

# The Flyer

Vol XXIII, No. 3-4

Winter/Spring 2003

*Address working toward an inclusive church . . .*

## NCJ and SEJ women meet, look toward Pittsburgh

Some 40 North Central Jurisdiction women, both lay and clergy, met Jan. 31-Feb. 1 at Cabrini Retreat Center, Des Plaines, IL. With the theme "The Women Must Gather," the group addressed how to work toward an inclusive church.

Keynote speakers Judith Craig, retired bishop, and Cecelia M. Long, conciliar officer of the General Council on Ministries and former general secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, inspired the women to own their gifts and to make themselves available when they are called out for leadership.

According to Emmy Lou John, laywoman from Northern Illinois Conference and one of the organizers of the gathering, the group has declared as its purpose: "Women, connected by prayer, who are committed to working toward an inclusive church. This will be apparent in an inclusive Episcopacy and inclusive delegations of laywomen, clergywomen and eth-

nic minorities to General and jurisdictional conferences. We will model a healthy, collegial way of political presence and decision making."

Other organizers, along with John, included Debbie Fisher, clergywoman from Northern Illinois Conference; Liz Lopez, clergywoman from Minnesota Conference; Mary Gates, laywoman from Minnesota Conference; and Judith Siaba, laywoman from Northern Illinois Conference.

As she reflected on the meaningfulness of the meeting, John commented, "It was wonderful to join with women who want to be supportive of one another in Christian community. I felt a real call to bring about the possibility of women having a greater voice in how the church moves forward."

For Liz Lopez the partnership of lay and clergywomen was exciting. Lopez brought a unique perspective to the group from her history with the Women's Leadership Team in South Central Jurisdiction. Their work led to the 1992 election of Ann Brookshire

Sherer, the first woman bishop from that jurisdiction, and the 1996 election of Janice Riggle Huie, as well as a more inclusive episcopacy in the jurisdiction. As Lopez pointed out, "That team offered a wonderful model of profound leadership from lay and clergywomen."

Lopez continued, "It is time to hear new voices in this jurisdiction and throughout the church—voices that even through different opinions can be unified for the future of the connection."

The gathering has planned another meeting September 12-13 in the Chicago area. The focus for this meeting is to convene women who are elected as delegates to General and North Central Jurisdictional Con-

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### *Resources, resources*

This issue of *The Flyer* offers our readers a variety of resources. Beginning with the article on jurisdictional meetings and continuing with book reviews, author interviews, ideas for annual conference displays, and suggestions for planning for 2004 General Conference, we hope to inspire you to continue to work toward the full and equal participation of women in the United Methodist Church. When you have exhausted these ideas, please visit our website at [www.gcsrw.org](http://www.gcsrw.org) or give us call at (800)523-8390 for more resources. ●

## GCSRW OKs women's advocacy fund

Following the action taken at its annual meeting Sept. 19-22, 2002, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women approved by mail-in vote the details for establishing the Advocacy for Women Endowment Fund.

This fund, an important mission and ministry of GCSRW, is especially designed to provide monies for emerging ministries related to advocacy for women. According to Raponzil Drake, member of the general secretariat of the Commission, several gifts have now been entrusted to the Commission through the endowment fund. Drake comments, "These gifts represent the donors' commitment to all the possibilities of a church which embraces women in the total life and responsibilities of the church. Gifts to the Advocacy for Women Endowment Fund are an act of faith that will make the church whole." ●



ferences, as well as other interested women, who seek to work collegially for a more inclusive church.

Holding similar goals, the Southeastern Jurisdiction Clergywomen's Consultation gathered almost 300 clergywomen at Lake Junaluska, NC, March 13-15 with the theme "Guide Our Feet." These clergywomen had not met as a jurisdictional group since 1986. It was during the January 2002 international clergywomen's consultation that they were inspired to plan the recent consultation.

According to Elizabeth Graves, clergywoman, Western North Carolina Conference, "The key to energizing our group was our one female bishop from the jurisdiction Charlene Kammerer, who invited women to an organizing meeting last July."

The design team anticipated two primary desires of the gathering: an opportunity for organizing themselves to help the church become what it can; and an opportunity for renewal and connection with other clergywomen with their joys and challenges.

With that in mind, the team fashioned this mission statement: to inspire women in ministry through worship; to equip women in ministry for service; and to develop an ongoing jurisdictional network of support.

Among the leaders and speakers were Youtha Hardman-Cromwell, Charlene Kammerer, Leontine Kelly, retired bishop, and Cynthia Wilson Hollins. Their inspiration and the participants' energy resulted in a plan for a follow-up meeting in July, again to be convened by Kammerer, to name a design team for another consultation in 2007. According to Pam Cahoon, clergywoman from Florida Conference, "This meeting was a wonderful opportunity to be inspired, to connect, to share, and to learn our history. Retired Bishop Leontine Kelly was our last speaker and offered tremendous inspiration."

With great enthusiasm, Graves reflects, "We accomplished our goals in ways we couldn't anticipate would happen. In fact, in the Empowerment workshop participants spontaneously pushed for a structure for continuing the vision into the future through conference conveners." ●

## New district superintendents and conference directors receive training

Each year in August, women and men from across the U.S. receive training as new district superintendents and conference directors of connectional ministries. The general secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women participate in that training by addressing issues of interest to women in the church, particularly clergy sexual misconduct.

