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October–December 2007

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www.umsexualethics.org

Single clergywomen discuss their opportunities, challenges

By Pamela Crosby

The good news? More than ever before, clergywomen have opportunities for service and are more widely accepted and embraced in The United Methodist Church and beyond. In 2006, the denomination celebrated 50 years of full clergy rights for women, and cheered the fact that women today comprise nearly 20 percent of ordained United Methodist ministers.



Still, women pastors who are single (never-married, widowed or divorced) face challenges that single male clergy do not face and that most of us never think about.

Oftentimes, single clergywomen:

- Are presumed difficult to assign to churches;
- Are not always paid or compensated equally compared to male or married peers;
- Face isolation, loneliness and lack of emotional support;
- Struggle to date with integrity and manage a social life;
- Fall into workaholic syndrome;
- Fight preconceived ideas that they are available anytime for calls, meetings and emergencies; and
- Must establish respect where status as a clergywoman is challenged or not valued.

We asked six respected clergy sisters to reflect on the issues that surfaced once they were assigned to congregations. (For a full description



Pastor of Clinton (Okla.) UMC, Jennifer Battiest, right, with her mother and district superintendent, Margaret Battiest. Read more about Jennifer on page 3.

of each woman interviewed, visit www.gcsrw.org.)

Being viewed as ‘Superwoman’

Debra J. Hanson, single pastor, wrote her 2004 dissertation on the unique concerns facing single clergywomen: “Congregations assume that single women pastors can easily manage household chores and still make every church meeting and event because there is no spouse to consider. Single male clergy are [sometimes coddled]

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Key



Sexual abuse is not just a Catholic Church problem



A few months back, a Roman Catholic diocese was hit with one of the largest penalties in history in the aftermath of lawsuits stemming from sexual abuse by clergy against children and teens.

Many of us who are Protestant Christians have read and watched stories like this with detached horror and disgust. But a recent story by the Associated Press stated more than 260 cases of sexual abuse perpetrated by Protestant clergy are reported each year—a higher number than the average of 228 reports against Catholic priests.

For the staff and members of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, these numbers were not surprising. The Commission has fielded more than 160 inquiries since 2004 related to alleged past and present sexual abuse against children, youth and adults.

Our denomination has done a better job than many in instituting strong policies and practices. Our agencies and annual conferences conduct background checks on those seeking ordination and on many lay employees. Most U.S. annual conferences require some form of prevention/awareness training for appointed clergy. The Safe Sanctuaries movement has prompted many local churches to instate policies and practices to keep youth and children from abuse.

At the same time, there's still much to be done. Some annual conferences have ineffective procedures for addressing sexual abuse; and some local church policies only address abuse against children and youth. Training for pastors is minimal in some areas. Staff-parish relations committees generally have little or no training to deal with a sexual harassment or sexual abuse complaint. And a few church leaders still react to sexual misconduct by blaming the victim, covering up facts or shielding errant clergy.

As a result, some church legal specialists estimate that The United Methodist Church has spent more than \$50 million since 2004 answering lawsuits, paying restitution and providing counseling for victims and families and congregations in the aftermath of sexual misconduct.

This Commission believes that the denomination can and should do better. To that end, GCSRW is proposing new resolutions to the 2008 General Conference that will strengthen The United Methodist Church's prohibitions against sexual abuse and misconduct by those in ministerial authority (this includes laity serving in leadership positions). You can read more about these resolutions on pages 4 and 5 of this issue of *The Flyer*.

Urge delegates to support stronger church policies that help prevent and address misconduct of a sexual nature. Our reliability as an agent of discipleship is at stake; we must do all we can to keep our congregants safe from physical and spiritual harm.

Walk in the Light!

M. Garlinda Burton, General Secretary

The Flyer

October–December 2007

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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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Debra Hanson,
West Kennebunk
(Maine) UMC and
Goodwins Mills
UMC, Lyman,
Maine

Single clergy

continued from page 1

by congregants, who bring them dinners and help them out. But single clergywomen are seen as self-sufficient. You're expected to clean the house, bring a casserole to the potluck and be pastor. Single clergymen aren't expected to do that."

Safety in the parsonage and in the church

Motoe Yamada, single associate pastor, works 60 to 70 hours a week: "Sometimes when I am working alone in my office after dark, the thought crosses my mind that if something were to happen, no one would hear me. My church members don't want me to stay after dark. In winter, it gets dark early and it's difficult to finish all my work during daylight hours."

Finding peer support and friends beyond work

Jennifer Battiest, single and in her first phase of ordained ministry: "Only three clergy in my conference are around my age [young adults], and we're the youngest by a couple of decades. The clergywomen all know each other, but they are older. I call them my aunts. In Oklahoma City, several women pastor churches. We've decided to meet once a month to talk about our concerns."

