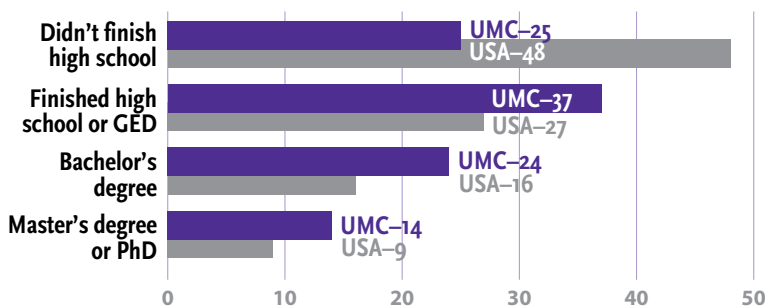
## Race



## Income



## Education



To read more comparisons and the in-depth article, please visit [www.gcsr.org](http://www.gcsr.org).

Sources: General Minutes of The United Methodist Church and US Congregational Life Project; US Census Bureau

## Three dimensions of feminist leadership

Feminist leadership involves changing the power dynamics so that decision-making and responsibilities are shared as broadly as possible, says cofounder and codirector of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual, Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., in the *WATERwheel* newsletter (Volume 18, No. 2, 2007; [www.hers.com/water](http://www.hers.com/water)).

What makes leadership "feminist" is not the gender of the leader, she says.

Hunt describes three dimensions of feminist leadership:

- the insistence on a team approach;
- respectful relating; and
- attention to new bottom lines/new criteria for success.

"Feminist leadership promotes gender and racial inclusivity, age diversity, socially responsible banking and investing, recycling and earth-friendly [operations], and human-scale worker/management arrangements with equitable sharing of the resources," she adds.

Hunt says these three leadership aspects "will empower all of us well beyond the justifiable excitement of women moving into leadership positions for the first time."

For more information, visit the website: [www.hers.com/water](http://www.hers.com/water).

# Let's monitor more than meetings

Examine how money's spent and who makes decisions in our annual conferences, agencies and congregations.

By Elaine Moy and M. Garlinda Burton

**Our primary task as United Methodist Christians is to invite all people into personal relationships with Jesus Christ. By monitoring the denomination for gender inclusiveness and just processes, we help neutralize institutional sexism and make the church a more welcoming and just place.**

For most of our history, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women has been a leader in monitoring gender and racial inclusiveness at denominational meetings, especially General Conference.

The Commission has helped the church practice greater self-monitoring during meetings. We are more aware when women and people of color are underrepresented on the dais, we listen more carefully to insure that “people language” is inclusive, and we are more apt to provide interpreters for United Methodists who do not speak English as their first language.

Still, most of our monitoring to date has been focused on the structure and flow of church *meetings* and who speaks versus who keeps silent. While this is one effective way to monitor our life as a denomination, in fact, looking at what goes on *between* conference meetings may show us more clearly how well women and people of color are included in the total life and ministry of the church.

In the coming quadrennium, we will monitor processes, forms and measures to focus on the daily lives of United Methodist seminaries, annual conferences, cabinets, boards of ordained ministries, lay ministries and conference and churchwide agencies. And we believe that our monitoring should provide answers to the following questions, which will also be probed by the General Commission on Religion and Race.

**1 Decision-makers.** Are women, people of color, persons from outside the United States, and young people—all of whom are often

underrepresented in deliberations—heard, seen and respected at the decision-making tables?

**2 Recruitment and retention.** Do we practice inviting, inclusive, wide-reaching recruitment, retention and deployment of women as clergy, lay leaders, treasurers, committee chairpersons, trustees or seminary professors? Or do we have just a few “token,” set-aside jobs for women—the one woman district superintendent, the president of Status and Role of Women, the one woman trustee?

**3 Policies and practices of all ministries.** Do we create denominational policies, processes and practices to empower women as well as men? Or do we draft laws and resolutions designed to preserve the privileges of those who currently hold office, voice and vote—called power.

