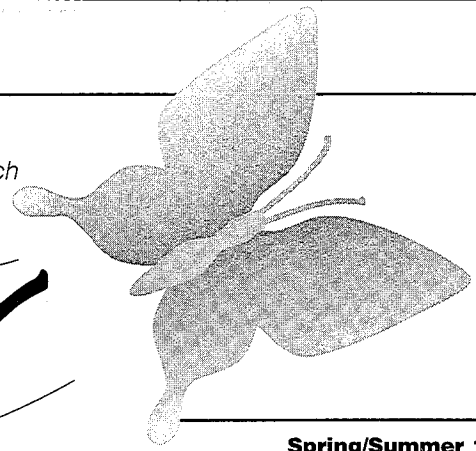


The Flyer



Vol XIX, No. 2

Spring/Summer 1999

Struggle continues with UMC stand

GCSRW uses holy conferencing to foster open discussion on homosexuality and inclusiveness

At its February 25-28 meeting, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) continued to struggle with the United Methodist Church's statements on homosexuality and holy union ceremonies. In contrast with the UMC's version of the struggle, as played out in March in the trial of the Rev. Greg Dell (see page 9, "Dell stands firm on same-sex unions"), the Commission engaged in holy conferencing, a process of discussion aimed at allowing all persons to speak their consciences in a safe, supportive environment.

Two proposals sparked the discussion: a statement on inclusive ministry and a statement in support of clergy who have performed holy union services for same-gender couples. In addition, the Commission continued the holy conferencing, begun at its September meeting, on the question of becoming a reconciling commission, a designation that would affirm and welcome on the Commission the full participation of all persons regardless of sexual orientation.

Throughout the discussion, a recurring question emerged: If the goal of the Commission is the full and equal participation of all women in the life of the church, then how does the Commission respond to a situation that prohibits the inclusion of all women?

Passionate and sometimes painful

discussion resulted in consensus on an agreement to prepare and consider at its September 1999 meeting a position paper on inclusiveness for consideration as a resolution to send to General Conference 2000.

As the Commission considered how to support inclusiveness, some members voiced their recognition of the contradictions within scripture and Social Principles. Some members expressed the desire to stay within the bounds of obedience to the law. According to one cler-

gywoman, "Church law is now clear. We might disagree, but the law is clear. This document [statement in support of those who have performed holy union services] gives encouragement to persons who violate church law."

A clergyman asked, "If we don't take a stand like this, aren't we compromising who we are?"

To which a laywoman responded, "I believe it is who we are about as a Commission, but we are a general agency

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Reed inaugurated as president of Philander Smith College

A former member of the general secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women has been inaugurated as president of Philander Smith College in Little Rock, AR. Trudie Kibbe Reed, who served the Commission from 1977 to 1984, was inaugurated on February 27, 1999. She is the first woman to serve as president of this historically black college.

Members, guests, and staff of the Commission participated in Reed's inauguration activities during their Feb. 25-28 meeting in Little Rock. They attended portions of a Black Family Studies Seminar held that weekend to launch the new Black Family Studies program Reed has developed.

On Friday, Dr. Geneva Gay, professor of education, University of Washington Seattle, gave the Seminar luncheon keynote address, "Educating



Trudie Kibbe Reed, right, accepts greetings from Pat Callbeck Harper as she prepares to be inaugurated as president of Philander Smith College, Little Rock, AR. Reed served as a member of the Commission's general secretariat from 1977 to 1984. Harper is serving as a consultant to the Commission on monitoring full and equal participation during General Conference 2000.

Us About Us." In her remarks, Gay emphasized the importance of fostering an ongoing community understanding of black families and institutions as a founda-

continued on page 2

Special Supplements:

Preparing Petitions for General Conference p. 5

From My Perspective: Barbara Thompson p. 7

?Cuántas clérigas hispanas?