Battling misperceptions of 'prowling' single women

Teresa Dear, associate pastor, now divorced: "I do not hug men in church. I don't want anybody to have the idea or perception that I've hugged her husband a nanosecond too long. Women are natural caregivers and men often mistake that attention for affection. Intentionally, I have been a good steward of my image."

Yamada: "If I feel uncomfortable meeting alone with a male church member, I keep my door open to avoid any situation."

Karen Meeker, U.S. Army Chaplain, single: "There are not a lot of women officers in the military and being a female officer you stick out. Soldiers tell me, 'You're


the first female chaplain I've ever met or seen.' After a decade in military, I've built up credibility and I've created a high level of trust among men."

Dating and relationships

Dear: "I don't date in the congregation. I love my congregation, but I don't talk about my personal life at church. I meet men in my travels, at speaking engagements, even at the airport. I introduce myself as Teresa Dear. For single clergywomen, the challenge of dating is being accepted for who you are."

Hanson: "Clergywomen have to be extremely intentional about creating a life apart from the parish and parishioners. Otherwise your work becomes your life and you become a workaholic. Your social life is limited. I did online dating because I was working a lot of hours. At first I got very discouraged [with online dating]. A lot of men looked at me as a status symbol... somebody to impress their family and friends."

Meeker: "I really don't feel lonely and I believe that's because of my relationship with God. I see Jesus as my companion. I think the traditional roles and expectations for a wife and mother are pretty high. [Nurturing the] marriage and raising children still falls on the woman; it's harder for female clergy to do. God has called me to full-time ministry. If God has a plan for me for marriage and a family in the future, I would welcome that."

Robin Dease, single mother and senior pastor: "In dealing with sexual issues and sexuality, I've learned the more transparent I am, the more secure people are. The largest population in my congregation is single women. When I share my personal story of being a single woman, I see that it empowers other women who have the same issues in their careers. The more I use biblical images and ideas to discuss singleness and relationships, the more we all grow." 

Pamela Crosby is a writer and producer in Antioch, Tenn. For an expanded version of this article, go to www.gcsr.org.



Karen Meeker,
Fort Bragg (Kansas)



Motoe Yamada,
Wesley UMC,
San Jose, Calif.



Teresa Dear,
DuPage African
Methodist Episcopal
Church, Lisle, Ill.



Robin Dease,
Wesley UMC,
Johns Island, S.C.

See page 5 for more on single clergy

Commission proposes stronger, more consistent approach to sexual misconduct

By M. Garlinda Burton

As one expression of the Body of Christ, The United Methodist Church seeks to bring people into relationship with Jesus Christ, so that they may be transformed and help change the world for the better.

But when a person experiences sexual abuse and exploitation in the context of the church, the pursuit of relationship with Christ may be jeopardized, and the Body is broken. An important component of the ministry of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women is to help the church reduce the risk of sexual misconduct and harassment before it happens, and to help foster justice and healing if and when it does.

The Commission will propose to the 2008 General Conference revisions to *The Book of Resolutions* that would:

- ✓ Strengthen and clarify what constitutes sexual misconduct in the context of professional ministry;
- ✓ Define sexual harassment, abuse and misconduct, and reiterate that they are chargeable offenses according to United Methodist Church law;
- ✓ Add language that classifies the use of pornography on church property or by a church leader as a form of sexual misconduct;
- ✓ Call for the creation of training and study resources to help congregations protect children, youth and adults against sexual abuse and exploitation in church settings;

- ✓ Challenge bishops and other church leaders to standardize prevention training for pastors and lay employees and volunteers, and to develop consistent “best practices” for prevention, intervention and adjudications;
- ✓ Urge United Methodist seminaries to require healthy boundaries and sexual ethics courses to church leaders-in-training.

Abuse and misconduct of a sexual nature costs the church millions of dollars each year in legal fees, counseling and mediation. Even more disturbing, sexual misconduct—a betrayal of trust by a

pastor or layperson in a ministerial role—often drives victims and their families away from the church, especially when their complaint is not adequately addressed by leaders.

Sexual ethics concerns accounted for about 35 to 40 percent of the General Commission’s staff time and

resources during this quadrennium. These included helping train ministerial professionals and laity in leadership about prevention of sexual misconduct, and assisting bishops, cabinets and conference crisis response teams in addressing and adjudicating complaints in a just, balanced and timely manner.

From September 2004 through July 2007, the Commission staff fielded more than 160 inquiries, including calls from victims of sexual misconduct in church settings (most of them laywomen and clergywomen), and requests from bishops and



SUPPORT GCSRW'S RESOLUTIONS

Sexual Misconduct within Ministerial Relationships

Eradication of Sexual Harassment in The United Methodist Church and Society

These resolutions will be available for review after Oct. 15 at www.gcsr.org.

district superintendents for assistance and advice on specific cases of alleged sexual misconduct by clergy or lay employees of the annual conference or local church.