Women participants in 2002 included the following. Unless identified as conference directors of connectional ministries (DCM), the participants are district superintendents: Pat Beghtel-Mahle, North Texas; Helen Davis Bell, West Virginia; Ava Burdine Berry, Northwest Texas; Mary Beth Blinn, Virginia; Lynne Blankenship Caldwell, Western North Carolina; Kim Cape, Southwest Texas; Marianne Chalstrom, North Indiana; Karen Dorris, Texas; Marcelle Dotson, New England; Ida Easley, South Indiana; Janice Frederick-Watts, South Carolina; Cyndy Garn, West Ohio; Melva J. Graham-England, Illinois Great Rivers; Barbara E. Harper, North Alabama; Deborah A. McLeod, Florida; Nancy Lee Moffatt, Wisconsin; Deborah O'Connor-Slater, North Central New York; Margaret Paige, Detroit; Stella M. Roberts, Holston; Martha Singleberry, New Mexico; Elaine J.W. Stanovsky, DCM, Pacific-Northwest; Libba Stinson, DCM, Alabama-West Florida; Glenda Ulmer, Rocky Mountain; Lily M. Villamin, California-Pacific; Hope Morgan Ward, North Carolina; Betty Sue Watson, Missouri; and Beverly Wilkes, Illinois Great Rivers.

### Did you know...

Predominant ethnicity of U.S. United Methodist local churches:

Asian American UMC	365
African American UMC	2,477
Hispanic UMC	372
Native American UMC	146
Pacific Islander UMC	39
Anglo American UMC	27,571

**Total 31,970**

Source: General Council on Finance and Administration

### Calendar

**June 19-21**

**Re-Imagining's 10th Anniversary Gathering, St. Paul, Minnesota.**

The theme is "Generations of Wisdom, One Body of Water." Leaders include Rita Nakashima Brock, Rebecca Parker, Mary Bednarowski, and Sara Evans. Registration materials are available at [www.reimagining.org](http://www.reimagining.org) or by calling (612) 879-8036.

## "Witnessing and Testifying..."

### Book focuses on religious women in civil rights era

When Rosetta Ross was a girl growing up in South Carolina, a deeply religious woman named Victoria Way DeLee was changing the lives of African Americans in her state. DeLee is one of seven women featured in Ross' book *Witnessing and Testifying: Black Women, Religion, and Civil Rights*, recently published by Fortress Press.

DeLee's Christian upbringing fueled her social action work, which ranged from leading protests and boycotts to organizing voter registration campaigns and school desegregation efforts. "I knew her and knew about her and grew up going to those mass meetings," Ross says, adding that her parents, Thomas and Bertha Ross, participated in civil rights activities with DeLee.

Ross, who later became an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, remembered DeLee and used her as an example when writing her dissertation about people living out their faith. Ross, now the McVay Associate Professor of Christian Ethics at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in Minnesota, eventually expanded that interest into a book exploring how the religious consciousness of African-American women related to their work as civil rights activists.

Though she considers the seven women that she chose to highlight to be "pretty central" to the civil rights movement, Ross notes that the extent of their influence has not received as much attention as the influence of the prominent men in the movement, either then or now.

Common elements of the lives of all seven women—DeLee among them—include being strongly influenced by an elder or elders and by traditions of faith in early life; having deep connections to their communities through community work motivated by religious traditions; and seeking, in general, to improve society.

In the preface to her book, Ross explains that the civil rights activism of these and other African-American

women "is their female enactment of black religious values that reflected an internal concern for the black community's survival and flourishing and a related external concern to address society's formal and conventional sources of inequality."

One of the earliest examples is Sojourner Truth, the former slave turned abolitionist and women's rights advocate. "Perhaps most important in Truth's moral vision is affirmation of her own human identity," Ross writes.

In the early 20th century, Nannie Helen Burroughs helped found and led the National Baptist Convention's Women's Convention, which supported education, the resettlement of black people moving to cities, and social and moral reform.

Both Ella Josephine Baker and Septima Poinsette Clark were college-educated professionals born around the turn of the last century who "not only carried on the work of improving African Americans' immediate material conditions but also saw the bigger picture and more possibilities. They helped inaugurate and shape the civil rights era," Ross writes.

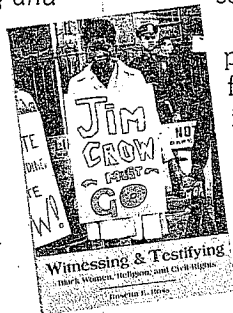
Women like DeLee and Fannie Lou Hamer, who both grew up in poverty and had limited formal education, had to deal with survival issues first for their own families before expanding into the needs of society. But once they became activists, their work was acknowledged, even by men.

Christian women were not the only ones with influence on the civil rights movement. In her book, Ross also profiles Clara Muhammad, who comes from the same generation as Baker and Clark but had less education and grew up in poverty. Muhammad and her husband, Elijah, founded the Nation of Islam. That Muslim organization's emphasis on black self-esteem and racial pride was the genesis of the black power movement that became a part of the civil rights movement.

Ross hopes the stories of some

later movement workers—Diane Nash and Ruby Doris Smith Robinson—will be inspiring to younger readers of her book. Both became active in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee while attending college in the late 1950s and early 1960s and served jail sentences for participating in sit-ins and other protests.

This article is excerpted from a United Methodist News Service press release, Jan. 29, 2003.



#### **The Flyer** Winter/Spring 2003 Vol. XXIII, No. 3-4

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**Editor:** Bonny Stalnaker Roth

The GCSRW, a national agency of the UMC, acts as an advocate, catalyst, and monitor to ensure the full participation and equality of women in the church.

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“...the Search for What Saves Us”

## Authors reflect on an important book on violence, atonement

Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker have published an important contribution to explorations of violence and atonement in their book *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering,*

*and the Search for What Saves Us*, published by Beacon Press, 2001.

The *Flyer* asked the authors to comment on how their book might be used by women in the church and by the General

Commission on the Status and Role of Women, in its role as advocate, catalyst and monitor on the status and role of women in the UMC. Here are their comments.

Brock and Parker respond, “We hope *Proverbs of Ashes* will be a valuable companion for women who do not see faith as doctrinal uniformity but as a journey, that includes sincere questioning of heart and mind and sincere searching to grow closer to God and be a more loving person.”