?Cuántas clérigas hispanas hay en la Iglesia Metodista Unida?*

Suerpintendentes de distrito	3
Presbíteras	38
Diáconos	22
Pastoras locales	20
Asociadas	1
Total	84

* Estos datos no incluyen las ordenaciones y nombramientos del 1998. Información provista por la Junta General de Educación Superior y Ministerio. From *el Intérprete*, Abril 1999

How many Hispanic clergywomen are in the United Methodist Church?*

District superintendents	3
Elders	38
Deacons	22
Local pastors	20
Associate members	1
Total	84

* These numbers do not include the names of those ordained in 1998. Information is provided by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. From *el Intérprete*, April 1999

Reed *continued from page 1*

tion for building the future. While recognizing the tension between remaining and becoming, she pointed out benefits for this program, including giving back resources to the community and enhanced empowerment of young people.

In the afternoon session, Dr. Maulana Karenga, professor and chair, Department of Black Studies, California State University Long Beach, and widely acclaimed as the creator of Kwanzaa, pointed out the importance of Black studies as a means for dialogue with African culture. One of the goals of multicultural study, underscored by Karenga, is to "respect not just the person, but the person in the culture."

Cecelia Long, member of the Commission's general secretariat, contributed to the actual inauguration of Reed by reading scripture. ■

Visit the Commission on the web:

www.umc.org/gcsrww

Church's struggle *continued from page 1*

of The United Methodist Church. We have to be careful about taking a stand against the Discipline that mandates us. It's tough because I'm trying to be a leader in my conference on behalf of women...but I dare say [if I were to support clergy conducting holy union services] I would never be elected... I could be denied the opportunity as one of the few women delegates from my conference to go to jurisdictional conference and vote for a woman candidate for bishop that we need so badly, along with other justice issues for women in the jurisdiction."

Another clergywoman lifted up others who have challenged structures: "I want us to remember that we are within the institution that we love, that we want to change. Remember others within institutions who broke the law: Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, Francis Asbury, Harriet Tubman, John Wesley, Jesus Christ. They broke the law and stepped out of their place."

Echoing that perspective, another member urged, "I do think it's a justice issue and I do think that it's discrimination and oppression. I quote from the Yellow

Ribbon in which Thelma Stevens writes, 'The year 1972 finds a great many women tired of waiting to be full and equal and responsible participants in the total life of the church.' I would add that there are some other people who are tired of waiting, too. 'Small tokens and symbols of power are not enough in the church of Jesus Christ.' And then she goes on, 'Its roots are centuries old, but oppressions, visible and invisible, intentional and unintentional, have dwarfed both tree and branch.'

In the context of responding to oppression, a laywoman emphasized, "We cannot prioritize oppression...As the saying goes, 'Until everyone is free, no one is free.'"

The overall discussion highlighted the heartfelt concerns of United Methodists living out their ministries in the midst of ethical dilemmas, matters of conscience, and conflict within the broader church. Repeatedly, members recognized that their discussion, with its depth of concern and respect for one another, differed significantly from those that occur within parliamentary processes that lead to votes for or against a position. ■

Spring/Summer 1999

Vol. XIX, No. 2

The Flyer

The Flyer is published four times yearly by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) in the United Methodist Church (UMC) as a communication link with the 68 Annual Conference Commissions on the Status and Role of Women (ACCSRWs). Primary distribution of *The Flyer* is through the ACCSRWs; individual subscriptions, available through the GCSRW, are \$7.50.

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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Spring Meeting at CCSRW

Members and staff of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women addressed a range of issues at their Feb. 25-28 meeting in Little Rock, AR. From witnessing portions of the inauguration weekend of Trudie Kibbe Reed as president of Philander Smith College to hearing a report from the Connectional Process Team to holy conferencing on emerging legislative issues to dinner and holy communion in the episcopal residence of Janice Riggle Huie—Commission members continued their witness and work to bring about the full and equal participation and responsibility of women in The United Methodist Church.



Commission members listen to ideas and questions of students of Philander Smith College. Taking notes on left is Lynn Baker with Charlotte Fitzsimons, both Commission members, seated on same row. In back are Kiyoo Fujui, former member of the general secretariats and member Dean Yamamoto.



From left, Commission member Beth Brown, former member JoAnn Miles, and member Francis E. W. Guidry enjoy their reunion at Philander Smith College.