Also, there were at least two legal cases against The United Methodist Church that were played out in the public news media, which raised concerns about the efficacy of our denomination's policies, procedures and ethos around justice for victims of misconduct of a sexual nature as perpetrated by clergy.

While our denomination is considered a standard-bearer in terms of addressing sexual misconduct, there is more work to be done. Recent studies indicate that while our clergy are better trained and more aware of sexual ethics concerns, laity are less informed and are increasingly identified as perpetrators of sexual harassments and abuse, particularly in local church life.

Also, the proliferation of Internet-based pornography and access to "cyber-sex" have outpaced the church's ability to regulate and monitor use of church-based computers and cell phones, and to protect children, teens and adults from online predators.

Our ability to make disciples, cultivate energetic congregations and bring the Gospel to bear on social challenges depend upon the church's role as a sanctuary, a place where people can meet God and interact with other Christians without danger of sexual abuse and harm. Encourage the delegates to General Conference from your annual conference to support the proposed resolutions on sexual misconduct and sexual harassment. ✎

M. Garlinda Burton is general secretary of GCSRW.

Single clergy

continued from page 3

Keeping single clergy safe in the church and parsonage

Since January 2007, five United Methodist clergymen have reported being stalked or harassed by a parishioner or "neighbor." In each case, the pastor lived alone—or with her children—in the church parsonage. In one case, police arrested a man who had broken into the parsonage after he had become fixated on the pastor's teenage daughter. In another case, the stalker was a trustee with access to the parsonage.

To help keep single clergymen—and clergymen—safer in the parsonage and church, trustees and laity in leadership can:

- ◆ Limit access to the parsonage to the trustee chair and pastor. Change the locks whenever there's a change in pastoral leadership.
- ◆ Install safety lighting, peepholes on the doors and an alarm system in the parsonage and the church as needed.
- ◆ Replace a solid office door with a door with windows, so that a pastor and parishioner can be seen during counseling sessions.
- ◆ Discourage the pastor from working alone in the church after dark, and escort her back to the parsonage after dark, even if it's only "just across the way."
- ◆ Notify and arrange with the pastor before entering the parsonage or the pastor's study for repairs, etc.
- ◆ Discourage members from matchmaking, especially between pastors and parishioners. Pastors must maintain professional boundaries in order to be effective leaders in their assigned congregations.

Single pastors should:

- ◆ Avoid dating parishioners and maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- ◆ Notify neighbors, trustees and the police of any unusual activity at the church or parsonage. Ask that safety equipment be installed as needed. Establish a "safety signal" (i.e., switch on an outside light if an intruder traps you in your home, and coach neighbors to call the police if that light is on at odd times).
- ◆ Remind parishioners that the parsonage where you reside is also your home; know who has a key. Don't hold church meetings in the parsonage and ask trustees to arrange with you before letting themselves into the parsonage for repairs.
- ◆ Maintain regular office hours for counseling with parishioners and attending routine church meetings. Encourage parishioners and staff to respect those hours.
- ◆ Trust your gut. If you don't feel comfortable working alone in the church, ask a trusted person to work there with you. Or if you don't feel safe visiting a parishioner's home alone, invite someone to accompany you to give Communion, etc. ✎



How to monitor meetings successfully

By J. Bradford Burkman

The Louisiana COSROW believes its annual conference should be intentionally inclusive and that all delegates should be welcomed and empowered to speak from the floor.



J. Bradford Burkman writes a daily monitoring report at Louisiana Annual Conference in Baton Rouge.

In order to help foster a truly inclusive leadership, the Commission has been monitoring meetings for several years and has six essential components for monitoring:

1. Decide what data to collect—The Louisiana COSROW measures participation at annual conference (speaking at a microphone) by using a table with nine columns: topic, time, name, role, podium/floor, male/female, racial and ethnic persons, young people, and clergy/lay.

Also useful is distinguishing between those speakers intentionally recognized by conference organizers and those appearing by virtue of their positions. Familiarity with the “inclusiveness” sections of the *Discipline* (in the index) helps when writing reports and in defining and justifying the monitors’ work.

2. Secure the support of meeting organizers—Monitors need the support of conference staff (to gain access to convenient stations to view the floor and dais), a photocopier and a table and electrical outlet for a computer.


3. Recruit and train volunteer monitors—A monitor should not be a conference delegate, because it is difficult to both track speaker demographics and

participate in the discussion and decision-making. However, a single monitor can easily cover each session. Recruit monitors to work a maximum of five to eight hours at a time. One person can monitor a session. When training a monitor, discuss which data the commission has decided to collect and explain how to use the forms.

4. Interpret the data—When interpreting the data, consider both the numbers and the politics. The political decisions are, for instance, what information to include in which reports and how diplomatic one must be when pointing out the lack of inclusiveness.