They continue, “We know many women have questions about faith, questions that are sometimes not fully formulated, but nag at the edges of their consciousness. We face honestly some of those very difficult questions such as: Does love require that I bear abuse willingly and believe it is for a good purpose? Why would a loving father want his beloved son to be executed by his enemies? How am I supposed to be grateful that a good person was tortured and murdered on my behalf? Does Jesus’ crucifixion really save the world, or is there another way to understand God’s salvation and the life of Jesus Christ?”

“We want women to feel strengthened and affirmed in their work to resist violence in their own lives and communities, especially violence against women and children, but also systemic violence such as

racism, homophobia, and war. We also want them to be inspired and challenged to read and explore further as they work out their own faith, grounded in scripture, tradition, reason, and experience, each of which we take seriously in the book.”

Brock and Parker emphasize, “Through the reading of *Proverbs of Ashes*, we want to encourage women to engage in reflection on their own life experience as a resource for doing theology, much as we do in the book. And we want, especially, for women to value their friendships as part of a journey toward God.”

In regard to the Commission, they reflect, “One important role for GCSRW is to continue advocating for women’s theological work, even when it challenges orthodox theology and doctrine. Christianity continues to be a living faith when it is applied to new situations and questions. Violence is not new, but much of what we know about it is, and, in the past the church did not condemn domestic violence and child abuse. Now it does and this new knowledge about violence must enter the faith journey.”

“Since we challenge the idea that violence was necessary to save the world, we think it is important for GCSRW to advocate for alternative resources for the ritual of communion, so that it doesn’t continue to present Jesus’ execution as ordained by God for our salvation. This new ritual also needs hymns and prayers to help us move in new, life-affirming directions that encourage us to resist violence. We also hope women in their own churches will create new liturgies, hymns, prayers, and ways of being together that do not celebrate violent death as saving.”

And finally, the authors point out, “We suggest that GCSRW encourage the United Methodist Women to include *Proverbs of Ashes* in their reading program and recommend it for local congregations to use in adult education study groups.” ●

**Flyer**

### National study seeks clergy-women who have experienced sexual harassment

Beth Cooper, campus minister at the Wesley Foundation, San Diego State University, is conducting a study of clergywomen who have experienced sexual harassment in a ministerial setting. Cooper invites women to contact her by e-mail or telephone to share their experiences. In May, a random sample of the women will be selected to complete the survey. For more information, contact Cooper at (619) 582-0772. E-mail: bcooper@mail.sdsu.edu. All information will be confidential. The research methods have been approved by Graduate and Research Affairs at SDSU.

### Deadline Nov. 29, 2003, for 2004 Genl. Conference petitions

Persons sending petitions to the 2004 General Conference should mail three copies to Gary W. Graves, petitions secretary, UM General Conference, P.O. Box 6, Beaver Dam, KY 42320, no later than Nov. 29, 2003. Petitions sent by commercial carriers (Federal Express, UPS, or DHL) should be sent to 302 N. Lafayette St., Beaver Dam, KY 42320. Petitions may also be faxed to (270) 274-4590 or e-mailed to petitions@umpublishing.org. See *The 2000 Book of Discipline*, Para. 507, for details on submissions.

### Resource for women in ministry wellness retreat

The National Council of Churches sponsored a wellness retreat last fall for women in professional ministry. Presentations and worship life at the retreat emphasized rich spirituality as essential for health and wholeness. For more information on the retreat, which is a model for others interested in developing such events, see *Women in Ministry: Birthing a New Vision of Health, Wellness and Identity* at [www.nccusa.org](http://www.nccusa.org).

### Notice

This issue combines the Winter 2003 and Spring 2003 editions of *The Flyer*. Subscribers will receive an extension of one issue for their 2003 subscription.



# Preparing for General Conference 2004

**W**hen approximately 1,000 delegates from around the world gather in Pittsburgh, PA, on April 27-May 7, 2004, their presence for this quadrennial happening will represent the equivalent of days and weeks of preparation by each individual, annual conference, and general board and agency. General Conference is the only body authorized to create and modify *The Book of Discipline*, United Methodism's "church law."

During the 2003 annual conference sessions, lay and clergy members of the annual conference will be electing the delegates to the 2004 General Conference and jurisdictional conferences.

The deliberations at General Conferences have been enriched by the participation of a significant number of women delegates. Although the numbers have been increasing, we cannot assume that women will automatically be elected. In fact, 2000 General Conference changes in the formula for election of delegates may result in fewer women being elected. Given the need for the whole church to be represented, the election of women delegates is important.

This supplement offers an overview of steps to help our readers prepare for these important elections.

## DATES AND EVENTS

### Annual conference 2003

Delegates to the 2004 General and Jurisdictional Conferences will be elected during 2003 annual conferences. Delegates and alternates from their respective annual conferences will meet several times between their election and General Conference to be oriented to the processes of General Conference, to discuss issues, and in some conferences to hold hearings in the conference among those concerned about particular issues.

### Deadline for petitions

Petitions must be postmarked by Nov. 29, 2003, 150 days before the opening day of the General Conference.

### General Conference 2004

April 27-May 7, 2004, Pittsburgh, PA

### Annual Conference 2003

Persons will be nominated for election by the Jurisdictional Conferences to serve for four years on general boards and agencies (in accordance with ¶ 705 of *The 2000 Book of Discipline*).

In 2004, episcopal candidates will be endorsed by annual conferences for consideration in their jurisdiction. At the present writing 16 bishops will retire: North Central, 2; Northeastern, 4; South Central, 4; Southeastern, 3; and Western, 2; and Central Conferences, 1.

### Jurisdictional Conferences 2004

Bishops are elected, general board and agency members are elected, and other jurisdictional business is carried forward for the following four years.