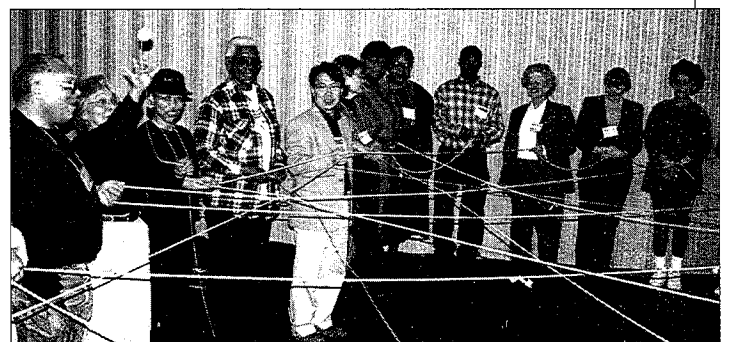
Dr. Maulana Karenga, professor and chair, Department of Black Studies, California State University Long Beach, and widely acclaimed as the creator of Kwanzaa, addresses the Black Family Studies Seminar at Philander Smith College.



During a table talk session, Commission members and guests consider the UMC and its position on homosexuality: from left, Martha Forrest, Mark Miller, Rose Arroyo, guest Loyce Newton Edwards, and Francis Guidry.



Guests at the Little Rock meeting of the Commission include from left: Lucille Miller, United Methodist Women (UMW) vice president, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference; Anna Gail Workman, Connectional Process Team; David Baker, spouse of Conna Missionary, Lynn Baker; Mary Lou Martin, UMW, North Arkansas Conference; Mary Brown, UMW vice president, Texas Conference; Martha McHenry, UMW district president, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference; Loyce Newton Edwards, CSRW chairperson, Oklahoma Conference; Elizabeth Andrews, CSRW chairperson, Alabama-West Florida Conference; Jeannette Bragg, UMW conference social action, Missouri East Conference; Pat Winburne, UMW treasurer, Memphis Conference; and Trina Bose, Connectional Process Team.



During closing worship, Commission members toss a ball of yarn around the circle to symbolize unity with one another. From left are Sherman Harris, Charlotte Fitzsimons, administrative assistant Cynthia Anglin, consultant Ethel Johnson, Dean Yamamoto, Alice Yun Chai, Joyce Waldon Bright, guest Loyce Newton Edwards, Martin Roberson, guest Elizabeth Andrews, guest Mary Lou Martin, and Martha Forrest.

GCSRW continues emphasis on intersection of racism and sexism

"People do not really understand that the sins of racism and sexism are embedded in the systems and institutions of church and society," says Barbara Ricks Thompson, recently retired general secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race and former president of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW). "So even as the institutions and systems say they can address the sins from within, that is only one step in overcoming sexism and racism."

In a recent interview with *The Flyer*, Thompson reflected on her decades of work to eradicate racism and sexism. As she reviewed the progress that has been made in The United Methodist Church in recent years, she emphasized the need for continued vigilance. "I believe there is a need to more forthrightly address the issues of the

intersection of racism and sexism. Our church is becoming more multiculturally diverse. We claim many ethnic groups in our membership—African, African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Filipino—as well as persons of European heritage. So the challenge increases in magnitude," continued Thompson.

Cecelia Long, member of the general secretariat of GCSRW, agreed with Thompson's perspective. According to Long, "Barbara's comments highlight the ongoing concern held by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women for the ways in which sexism and racism are so intricately intertwined and difficult to name and combat."

Long continues, "In The United Methodist Church, there is an underlying assumption that if you have women of

any color in any leadership position, neither racism nor sexism exists. It seems to me, however, that we must be even more vigilant in assuring that the treatment of women in leadership positions is not any different from that of men in the same positions.

"We must shift our focus from the numbers of women in leadership," emphasizes Long, "to understanding and recognizing the difference in the treatment or attitude about women, especially women of color. There are different expectations which are not expressed but which are lived out in the institutional life. The difference in treatment of women of color is very difficult to describe, but it certainly is felt by many women who have experienced it. We must continue to name the intersection of racism/sexism in order to be aware of its damaging effects." ■

(See p. 7 for the full interview with Barbara Ricks Thompson.)

Ovations

To **Ellen Jeffery Blue**, of Olla, LA., and a graduate student at Tulane University, who has received a Dempster Graduate Fellowship from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry for the 1999-2000 academic year.