5. Distribute the data—The Louisiana COSROW packages their final results three ways. First, a private letter is written for the bishop and cabinet listing the names of people who were remarkably inclusive or exclusive. Second, a more diplomatic article is submitted to the conference newsletter. Third, a copy of that article is sent to GCSRW, along with corresponding forms and a report of the conference experiences.

This year the conference published a daily monitoring report during annual conference.

6. Be visible—The monitoring coordinator becomes the face of inclusiveness at annual conference. Ideally, the bishop introduces the COSROW chairperson and monitoring coordinator at the beginning of conference. The Louisiana daily monitoring reports included the monitor’s cell phone number, email and location on the floor. 

J. Bradford Burkman teaches mathematics at the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts, and has coordinated COSROW monitoring in Louisiana since 2005. He may be reached at bburkman@lsmsa.edu.

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@gcsr.org.



Women Worth Watching

The Rev. Mary Walton: Domestic violence

After working as a clinical consultant for alcohol addiction in the mid-1970s, the Rev. Mary Walton began serving as a clinical social worker for domestic violence victims and their children. In 1980, she became founding director of the Interval House Domestic Violence Shelters in Long Beach and Orange County, Calif., which offers emergency and transitional housing and counseling. One of the oldest and largest multicultural domestic violence assistance programs in the United States, Interval House serves clients in 45 languages and dialects.



*Rev. Mary Walton,
Long Beach, Calif.*

In 2000, Walton founded and directed the Creating a Safe Environment (CASE) partnership, a ministry that brings together the ministries of Interval House and Dominguez UMC in Long Beach, and seeks to improve the response to families experiencing or exposed to domestic violence and increase awareness of domestic violence and knowledge of interventions among pastors and community leaders.

In 2004, Walton was commissioned a probationary elder and was appointed pastor of the Dominguez congregation, where she still serves.

“Because our primary focus is on breaking the silence of family violence and intimate partner abuse, and imparting knowledge of domestic-violence resources, CASE conducts presentations and workshops at churches in Long Beach and surrounding areas,” Walton says. “Because of this,

women have been informed about abuse and some have escaped domestic violence.”

Walton adds that the California-Pacific Annual Conference COSROW has helped the partnership submit domestic-violence-related resolutions to the annual conference.

In March, Walton was named Woman of the Year by the California State Legislature and later that month she received the Legacy Award at the national conference of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African-American Community.

More information is available at www.thecasepartnership.org. Or call (310) 834-1234.

Q What is your favorite hymn?
“Blessed Assurance”
(UMH 369)

Q When you were young, what did you want to be?
A missionary. I wanted to take care of all the people in Africa and bring them back home with me.

Q If money were no object, what would you like to do?
For fun, I’d organize my own choir who would follow me everywhere I went. For meaning, I’d donate significant funds to A Place of Miracles, a ministry in Pasadena, Calif., organized by my niece to serve mothers with HIV/AIDS.

Q What advice do you have for other Christians?
Keep on growing, learning, experiencing and loving one another as sisters and brothers.

**OCTOBER IS
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE
AWARENESS
MONTH**

‘LOVE YOUR BODY DAY’ IN OCTOBER

October 18, 2007, is the National Organization for Women Foundation’s 10th annual “Love Your Body Day.” The Love Your Body Campaign promotes positive, healthy images of women and girls, protests harmful and offensive advertisements, and raises awareness about women’s health issues. For more information, visit www.loveyourbody.nowfoundation.org.

Conference execs more likely to be men, clergy

By Craig This

Women comprise 58% of United Methodist membership and 57% of the total number of employees of U.S. annual conferences, according to the 2006 employment profile conducted by the General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

However, while women—lay and clergy—have the majority of all conference jobs, men outnumber women at the executive level. And across the gender divide, clergy are more likely than laity to hold high-paying conference jobs, whether or not the jobs require theological education.

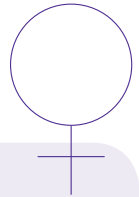
Men—both lay and clergy—hold 69% of the upper-management jobs in United Methodist annual conferences. Clergymen have the highest percentage of executive positions (58%), followed by clergywomen at 22%, laymen at 11% and laywomen at 9%.

Laywomen as a whole make up the largest demographic group among those employed at the annual conference level (883 laywomen compared to 338 laymen). However, 522 (59%) of those positions held by women are administrative/clerical. The largest portion of laymen (31%) is service workers.

Clergymen comprise the second largest total of employed persons at the annual conferences with

465 employees, compared with 196 clergywomen. And 71% of clergymen (331) and 65% of clergywomen (127) are in executive positions.