### Late summer 2004

Shortly after the Jurisdictional Conferences, nominating committees for each general agency will meet to nominate additional members as designated in the respective disciplinary paragraphs. The nominating committee for each agency is made up of three members from each jurisdiction elected to serve. General provisions are discussed in ¶ 706.

### Election of delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences

To begin . . .

- Make contact with other lay women and clergywomen in your annual conference about the upcoming elections.
- Know what *The 2000 Book of Discipline* says about election of delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences (see especially *The 2000 Book of Discipline*, ¶502, ¶513, ¶12, ¶21-23, ¶33, ¶ 34).
- Know the process for balloting in your annual conference. (This may vary from conference to conference.) Contact the secretary of your annual conference and your conference journals.
- Who is eligible to be elected? Among lay women? Among clergywomen? (It is important to name more than one person.) (REMINDER: Diaconal ministers who are now deacons in full connection are elected by clergy ballots.)
- How can their gifts and willingness to serve as a delegate be made known in the annual conference?
- How will the annual conference be reminded of the church's commitment to inclusiveness? (See ¶117 of *The 2000 Book of Discipline*.)

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# Ideas for action

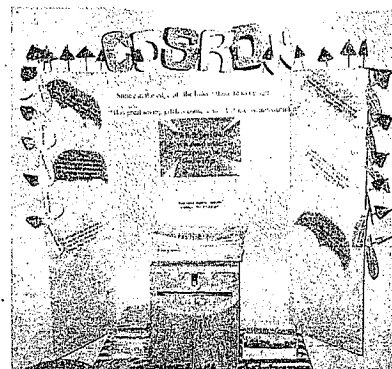
## Table displays at annual conference

As Annual Conference Commissions on the Status and Role of Women prepare for annual conference display tables, the Commission offers the following ideas for developing a display.

1. Download information (articles, bibliographies, etc.) from the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women website: [www.gcsr.org](http://www.gcsr.org). Display and/or distribute to attendees.
2. Display books and other educational resources (videos, Graded Press studies, etc.) related to inclusive language; relational and organizational power dynamics; sexual misconduct; historic Methodist women. Think globally. Also check with General Commission on Archives and History website ([www.gcah.org](http://www.gcah.org)); women church historians, theologians, worship leaders; and liturgies, meditations and prayers by women.
3. Display and/or distribute statistics related to clergy-women from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministries. General Council on Finance and Administration's statistics on clergy may be of interest to folks ([www.gcfa.org](http://www.gcfa.org)).
4. Display, distribute, and reproduce or subsidize individual copies of *The Flyer*, the GCSRW newsletter.
5. Display and/or distribute copies of the brochure, "What you in the congregation need to know about..." This excellent educational resource about clergy misconduct is available from GCSRW for 35¢ each.
6. Show the video, *Ask Before You Hug*, available from EcuFilm (Nashville, TN; (800) 251-4091). Show the

video, *Caring Shepherds*, available from the General Council on Finance and Administration Risk Management Department, (847) 869-3345.

7. Gather e-mail addresses and create an annual conference CSRW e-mail newsletter and/or chat-line. Be sure to create a purpose statement for each endeavor, such as for the sharing of worship ideas; liturgies; meeting guidelines for planning or development; issues/concerns related to women in ministry locally, conference, or nationwide; organizing or beginning an AC/CSRW.
8. Collect, copy and distribute copies of CSRW related articles from *The Interpreter*.
9. Distribute forms for monitoring women's participation in meetings to attendees to help raise their consciousness of meeting dynamics: who is in attendance and who isn't; who speaks and who doesn't; how are people recognized; etc. Monitoring ideas can be found in *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: Advocates for Inclusiveness, 2001-2004*.
10. Print and distribute the GCSRW and/or your AC/CSRW website address on stamps, cards, buttons, magnetized strips, labels, etc.



Kansas Conference CSRW "Parasol of Understanding" display at 2002 Annual Conference

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## General Conference 2004 from page 5

### What you need to know . . .

**Lay delegates** are elected by lay members of the annual conference.

*Eligibility:* Members in the United Methodist Church for at least two years prior to election; active participants in the United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election; members within the electing annual conference at the time of the General or jurisdictional conferences. (*The 2000 Book of Discipline*, ¶134).

**Clergy delegates** are elected by clergy members in full connection of the annual conference.

*Eligibility:* Members in full connection and traveling preachers in the United Methodist Church for at least four years next preceding their election; in full connection with the electing annual conference at the time of General or jurisdictional conferences. (*The 2000 Book of Discipline*,

¶133) (A constitutional amendment, ratified by the Council of Bishops in 1997, deleted the words regarding traveling preachers and four-year requirement. This allows deacons in full connection to be elected as clergy delegates.)

There are an equal number of lay and clergy delegates elected in accordance with the formula outlined in *The 2000 Book of Discipline*, ¶502.

The bishop and secretary of the annual conference have been informed of the number of delegates to be elected during the 2003 annual conference session.

Watch for additional information on preparing for General Conference 2004 in upcoming issues of *The Flyer*. See also the website of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, [www.gcsr.org](http://www.gcsr.org), and the United Methodist Church website, [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org).

# Resources

**The Art of Soul: An Artist's Guide to Spirituality**, Regina Coupar (Novalis, 2002). A useful volume that encourages readers to see, experience and create spiritual insights through the arts. Ideal for a self-guided retreat or group work. \$19.95.

**Blessed One: Protestant Perspectives on Mary**, Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Cynthia L. Rigby (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002). Widely respected Protestant scholars seek to answer three basic questions: Who is Mary? How does Mary's story intersect with contemporary life? And what does Mary teach us about God? \$19.95.

**A Charmed Life: The Spirituality of Potterworld**, Francis Bridger (Doubleday, 2002). Taking readers on a tour of Potterworld, Bridger shows that each adventure presents new ways of expressing and exploring key spiritual issues, from the meaning of justice, to the need to confront fears, to the debilitating effects of evil. The author demonstrates that it is their intrinsic human goodness, love, and friendship—not wizardry or magic—that allows them to triumph over evil. \$10.95.