**4 Media portrayals and promotional campaigns.** Should and do our media and promotional materials reflect who we currently are or do they show who we hope to be? How do our conference newspapers and websites, congregation newsletters, brochures, pamphlets, signs and DVDs portray church leaders and laity? Are men and women, boys and girls, young and old, white and people of color, laity and clergy all equally and accurately represented?

**5 Inclusive language and theological exploration.** Do we describe people as part of “mankind” and the “brotherhood of man?” Or is humanity described in feminine or gender-inclusive words as well? What words are used to describe people? What types of articles are included in publications and on websites? Are inclusive images used in our worship and liturgy? Does Sunday school curriculum focus only on men’s perspectives and male characters in the Bible? Or do we also learn about the ministries of Deborah, Miriam, Gomer, Mary, Mary Magdalene and Lydia?

**6 Evangelism and church development.**


A recent study by the General Council on Finance and Administration indicates that the U.S. United Methodist Church has virtually abandoned racial/ethnic *and* working-class *and* poor communities, preferring to start more churches in wealthy and suburban areas. Women pastors are less likely to be at the helm of new church starts than men, and people of color are less likely than white pastors. Are those facts compatible with our Wesleyan Christian understanding of the world being our parish?

**7 Finances.** When annual conferences and local churches cut expenses, are programs supporting women's concerns and racial/ethnic ministries the first to go? Who creates and approves the budget? Are women, young people, people of color and new-to-church people represented at the decision-making table? How is the money used? Do we do more internal maintenance—new furnishings, choir robes, pastor's pension—than we do evangelism, outreach and support of the poor and marginalized? Which ministries *never* get cut, and why?

**8 Acceptance of women pastors.** What are we doing right—and what are we doing wrong—with regard to appointing clergy and helping congregations prepare for women pastors? Do we embrace open itineracy and

the intervention of the Holy Spirit in the appointment process? Or do we decide upon a pastor based on race or gender or status?

**9 Who are our leaders?** Are the leaders we elect, ordain, consecrate and hire equipped to live and work and minister in a world in which women's theological and ideological points of view are respected? And are they competent to live out their discipleship effectively with sensitivity and knowledge of other cultures, nations and races? Are men as well as women tapped as nursery workers and children's Sunday school teachers? Are women and people of color named as finance leaders and trustees?

**10 Commitment to global nature in the U.S.** United Methodists declare proudly that we are a global church. But how is that evident in your annual conference, my district or our congregation? Does your conference COSROW recruit women from Europe or Africa or the Philippines as leaders in your work? How can we improve our knowledge of cultural differences and expand our understanding of women's empowerment in a global church context? How can we do a better job of including global voices in making decisions and setting directions for our denomination? 

*Elaine Moy is associate general secretary of GCSRW. M. Garlinda Burton is general secretary of GCSRW.*

## Worth Repeating

“ I believe it is important for us to teach our children, even as youngsters, what they can do in Sunday school and church and at home—how to give and how to respond in ministry. The success of the church depends on the understanding and full participation of all church members, from the youngest to the oldest. ”

> *Mary White, GCSRW member since 2000, and lay leader in the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference, on her practice of tithing. From “Women Who Tithe,” in the February 2007 issue of Response magazine.*



Photo by Steve Falk



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## COSROW gathering advocates monitoring

Twenty-five members of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women in the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference gathered last March for a “Day that Will Make a Difference,” an event teaching the significance of the commission at the local and general church levels.

S. Kim Coffing (left), assistant general secretary for education and advocacy for GCSRW, led discussions on using inclusive language, monitoring meetings and worship services for gender equity, and assuring that churches are safe sanctuaries for all people. The event was organized by the annual conference chair, the Rev. Iris Farabee-Lewis (right).



“COSROW focuses on looking at the hard places of where women are—or aren’t—and why,” Coffing says. “COSROW works internally: we ask if women are present in the issues the church pays attention to. ... One question to always ask is: If women are 60 percent of church members, where are they as decision-makers, or chairpersons, at General Conference, at annual conference and in the local church?”

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