To **Barbara Brokhoff**, general evangelist for the Florida Annual Conference, who has received the 1999 Philip Award, given by the National Association of United Methodist Evangelists in Dallas. She is the first United Methodist clergywoman to receive the award.

To **Carrie Lou Goddard** and **Ethel R. Johnson**, for whom the Goddard-Johnson Chair of Christian Education has been established at Africa University by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in partnership with the Christian Educators Fellowship and Africa University. The endowed chair is named in memory of Carrie Lou Goddard, who died Feb. 25, and was a former professor of Christian education at Scarritt College in Nashville and an editor of children's

curriculum at the United Methodist Publishing House. Johnson, a consultant with the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, is a former professor of Christian education at Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Since retiring, she has given extensive time to the church by providing leadership and training in Christian education in the African countries of Zimbabwe, Liberia, Nigeria and Kenya.

To **Marilynn M. Huntington**, director of Conference Council on Ministries, California-Pacific Conference, who has been honored for her 40 years of ministry by Claremont School of Theology with the Marilyn M. Huntington Scholarship fund.

To **Evie Jo Wilson**, long-time member of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Houston, who has received the 1999 Stanley S. Kresge Award, given annually by the United Methodist Foundation for Christian Higher Education to recognize dedication to United Methodist higher education. ■

Resources

Knowing Her Place: Gender and the Gospels, Anne Thurston (Paulist Press, 1999). A fresh look at thirteen familiar stories from the New Testament, read from a woman's perspective. \$12.95.

Praising God: The Trinity in Christian Worship, Ruth C. Duck and Patricia Wilson-Kastner (Westminster John Knox, 1999). The text offers practical suggestions about how to compose worship, using metaphor, analogy, and images and concludes with new worship resources expressing trinitarian faith in accessible contemporary language. \$22.00.

Telling the Truth: Preaching about Sexual and Domestic Violence, John S. McClure and Nancy J. Ramsay, eds. (Pilgrim Press, 1999). The authors assemble wisdom of experts from across disciplines and denominations who analyze biblical and theological issues, present pastoral resources, and discuss preaching strategies as related to sexual and domestic violence. \$15.95.

Women and Redemption: A Theological History, Rosemary Radford Ruether (Fortress, 1998). This scholarly book is a valuable study of the complex history of redemption and how that has affected women who claim redemption through Christ. \$19.00

Women Pioneers for the Environment, Mary Joy Breton (Northeastern Univ., 1998). Here are sketches of over 40 women environmentalists and their inspiring stories focusing on a variety of environmental issues. \$26.95.

Copy deadlines To ensure inclusion of job announcements, calendar items, and other items to be published in *The Flyer*, please submit written details to the editor by June 15, 1999 for the Summer/Fall 1999 issue and by August 15, 1999 for the Fall/Winter 1999 issue. Send to: Bonny Stalnaker Roth, GCSRW, 1200 Davis St., Evanston, IL 60201. (800) 523-8390. You may also submit information through e-mail: gcsr@gcfa.org.



Preparing Petitions for General Conference Make Your Petitions Count!

An important process for General Conference decision making gets underway this year: preparation of petitions. Petitions provide a means for groups and individuals throughout the church to suggest action to be taken by the 2000 General Conference. Here's how the process works.

Legislative committees may divide into subcommittees to read and consider each petition on a particular topic or issue. They may recommend acceptance, amendment, or rejection of

each. This is no small task considering that 3,009 petitions were sent to the 1996 General Conference.

Legislative committees then vote concurrence or nonconcurrency on the recommendations and report their actions to the full General Conference. The plenary session eventually votes on the committees' recommendations.

The following guidelines have been adapted from United Methodist Communications web site on General Conference 2000: www.umc.org/gc2000/index.html.

Guidelines for writing petitions

Petitions to General Conference usually cover a wide range of topics, from proposals to restructure the entire denomination to mandating a new work area for local churches. Your petition should address a particular area of concern about church law and covenant; suggest changes in the church's structure; or create, delete or modify a statement on a social, economic, moral or theological issue.