**Constructing the Erotic: Sexual Ethics and Adolescent Girls**, Barbara J. Blodgett (Pilgrim Press, 2002). This text emphasizes an ethic of vulnerability and trust rather than sexual liberation. \$20.00.

**Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement** (University of Georgia, 2000). This collection of first-person accounts is riveting. Particularly powerful is the sharing about where the civil rights movement led these women. \$29.95.

**Dissident Daughters: Feminist Liturgies in Global Context**, ed. Teresa Berger (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002). This book gives voice to women activists who show how social, cultural, and political realities shaped them and their liturgies; and how they envision their lives in and as communities of faith. \$24.95.

**The Face Is Familiar: Remembering Unnamed Women in Scripture**, Louise, Mary, and Sue Westfall (Horizons: Presbyterian Women, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2003). Our Presbyterian USA sisters have given the Christian church a timeless gift in this recently released nine-lesson Bible study for use with small groups, retreats or other special events. The historic background, educational tips, clearly marked maps and stunning artistry are inspiring. This study is also available in Spanish and Koran translations. Contact PDS, (800) 524-2612.

**Family Abuse and the Bible: The Scriptural Perspective**, Aimee K. Cassidy-Shaw (The Haworth Press, 2002). This volume reconciles a Biblical interpretation of marriage with the reality of domestic violence. It combines close Biblical exegesis with psychological insight into the effects of verbal, sexual, physical, and spiritual abuse. \$19.95.

**God in the Balance: Christian Spirituality in Times of Terror**, Carter Heyward (Pilgrim Press, 2002). Heyward addresses religious and political vulnerability to terror by examining six images of God. \$14.00.

**Great Women of Faith: Inspiration for Action**, Sue Stanton (Paulist Press, 2003). This collection of 36 brief biographies of women addresses each woman's call from God and her work toward social justice and equality within the world. The text includes both well-known and lesser-known women and is a teaching tool for grades 4 and up, including adults. \$12.95.

**The Gospel According to Harry Potter: Spirituality in the Stories of the World's Favorite Seeker**, Connie Neal (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002). The author explores the world of magic and mystery created by J.K. Rowling alongside the stories and grand themes of the Bible. She demonstrates how the lessons in this series not only echo many of the stories in the Bible but reinforce the central messages of Christianity. \$12.95.

**Healing a Broken World: Globalization and God**, Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda (Fortress Press, 2002). Economics is a prime concern for feminist theology/theory. How to do justice in a globalized economy is the conundrum. \$20.00.

**Hope in the Holler: A Womanist Theology**, A. Elaine Brown Crawford (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002). This book identifies and analyzes the theological vision of hope voiced within the narratives of enslaved, emancipated, and contemporary black women and brings that vision into discussion with contemporary womanist theologies. \$14.95.

**Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics: An African Perspective**, Misimbi Kanyoro (Pilgrim Press, 2002). The author writes to bring the voices of rural African women to bear on theological thinking of both male and female scholars and calls for a theological understanding and accommodation of diversity. \$17.00.

**Jesus, Judaism, and Christian Anti-Judaism: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust**, ed. Paula Fredriksen and Adele Reinhartz (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002). These readable essays are arranged around the historical figures and canonical texts that matter most to Christian communities and whose interpretation has fed the negative characterizations of Jews and Judaism. \$19.95.

**Jesus of Nazareth**, Dorothee Soelle and Luise Schottroff (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002). The authors demonstrate how Jesus' works, words, and inspired community pose timeless challenges for contemporary life. \$14.95.

**Mother Roots: The Female Ancestors of Jesus**, Helen Bruch Pearson (Upper Room Books, 2002). This book focuses on the four women named in Matthew in the genealogy of Jesus: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. Each reflected turning points in the history of Israel and God's covenant people. \$15.00.

**Plenty Good Room: Women Versus Male Power in the Black Church**, Marcia Y. Riggs (Pilgrim Press, 2002). The author feels that sexism has been perpetrated by misuse of the scriptures and by circumscribing the role of women, and seeks to transform current discourse about sexual behavior and clergy misconduct. \$20.00.

**Return Blessings: Ecofeminist Liturgies Renewing the Earth**, Diann I. Neu (Pilgrim Press, 2002). This text contains liturgies illustrating spiritual, political, and educational actions to restore the Earth to its dignity. \$18.00.

**Sacred Choices: The Right to Contraception and Abortion in Ten World Religions**, Daniel C. Maguire (Fortress Press, 2002). The author shows the openness of the world's religions to positive views on sexual pleasure and flexibility on birth control and abortion. \$13.00.

**The Spiritual Activist: Practices to Transform Your Life, Your Work, and Your World**, Claudia Horwitz (Penguin Compass, 2002). A how-to manual for staying healthy and sane in life-long struggles for justice. \$16.00.

**With Love and With Work in the Worldwide Church** (WCC Publications, 2001). A collection of photos and stories, analysis and history about women who have made an enormous difference in ecumenical work worldwide. \$17.90.

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# Status Report

## Church women plan week-long vigil at White House

United Methodist Women will take their prayers for peace to Washington during the week following Easter.

The women will gather near the White House from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. daily, April 21-25, and continuously read from the more than 10,000 prayers that have been mailed to the organization from around the nation and world.

The prayers have arrived at the United Methodist Service Center in Cincinnati as part of the UMW's prayers for peace campaign. Each individually written prayer pleads for peace.

Participants gathering at the nation's capital will do so at their own expense. Directors from the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, the administrative arm of UMW, will begin each day with devotions and information at the United Methodist offices at Capitol Hill. Division staff will follow the day's prayer session with a debriefing and urge women to visit their members of Congress to share their concerns.