A previous “By the Numbers” suggested that the general church pigeonholes women in terms of the jobs they hold and the places where



Laywomen/Clergywomen Employed in Jurisdictions* 2006

Laywomen	NCJ	NEJ	SCJ	SEJ	WJ	UMC	% of UMC
Executive	10	7	14	18	4	53	9
Professional	7	13	21	1	0	49	28
Managers/ Administrators	23	25	55	28	13	144	45
Technicians	7	0	7	6	2	22	41
Administrative/ Clerical Support	138	136	177	21	50	522	94
Service Workers	22	2	18	28	23	93	46
Laywomen Total	207	183	292	102	92	883	47

Clergywomen	NCJ	NEJ	SCJ	SEJ	WJ	UMC	% of UMC
Executive	29	30	29	26	13	127	22
Professional	5	5	21	0	0	31	18
Managers/ Administrators	5	1	10	11	3	30	9
Technicians	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative/ Clerical Support	0	0	4	1	2	7	1
Service Workers	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Clergywomen Total	40	36	64	38	18	196	10

Annual Conferences that did not return profiles by publication deadline (and therefore were not included) are: Florida, Holston, Illinois Great Rivers, Memphis, Mississippi, Pacific Northwest and Yellowstone.

**Jurisdictions are: NCJ: North Central; NEJ: Northeastern; SCJ: South Central; SEJ: Southeastern; WJ: Western; UMC: United Methodist Church.*


e numbers

they work. Similarly, in U.S. annual conferences, laywomen are more likely to be hired as administrative/clerical persons than as executives. And while clergywomen are more likely than their lay sisters to have management jobs, they are not as numerous in those jobs as their clergy brothers.

It can be correctly argued that the overall lack of women in the church leadership limits the ability to place women in executive levels of leadership across the church. Currently, there is about one clergywoman for every five clergymen. If the church is placing these clergywomen in churches, annual conferences, general agencies and schools

of theology, there are only so many of them to go around. The lack of a greater pool of clergywomen affects the church's ability to place them in a denomination with 33,000 churches, 66 annual conferences, 526 districts and 13 schools of theology.

At the same time, the inability of the church to place women in highly visible leadership positions, whether at the annual conference level or in the local church, hurts recruitment. Women, young and old, who are being called into the ministry by God need role models they can emulate and imitate in fulfilling their calling from God. If they do not see women fulfilling their potential

in The United Methodist Church, then these women may seek to fulfill God's calling in another denomination or seek careers in the secular arena. 

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



Laymen/Clergymen Employed in Jurisdictions* 2006

Laymen	NCJ	NEJ	SCJ	SEJ	WJ	UMC	% of UMC
Executive	30	8	8	10	7	63	11
Professional	7	18	8	5	0	38	22
Managers/ Administrators	14	11	30	14	13	82	25
Technicians	4	5	5	9	8	30	55
Administrative/ Clerical Support	0	0	12	5	4	21	4
Service Workers	37	32	19	5	11	104	51
Laymen Total	92	74	82	48	43	338	18

Clergymen	NCJ	NEJ	SCJ	SEJ	WJ	UMC	% of UMC
Executive	71	57	98	93	18	331	58
Professional	3	2	48	3	1	57	32
Managers/ Administrators	11	18	7	28	3	67	21
Technicians	1	0	1	0	0	2	4
Administrative/ Clerical Support	3	0	0	0	0	3	1
Service Workers	4	0	0	0	0	5	3
Clergymen Total	93	77	154	124	22	465	25

CORRECTION:

The July/Aug/Sept 2007 issue of *The Flyer* contained errors in Table 1 of "Women by the Numbers." The GCFA Total Racial Ethnic Women Voting members should be 5 (not 6), Total Voting Members should be 40 (not 53) and Racial Ethnic Women as % of Total Voting Members should be 13% (not 11). The GBCS Total Racial Ethnic Women should be 12 (not 9), Total Voting Members should be 62 (not 59), and Racial Ethnic Women as % of Total Voting Members should be 20% (not 15).

Three annual conferences offer models for supporting clergy spouses

By Heather Peck Stahl

EDITOR'S NOTE: Earlier this quadrennium, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women asked spouses of clergy to discuss their concerns, needs, sense of understanding church structure and process, and where they go for help and support. The Commission has convened a churchwide team to further study and advocate for better support for clergy spouses. For this article, we asked three women from the Virginia, Iowa and Florida annual conferences to describe their respective ministries.

1 Virginia: Welcome dinner and a 'Thrival Kit'

Beth Downs, director of ministerial services for the Virginia Annual Conference, says the conference has an active Clergy Family Enrichment Committee that is part of the conference board of ordained ministry.



Kiok Cho, spouse of Rev. Young Jin Cho, makes crafts with others at the Virginia Conference Clergy Spouses' Retreat, Blackstone, Va.

Formed in 2000, the committee provides an annual clergy spouses' luncheon, an annual spouses' retreat, and a clergy spouse support coordinators' program.