When preparing a petition for General Conference, it is best to:

1. Type (double spaced) or print petitions.
2. Use as few words as possible to make your point.
3. Refer to a dictionary, church directory, *The 1996 Book of Discipline*, and/or the *The 1996 Book of Resolutions* to ensure accuracy.
4. When suggesting changes in *The 1996 Book of Discipline*, clearly indicate portions to be added or deleted.
5. Use boldface for additions and strike-outs for deletions, or double underline for additions and single underline for deletions, etc.
6. Understand that sending the same petition in quantity is wasted effort and money, although all will be counted and kept on file.

Guidelines for submitting petitions

Any United Methodist individual or group may send in petitions. Guidelines for submitting petitions are contained in *The 1996 Book of Discipline*, par. 507, which stipulates that:

1. The petition must be sent to the secretary of the General Conference or a designated petitions secretary in a format determined by the secretary of the General Conference.
2. Each petition must address only one issue if the *Discipline* is not affected; if the *Discipline* is affected, each petition must address only one paragraph of the *Discipline*, except that, if two or more paragraphs in the *Discipline* are so closely related that a change in one affects the others, the petition may call for the amendment of those paragraphs also to make them consistent with one another.

3. Each petition must be signed by the person submitting it, accompanied by appropriate identification, such as address, local church, or United Methodist board or agency relationship. Each petition submitted by fax or electronic mail must identify the individual submitting it, accompanied by identification as above, and must contain a valid electronic mail return address or return fax number by which the submitter can be reached. Electronic signatures will be accepted in accordance with common business practice.
4. All petitions submitted to the General Conference, except those submitted by individual members of The United Methodist Church and local church groups, which call for the establishment of new programs or the expansion of existing programs will be invalid unless accompanied by supporting data that address the issue of anticipated financial requirements of the program.
5. Petitions must be postmarked by a national postal service no later than 150 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference.
6. If petitions are transmitted by a means other than a national postal service, they must be in the hands of the petitions secretary no later than 150 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference. Exceptions to the time limitations shall be granted for petitions originating from an annual conference session held between 150 and 45 days prior to the opening session of the General Conference, and for other petitions at the discretion of the Committee on Reference.
7. For the first time, petitions can be filed by e-mail. They should be sent to petitions@umpublishing.org and the e-mail should include the petitioner's phone number. The preference for e-mail attachments is Microsoft Word, but they may also be submitted in Microsoft Excel and WordPerfect.
8. Petitions sent by mail should be addressed to: Sheila McGee, Petitions Secretary, P.O. Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202. For questions related to petitions, call (615) 749-6488.

Watch for additional information on preparing for General Conference 2000 in upcoming issues of *The Flyer*.

Connectional Process Team releases report

In February, the UMC's Connectional Process Team (CPT) began distributing its draft report across the denomination. In September, CPT members will prepare the final version that will go to the 2000 General Conference in Cleveland, May 2-12..

The first draft of the CPT report, running to an estimated 22,000 words, and a response document are being mailed across the church and will be available on the church's web page. The 38-member CPT was created by the 1996 General Conference to "manage, guide and promote a transformational direction" for the denomination as it moves into the 21st century.

To read the report from the web site, contact www.umc.org/cpt/report. Responses are invited by clicking on "Survey" on that web page.

GCCUIC offers grants from Local Diversity Fund

Annual conferences and local churches are invited to apply for a grant from the Local Diversity Dialogue Fund of the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (GCCUIC).

The purpose of the fund is to encourage and enable local churches, districts, and annual conferences to implement dialogues on issues arising from the theological diversity existing in the United Methodist Church today.

GCCUIC offers the document "In Search of Unity" as a resource and a model.

For information on guidelines and an application, contact GCCUIC, re: Local Diversity Dialogues Fund, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 1300, New York, NY 10115-0122. (212) 749-3553. (800) 633-8936. Fax: (212) 749-3556. E-mail: gccuic@gccuic-umc.org

UMR Communications launches new web site

For those who enjoy surfing the net, the new site Good Works Online features ministry and programming ideas and success stories from churches of every denomination, information about recommended web sites, and more.