The Women's Division is encouraging UMW units that cannot make the

trip to Washington to participate in their own communities by assembling to read their prayers and by visiting their state capitals.

Joyce Sohl, deputy general secretary of the Women's Division, affirmed the importance of the prayers for peace, noting that women, children and youth "are the first to suffer in times of war, oppression and dispossession."

—United Methodist News Service,  
March 31, 2003

## United Methodist Men work to eradicate domestic violence

The National Association of Conference Presidents of United Methodist Men has committed to the "eradication of domestic violence within society, especially where it exists within United Methodist churches."

The association also "desires to join with the United Methodist Women in a joint effort to accomplish this goal." The action followed a workshop for the men's group led by Peggy Halsey, a staff member of the General Board of Global Ministries, during their meeting March 5-9 in Nashville.

"Why is domestic violence considered a woman's issue when it involves the whole family?" Halsey asked. Halsey reported that 31 percent of U.S. women say they have been physically or sexually assaulted by a boyfriend or a husband, and the statistics are not a lot better within the church. A 1992 survey found that 15 to 20 percent of United Methodist women report such abuse. Halsey said it is critical for men to be involved in the struggle.

Tracing the history of actions regarding domestic violence within the United Methodist Church, the veteran church executive said that in 1980 everyone agreed domestic violence was an issue that needed to be addressed, but most believed that such abuse was "out there" and not within the church. Surveys in 1982 and 1992 found that battering occurred only slightly less frequently within the denomination.

In order to be allies in the fight against domestic violence, men must listen to women and believe them; understand that women know that all

men are not batterers; understand that even men in high positions can be abusers; and challenge the attitudes and behavior of other men.

Following the workshop, the conference presidents committed to join with the United Methodist Women to accomplish this goal.

—UMNews, March 18, 2003

## Study examines why gay United Methodists stay in church

Despite the United Methodist Church's restrictive policies regarding homosexuality, many gays and lesbians remain in the denomination because they feel accepted at their local churches.

That's a key finding of a study conducted by Jamie Bigham Stroud of Philadelphia, a marriage and family therapist licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The longtime United Methodist conducted her research as part of a doctoral dissertation for the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality in San Francisco.

"Many have said it's the local church that keeps them connected, not the denomination as a whole," Stroud told United Methodist News Service in a Nov. 4, 2002, interview. "People say it's their heritage or identity."

As a child growing up in the denomination, Stroud said she was taught that everyone was welcome in a Methodist church. When she grew older, she realized that some people weren't as welcome as others.

Three years ago, Stroud, married and the mother of three adult daughters, joined the board of the Reconciling Ministries Network, which advocates for the full inclusion of people of "all sexual orientations and gender identities" in the church. She now serves as the national coordinator of that group's Parents Reconciling Network.

Through that work, as well as friendships with gays active in the church, and a situation with her youngest daughter not being able to have a union ceremony performed by a United Methodist pastor or in a United Methodist church, Stroud became

## Resources from page 7

**Witnessing and Testifying: Black Women, Religion, and Civil Rights**, ed. Rosetta E. Ross (Fortress, 2003). The author profiles seven civil rights activists, but also draws on their predecessors. Each biography is followed by commentary on the individual's religious motivation and moral vision. \$23.00.

**Women and the Authority of Scripture: A Narrative Approach**, Sarah Heaner Lancaster (Trinity Press, 2002). Lancaster argues that women can legitimately criticize those things in scripture that help maintain a patriarchal world without having to deny the authority of scripture altogether. \$24.00.

**Women's Rites: Feminist Liturgies for Life's Journey**, Diann I. Neu (Pilgrim Press, 2002). Neu presents an assortment of new feminist liturgies that celebrate and pay tribute to women's physical, spiritual, and emotional rites of passage. \$21.



curious about why gays and lesbians remained with the denomination.

She based her dissertation on the responses of 358 people who primarily identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual, although she is continuing to accept questionnaires and will incorporate new responses before publishing the information in a book.

Many respondents shared an active involvement in the local church, bolstering the finding that the congregation was key to keeping them in the denomination.

Other factors that help retain the connection are the denomination's Wesleyan theology, historic focus on social justice, availability of welcoming or reconciling congregations and just plain stubbornness, according to Stroud. People who said they were stubborn "also indicated they weren't just sitting back and letting it be. They were speaking up in many instances, where they could, to work for change."

Not surprisingly, respondents expressed negative feelings about denominational policies that declare the practice of homosexuality to be "incompatible with Christian teaching" and prohibit the ordination of gay people and union ceremonies for same-sex couples. The major difference in response between clergy and laity, Stroud said, is that people who were not clergy didn't experience as much limitation as to what they could do in the local church. More information about Stroud's study and an opportunity to respond to the questionnaire are available at [www.GUMresearch.org](http://www.GUMresearch.org), her web site.

—UMNews Service, Nov. 6, 2002

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## **Theological statement adopted by Reconciling Ministries Network Clergy**

A group of United Methodist clergy concerned with the full inclusion of all persons regardless of sexual orientation released a theological statement following its Oct. 21–23, 2002, meeting in Nashville.

The 25-member leadership team of the Reconciling Ministries Clergy affirmed that human sexuality is a good gift from God. However, the clergy from across the nation noted that when sexuality is misused "it holds the power to do harm." "We understand this gift is most fully realized in a context of covenant," said the group formerly known as the Clergy Alliance.

"Responsible use of sexuality is not dependent on the gender of a partner; rather, it is based upon faithful, mature, loving, and mutually respectful expression of that gift. When we so live out our sexuality, we are drawn into ever deepening relationships with others and with God."