In addition, the committee provides for clergy families a *Thrival Kit* (a journal of information, inspiration and guidance), sponsors a welcome dinner for clergy families newly appointed to the conference and advocates parsonages support groups.

Originally planned and led by cabinet spouses, the spouses' luncheon began some 40 years ago. Held during annual conference sessions

each summer, the luncheon brought together 175 spouses this year and 190 spouses in 2006.

Also begun at least 40 years ago, the three-day spouses' retreat is held in the spring at the Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center. About 30 spouses attended this year. In fall of 2006, the conference also offered a one-day Saturday event for clergy spouses.

The District Clergy Spouses Support Coordinators program was developed about three years ago. These coordinators are trained to help clergy families with issues such as substance abuse, disability leave and death. Coordinators also support spouses by working with district chaplains and offering "a listening ear and a person to talk to," says Downs.

Members of the clergy family enrichment committee also encourage district superintendents to create parsonage-support committees, which review yearly parsonage report forms and alert the superintendent if there is a problem with a parsonage.

The *Thrival Kit*, first written in 2000, is revised annually and distributed to first-time clergy ap-

Survey of UM clergy spouses

This fall a survey will be sent directly to 1,000 UM clergy spouses in the United States to learn what issues they face and would like the church to address. The GCSRW will report the results of this survey in late 2008.

Recently, an interagency task force (General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits, General Board of Discipleship, General Board of Education and Ministries and GCSRW) sponsored a survey among annual conference leaders to discover what resources and policies are available to clergy spouses and families, and how knowledgeable the clergy spouses and families are of these resources and policies.

Results confirmed inconsistencies across the denomination in the available resources for clergy spouses and families and the differing policies regarding clergy spouses—especially when a marriage and/or family crisis occurs. The leaders' survey also found that some conferences do not have anyone assigned specifically to respond to the needs of clergy spouses and families.



pointees and their spouses at the welcome dinner. It is also available at www.vaumc.org. The kit includes topics such as what to expect in the ministry, understanding the appointment system, parsonage life, conference relations, wellness and wholeness, children in clergy families, finances, pension and benefits, sources for help in specific crises, and support for single, married and couple clergy issues.

2 Florida: 'Shade and Fresh Water'

The Florida Annual Conference offers retreats and resources to clergy and their family members through Shade and Fresh Water: A Space for Grace, an agency of the conference.

Trudy Corry Rankin, program coordinator and clergy spouse, says the vision of Shade and Fresh Water is to provide a “transformative sanctuary” for individuals and their families who are professionally associated with the Florida Conference “for the restoration of body, mind, and spirit toward more abundant living.”



Trudy Corry Rankin displays resources available from Florida's Shade and Fresh Water.

The agency has offered individual retreats with spiritual direction; relocation workshops and retreats for those moving to a new appointment; retreats for clergy or clergy spouses coping with divorce; “Extreme Shade” for teens recovering from divorce in the clergy family; and a clergy kids’ camp.

Rankin says, “The stronger the resources for clergy spouses, the more likely these spouses will be able to manage and maintain their role. Those who feel called to the role thrive in it.” Rankin wrote a dissertation on coping resources for clergy spouses in 2004.

Each year, clergy families moving to a new appointment within the conference may receive a CD-ROM with helpful information about relocating. These are available at relocation workshops, says Rankin.

In addition, every new clergy family in the annual conference receives a *Thrival Kit*, a handbook that includes topics such as parsonage living,

wellness and wholeness, pension and benefits, and where to turn for help. The *Thrival Kit* was originally developed in the Virginia United Methodist Conference. More information is available at www.shadeandfreshwater.org.

For the past 20 years, Florida Conference has hosted a three-day clergy spouse retreat in January, which Rankin says typically draws 75 to 100 spouses. The conference has also hosted a three-day Clergy Couple’s Retreat in March, with an average attendance of 25 to 50 couples.

Shade and Fresh Water has also developed a DVD on the clergy culture, specifically to help the staff-parish relations committees of local churches “understand more about the clergy culture before making their evaluations and decisions for transfers,” says Rankin.

3 Iowa: Guiding spouses to support

“Clergy receive adequate information about policies, practices, programs and benefits when assigned, but non-clergy spouses (mostly women) do not [always] receive that same type of helpful information,” says lone G. Shadduck, co-chair of the Iowa Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

In response to that need, the Iowa COSROW developed *The Guide: What to Do If . . . ?* (*Basic Information Handbook for Clergy Spouses*). First published in June 2003, the 88-page wire-bound handbook is now in its third printing.

The Guide covers issues such as “quality of life protection programs,” “if you become widowed,” “dissolution of clergy marriage” and “building healthy relationships.” It also includes appendices for resources, an index and an evaluation form.

The guide is distributed to all non-clergy spouses in the annual conference and is available through district representatives, says Shadduck. The handbook is also available at the COSROW display table at the Iowa Annual Conference and through the secretary at the conference office. ✿

Heather Peck Stahl is communications director for GCSRW.