Representing 1,650 clergy who have signed the Reconciling United Methodists Statement of Inclusion, the group revised and approved "A Working Statement of Faith" from the Theology Task Force, co-chaired by Philip Wogaman and Mary Kraus. That statement affirms that "the nature and purpose of God are most fully disclosed in Jesus Christ, who comes among us as One filled with grace—teaching, challenging systemic injustice, expressing love, embracing those who have been rejected." This is the third meeting this year of the clergy organization.—*Reconciling Ministries Network press release, Oct. 29, 2002*

The full text of the statement follows:

### **Theological Statement of Reconciling Ministries Clergy Alliance** October 23, 2002 Scarritt-Bennett Center Nashville, TN

We believe in a loving God whose blessed creation is both good in itself and the precondition of grace and covenant.

We believe that the nature and purpose of God are most fully disclosed in Jesus Christ, who comes among us as One filled with grace — teaching, challenging systemic injustice, expressing love, embracing those who have been rejected.

We believe in the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, present always as an expression of Divine love, drawing us into the heart of God and into new visions of human possibility.

We believe that humankind, though fallible and inclined toward sin, both personal and systemic, is created in the image of God.

We recognize that humankind stands always in need of Divine grace, and we humbly confess that the ways of God greatly transcend the grasp of human understanding.

We believe that God draws us into deeper theological understanding through the gifts of scripture, tradition, experience, and reason.

We believe that the church is the Body of Christ, alive and at work in the world. It is God's intended human community of love and grace — a sign of God's reign.

We believe, at this critical juncture in our common history as United Methodists, that God has called us to speak a clear word concerning human sexuality.

We believe that human sexuality is a good gift from God; however, when misused, it holds the power to do harm.

We understand this gift is most fully realized in a context of covenant. Responsible use of sexuality is not dependent on the gender of a partner; rather, it is based upon the faithful, mature, loving, and mutually respectful expression of that gift. When we so live out our sexuality, we are drawn into ever deepening relationships with others and with God. ●

# Ovations

To **Cynthia Abrams**, director of the National United Methodist Native American Center in Claremont, CA, who has been named the program director for alcohol and other addictions at the General Board of Church and Society.

To **Dalila Cruz**, a laywoman in the Rio Grande Conference, and **Amy Gerhart Sage**, a clergywoman in the Missouri Conference, who have been named co-conveners of the Women's Leadership Team in the South Central Jurisdiction, a group calling for the inclusion of women and men of color in the episcopacy.

To **Laila Riksaasen Dahl**, who was ordained as bishop of the Diocese of Tunsberg in southeastern Norway. She is Norway's second female Lutheran bishop; most Nordic countries have female bishops.

To **Gloria Holt**, president of the United Methodist Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders, North Alabama Conference lay leader, and a founding member of Clear Branch United Methodist Church in Trussville, AL, who has been chosen to deliver the Laity Address at the 2004 General Conference.

To **Velma Love**, a United Methodist student at Claremont (CA) School of Theology, who has received a scholarship funded by the National Council of Churches Bible royalties and named for Melvin G. Talbert, a retired UMC bishop and former NCC president.

To **Brooke Newell**, pastor of Park United Methodist Church in Hamilton, NY, who will become a seminar designer at the General Board of Church and Society.

To **Gwen E. Redding**, who has been named director of UMCOR Sager Brown in Baldwin, LA, a General Board of Global Ministries facility that ships resources

throughout the world and provides volunteer opportunities.

To **Jean Miller Schmidt**, professor of church history at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, who will receive the 2003 Distinguished Service Award for her work in women's history within Methodism from the General Commission on Archives and History.

To **Judy Smith**, formerly executive director of publishing, who has been named to the newly created post of associate to the president/chief administrative officer at the United Methodist Publishing House.

To **Carole Vaughn**, who is the new associate council director of communications for the Virginia Conference. Vaughn, a certified Christian educator, comes to the position after serving as the conference's director of discipleship and children's ministries since 1991.

To **Jennifer Woodruff**, who has been named librarian at the General Commission on Archives and History. ☉

## Worth Repeating . . .

"Spiritual struggles can only be resolved through spiritual means. Let us use our spiritual armor and focus on bringing resolution to this worldly warfare in the heavenly realms through our faith, our praises, and our prayers. Let us hold a vision for a future of peace and justice and speak to it through the witness of our written and spoken voices."

—Linda Lee, bishop, Michigan Area

# Ideas for Action

from page 6

11. List the clergywomen and laywomen and supportive churches who have served in ministries throughout your AC, both past and present.
  12. On a graffiti board, have AC delegates list the women who have been influential in their faith life. Call it something like "These Clouds of Witnesses..."
  13. Ask in a pre-AC mailing for attendees to bring pictures of women who have been important to their faith life. Display and/or scan them for a media presentation. Display pictures of AC and local church CSRW leaders and members.
  14. Distribute inclusive language vocabulary lists or ideas.
- Send GCSRW a photo of your display tables!

Collect information about the women of leadership, especially clergywomen, for the 2006 celebration of UMC women receiving full clergy rights.

For more information, contact Kim Coffing, assistant to the general secretariat in program and constituency services, GCSRW, (800) 523-8390. E-mail: gcsr@cgfa.org ☉

## You can help support women in the Church—Subscribe to *The Flyer*

**The Flyer** invites you to subscribe and thus demonstrate your support for women in the United Methodist Church. As the primary communication tool of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, **The Flyer** offers its readers updates on women's issues and resources for annual conference and local church women's groups. Your subscription will guarantee four issues of **The Flyer** for one year.

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# Women pray for peace

By Diann I. Neu and Mary E. Hunt

As women around the world strive to be faithful in the midst of war and rumors of war, The Flyer offers the following prayers, reprinted by permission, as a way of drawing closer to one another and to God.

Excerpts from WATERwheel, Winter 2002-3. Reprinted with the permission of Diane Neu, dneu@hers.com, (301) 589-2509. These prayers were used on Feb. 12, 2003, in front of the White House when WATER women joined Code Pink for the Women for Peace Vigil. We dedicated each hour to a special intention. Use this as a model for your community witness for peace.