Results of Commission's local church survey show progress

However, many congregations still lack inclusive language, female senior pastors, women chairs of trustees and mandated sexual harassment policies

By the Rev. Gail Murphy Geiss

Since 1970, GCSRW has regularly surveyed local churches in the United States. The main purpose has been to assess the status of women as church leaders, measure progress regarding ongoing issues such as inclusive language and sexual harassment, and provide an opportunity for local churches to address the Commission with emerging issues of concern.

The following is a summary of the results of the 2007 survey.

Women in leadership

One of the most recently discussed statistics is the low number of clergywomen leading the very largest churches—those with membership of 1,000 or more. In 1999, 2% of women served churches with 1,000 members or more; in 2007, that percentage grew to 7%.

Although the slight increase is promising, there is still a statistically significant correlation between the size of the church and the gender of the pastor. Men and women are equally likely to serve medium-sized churches, but women are more likely to serve smaller churches and men are more likely to serve large ones.

Other highlights related to women in congregational leadership include:

- ◆ Almost one in five churches has no women ushers, especially smaller churches;
- ◆ Over half of churches had a clergywoman preach in the last year, and about three quarters had a lay woman preach; and

One in five churches has no women ushers.

- ◆ Among those churches that do not have an even mix of boys and girls as acolytes, it is more likely to find all or mostly girl acolytes than boys.

A common way women can provide leadership in the local church is by chairing committees. This year's survey found the continuation of the trend of more men serving as chairs of administrative committees and more women leading programmatic committees. We also note the continuing prevalence of men in administrative leadership positions—church council with 56%, trustees with 80% and finance with 52%. The close exception is staff-parish relations committee (SPRC) chairs with 52% women.

Other related findings include:

- ◆ the Northeastern Jurisdiction is the only one in which the chair of the church council is more likely to be a woman than a man;
- ◆ in churches made up of primarily racial/ethnic members, the church council chair is more likely to be a woman than in primarily white churches;
- ◆ larger churches are more likely to have men as chairs of the finance committee and the SPRC;
- ◆ no committee is chaired only by men;
- ◆ churches with women pastors are more likely to have men as chairs of the trustees, but women as chairs of worship and witness; and
- ◆ the majority of churches said their lay leadership/nominations committee intentionally seeks gender balance (84%) and that the church is deliberate in recruiting women and girls to lead in worship (78%).

Inclusive language

Inclusive language was a major emphasis for GCSRW in the 1980s, culminating in the production of the study guide, *Words that Hurt, Words that Heal* in 1985. Since then, it seems that little progress has been made. This year's survey attempted to assess both the current usage of and concern about inclusive language through a number of questions. Summary results for each of those questions include the following:

- ◆ Clergy (68%) report that they are more comfortable using gender-inclusive terms for God (Father/Mother or Parent/Creator) than laity, who are happier with the term "Father" (95%);
- ◆ The large majority (82%) of all United Methodists, clergy and lay, tend to use male-only language for God;
- ◆ The large majority of clergy use inclusive language for people (79% prefer "humankind") though most laity say they do not (65% prefer "mankind");
- ◆ One is more likely to hear inclusive language in larger congregations (500 or more members), in churches with women pastors, and in the Western Jurisdiction;
- ◆ Most respondents indicated that inclusive language is not a priority for their churches (64%) and in fact, that "it would be considered a frivolous concern" (58%);
- ◆ Primarily racial/ethnic congregations are less likely to see inclusive language as "frivolous," whereas mostly white churches do find it frivolous; and
- ◆ Most churches (93%) conduct no study of gender and language.



“ I've written a lot about being alienated from the church. If I can't find room to breathe here, what kind of community can I create? I do that not by leaving the traditional congregation but by recognizing that I'm part of many different congregations. By being part of a Woman Church, one is strengthened to stay in the traditional church and work for change. ”

> *The late Letty Mandeville Russell, a pioneer in feminist theology, author and longtime professor at Yale Divinity School*

Sexual harassment training and policies

The 1996 General Conference mandated that each annual conference and local church adopt a sexual harassment policy. With only two exceptions, all churches continue to show a steady increase in the percentage with sexual harassment policies. Churches with fewer than 50 members are least likely to have a sexual ethics policy (9% in 1995 and 34% in 2007). But in congregations with more than 50 members, at least six out of 10 churches are in compliance, and in the congregations with more than 1,000 members, that number is almost nine out of 10 (36% in 1995, and 86% in 2007).

Ninety percent of pastors have attended at least one sexual ethics training, and just over three quarters (76%) found it to be helpful. In addition, just over one fourth (28%) have participated in supplementary training.

Pastoral care issues for women

Finally, respondents were asked about the specific concerns women and girls bring to pastoral care settings. A list of 16 options was given, and a space for "other" topics was provided. The percentages for the top five specific pastoral care issues for women were: marriage/divorce (62%), depression (51%), aging parents (50%), finances (48%) and employment (42%).

The Rev. Gail Murphy Geiss is professor in the department of sociology at Colorado College.

Read the complete results of this study at www.gcsr.org.

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Your holiday gift can empower women: Give to the Advocacy for Women Fund



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

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

"Through the ministry of monitoring, GCSRW is continually helping to guide the church into becoming the diverse body of Christ we deeply desire and are called to be."

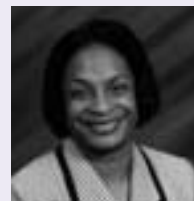
—KAREN ALLEY, OFFICE OF FACULTY ACTIONS,
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, BOSTON UNIVERSITY



Karen Alley

"The endowment fund enables GCSRW to continue its work regarding sexual harassment, monitoring and research. I am grateful the Commission remains an active ministry of The United Methodist Church... because we need their presence and our voices to be heard."

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- ★ **Sheron C. Patterson**, senior pastor of Highland Hills UMC in Dallas, announced in April that she had breast cancer. After undergoing treatment, she started a new ministry on breast cancer awareness. She is seeking 8,000 women across the country to sign the health pledge at www.DrSheron.com.
- ★ **The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer** assumed her post Oct. 1 as the new program director for women's ministry for the National Council of Churches USA. Serving in the New York office, Tiemeyer seeks to champion the spiritual and professional development of women leaders in the organization and its member churches.
- ★ **Erin M. Hawkins** was elected general secretary of the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race effective Sept. 1. At 31, she is possibly the youngest top executive of a denominational agency, according to the commission.



passing legends

Letty Mandeville Russell, one of the world's foremost feminist theologians and longtime member of the Yale Divinity School faculty, died July 12 at age 77. She was the author and editor of more than 17 books.

Harmon Wray, restorative justice advocate, died July 24 at age 60. In addition to his advocacy work and ministry at Riverbend Maximum Security Prison in Nashville, Tenn., Wray was the 2003 recipient of a lifetime achievement award from the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.

The Rev. Linda H. Hollies, an activist who worked passionately for clergywomen and racial justice, died Aug. 19 at age 64. Pastor of Calvary UMC in Jackson, Mich., Hollies was author of 29 books including *Jesus and Those Bodacious Women*.

Women's participation growing in South Central

Delegates to 2008 General Conference and Jurisdictional conferences

By Bill D. Ball, Jr.

Among the 15 annual conferences in the South Central Jurisdiction, laywomen comprise 47% of the 2008 General Conference lay delegates. Women lead the lay delegations in six annual conferences (40%). Eight conferences have 50% or more laywomen in their delegation. Women comprise approximately 59% of the membership in the South Central Jurisdiction.*

Clergywomen comprise 31% of the General Conference delegate positions. In five conferences (33.3%), clergywomen were elected to lead their clergy delegations. Many more clergymen (64.7%) than clergywomen (30.4%) are serving as the sole pastor or senior pastor of a church with multiple clergy.

Laywomen in the South Central Jurisdiction comprise 48% of the jurisdictional delegates. Seven conferences have 50% or more women in their

lay delegation. Two conferences have no laywomen as delegates to jurisdictional conference.

Clergywomen comprise 32% of the jurisdictional delegates. Nine conferences have more than 32% clergywomen as their delegates. Two conferences have no clergywomen as delegates to jurisdictional conference.

Bill D. Ball, Jr. is CEO of the Institute for Program Evaluation, Allen, Texas. Ball is a member at Sun creek UMC in Allen, Texas and was a delegate to General Conference delegate in 1984.

*General Council on Finance and Administration, 2007. Most current official statistics are as of 2005.

Editor's note: For a more complete explanation of these figures, including two detailed tables, please visit www.gcsrw.org.



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‘Women Called to Ministry’ ideal for congregational study

Women Called to Ministry was conceived and created by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women as a follow-up to last year’s 50th anniversary celebration for full clergy rights for women in the Methodist tradition. Co-sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the six-part, downloadable study traces the biblical and historical roots of women spreading the word of God, from the Old Testament to the contemporary Christian church.

The resource is designed for adult Sunday school or bible study (and includes a student booklet and leader’s guide). It is available free for local churches in a PDF format at www.gcsr.org.

In creating the study, the Commission invites laity and clergy in congregations to explore in more depth the impact that women preachers have had on the historic and modern Christian church.

“Some people still ask why we ordain women,” says M. Garlinda Burton, GCSRW general secretary. “But women figure loudly and prominently in preaching and teaching throughout biblical and church history. The question for the church is how to understand and honor God’s calling,” says Burton, who recommends the study for Advent, Lent, Women’s History Month (March), or any time. 



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