## 9 am Intention

Reading: "Praying with the Beatitudes," author unknown, from the Ecumenical Women's Prayer Vigil in the Philippines

BLESSED ARE...

BLESSED ARE THE POOR

Not the penniless but those whose hearts are free.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN

Not those who whimper but those who raise their voices.

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

Not the soft but those who are patient and tolerant.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE

Not those who whine but those who struggle.

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

Not those who forget but those who forgive.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PURE IN HEART

Not those who act like angels but those whose life is transparent.

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

Not those who shun conflict but those who face it squarely.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR JUSTICE

Not because they suffer but because they love.

## Noon Intention

### Calls for Peace

Throughout time women have called for peace. Let us listen to a few examples.

"It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it."

—Eleanor Roosevelt, radio broadcast (1951),  
in Joseph P. Lash, *Eleanor: The Years Alone* (1972)

"You can't shake hands with a clenched fist."

—Indira Gandhi, in *The Christian Science Monitor* (1952)

"September 11 changed the world. Our deepest fears now haunt us. Yet I am convinced that military action will not prevent further acts of international terrorism against the United States."

—Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) who cast the only vote in opposition to S.J. Res. 23, *Authorizing the Use of Military Force* (2001)

"New horrors require new moral creativity. The tragic events of September 11 challenge people of good will, especially religious people, to find new ways of handling conflict and dealing with difference."

—Mary E. Hunt, "A Call for Moral Creativity," *WATERwheel* (2001)

"The quietly pacifist peaceful / always die / to make room for men / who shout." —Alice Walker, "The QPP," *Revolutionary Petunias* (1971)

"I hope women will not copy the vices of men. I hope they will not go to war; I wish men would not. I hope they will not be contentious politicians; I am sorry that men are. I hope they will not regard their freedom as a license to do wrong! I am ashamed to acknowledge that men do." —Mrs. Elizabeth Jones, *Women's Rights Convention, 1960, History of Woman Suffrage, I*, (1881)

"I want that there should be a belief, a faith in the possibility of removing mountains to the side of right. If we believe that war is wrong, as everyone must, then we ought to believe that by proper efforts on our part, it may be done away with." —Lucretia Mott, in *Woman on War*

"The struggle to maintain peace is immeasurably more difficult than any military operation."

—Anne O'Hare McCormick, in *Julia Edwards' Women of the World* (1988)

"Acquire inner peace and a multitude will find their salvation near you." —Catherine de Hueck Doherty, *Poustinia* (1975)

"We may have to learn that listening to those to whom no one listens at all may be the only power that's really effective."

—Joan Chittister, OSB, in *Sifting Through What We Are Left With from the Intercommunity Center from Justice and Peace* (2001)

## 3 pm Intention

### Prayer

(Two children read, alternating line by line.)

1. Dear God, that's the name Christians call you.

2. Dear Allah, that's the name Muslims call you.

1. Dear Love, that's the name many call you.

2. Dear Spirit, that's the name others call you.

1. We pray for the children who live in the U.S.

2: We pray for the children who live in Iraq.

1. We pray for kids who eat three meals a day.

2. We pray for those who can't find food to steal.

1. We pray for children who give their parents kisses every day.

2. We pray for those whose moms and dads were killed in war.

1. Dear God of many names, give peace to all the children of the world.

2. Dear God of many names, give peace to the whole world.

### Sending Forth

Go forth committed to work for world peace.

May peace be before us and behind us, beside us and around us.

May peace be above us and below us, inside us and throughout the world.

Diann L. Neu, D.Min., and Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., are co-founders and co-directors of WATER. WATER (Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual) is a feminist educational center, a network of justice-seeking people that began in 1983 in response to the need for theological, ethical and liturgical development for and by women. For more information, phone (301) 589-2509. Fax: (301) 589-3150. E-mail: water@hers.com. Website: www.hers.com/water.





**The General Commission on the  
Status and Role of Women**  
in the United Methodist Church  
1200 Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201

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



## Books explore two journeys out of slavery— Exodus, US African American Methodists

The annual spiritual growth study published by the Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries, weaves the story of escape from slavery by the Hebrews into the journey out of slavery by African American Methodists in the United States. *Exodus: The Journey to Freedom*, by Christine and Bernard Keels is designed for use in Schools of Mission, congregations and United Methodist Women's units throughout the United Methodist Church. Christine Keels is a former member of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

According to Women's Division information about the study, *Exodus* is a spiritual journey of escape from slavery. Likewise, the fabric of Methodism includes the threads of the journey out of slavery toward freedom by African Americans and all Methodists. The histories of our divided Methodist family—African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, United Methodists, and Christian

Methodist Churches—remind us that we have not reached the Promised Land. As talks of reunion are broached, we know that unless we understand the spiritual crises created by slavery, racism, and the divisions of the Methodist family, we will never be equipped to move into the freedom of reunion.

The accompanying study guide provides Bible study, worship, group exercises and other tools to make this a journey where no one is left behind. The book and guide take us through slavery, abolition, war, anti-lynching, segregation, and civil rights while helping us see the parallels in the church structures and practices which lead to the idolatry of race.

This book introduces readers to the historic Black denominations and Black history within United Methodism. The Women's Division website at [gbgm-umc.org/umw/exodus](http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/exodus) provides additional extensive resources. The study's focus on African American real-

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ities responds to the immediate reunion conversations and is understood to be part of the wide range of racial and ethnic oppressions. It takes its place among the multitude of voices raised against the claim, "We just didn't know." Jesus made it clear that ignorance is not an excuse when he said, "When you've done it to the least of these, you've done it unto me."

The study costs \$6.00 plus shipping and can be ordered through Service Center (800) 305-9857. A youth book and video are also available. ☉