To check out the site, go to www.goodworksonline.com. ■

Calendar

Sept. 22-25

The Whole Woman: Body and Image, Scarritt-Bennett Center, Nashville. This three-day seminar is intended for professional women in any career who want to weave separate parts of their lives together while leaving room for themselves. Topics include, health and personal care, verbal and nonverbal communication skills, ethics in the workplace, finances and budgeting, using expertise and talents beyond retirement. Contact Martha S. Pilcher, (615) 320-4600. Web site: www.umc.org/scarritt. E-mail: pilcher@nc5.infi.net.

Sept. 23-26

Liturgical Needlework: Embroidering in Sacred Spaces, Scarritt-Bennett Center, Nashville. Marion Scouler, along with Rebecca W. Waldrop and Judy W. Loehr, will teach whitework, a type of embroidery used on linens and parament for holy communion. Workshop includes hands-on experience in liturgical design. Contact Martha S. Pilcher, (615) 320-4600. Web site: www.umc.org/scarritt. E-mail: pilcher@nc5.infi.net.

March 27-29, 2000

Women's Lives, Voices, Solutions: Shaping a National Agenda for Women in Higher Education, Minneapolis. This national conference is also planned as a teleconference. It will be a national conversation with students, faculty, and staff throughout the U.S. to discuss key issues that affect the education, advancement, and success of women in higher education. Contact the National Teleconference for Women in Higher Education, University of Minnesota, Office of the Associate Vice President for Multicultural Affairs and Academic Affairs, 432 Morrill Hall, 100 Church St., S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455. Web site: www.umn.edu/women/wihe.html. E-mail: wihe@tc.umn.edu. ■

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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Barbara Thompson

From my perspective

Interviews with leaders on issues of importance to women in the church

Barbara Ricks Thompson is a life-long Methodist. From the time her name was put on the cradle roll in Sunday School, she has been a member of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, Washington, D.C. Her service to the United Methodist Church has extended far beyond her contributions to her local church. This past October, Thompson retired as general secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race, where she had served from 1985.

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women salutes Thompson for her support of women in the church, particularly during the time she served as president of the Commission from its inception in 1972 through 1978.

Flyer: *What was the focus of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women in 1972?*

Thompson: In the first year of the Commission's existence there were many demands on our attention. We had to gear up as a general agency of the church, which included finding office space, selecting staff, establishing relationships with other general agencies, and so forth. It was clear from the outset that the issues confronting women in the church would not be solved or resolved within one quadrennium. Thus we also needed to build the case for the agency to become a standing commission of the church.

A great challenge was the need to prioritize how we would address the multitude of issues confronting women in the church with a limited budget.

Flyer: *In those formative years, what issues stand out in your mind?*

Thompson: There were two issues that emerged as demanding immediate attention. The issue that grabbed the greatest attention, as I recall, related to clergywomen. Women were seeking to be ordained in growing numbers. But the church was not really ready for them. Some women had bad experiences in seminary. They experienced trauma in seeking ordination and appointments. Conference Boards of Ordained Ministry did not know "what to do with them." Local church-

es did not want women as ministers. Clergywomen were not represented in the decision-making structures of the church. So we were confronted with a broad range of advocacy and monitoring issues in this area.

Another key issue was the representation of laywomen in the decision-making places in the church. In local churches the leadership of women was usually in the nurturing areas of church school superintendent and teachers, ushers, outreach ministries, etc. However, seldom were women selected as officers or even members of committees such as trustees, finance, and audit. We knew that representation had to be more inclusive at the local level as well as beyond the local church.

Flyer: *What work are you most proud of?*

Thompson: The Commission has made great headway in helping the local church to become accepting of clergywomen. We were instrumental in opening doors for them so that churches would accept their gifts. But that work is not finished yet. I am satisfied with the progress we have made in increasing the representation of women in decision-making bodies. Yet there is still much to be done in this area, also.

Flyer: *At that time in the early 1970s, how would you describe work on the intersection of racism and sexism?*

Thompson: For women of color, racism and sexism are inextricably linked. In the early days, most women of color made the hard choice between the two issues and addressed their efforts to working on issues of racism. In the Commission, there was a committee responsible for helping us to address the intersection of racism and sexism

Also, there was an attempt to establish a joint task force with the Commission on Religion and Race to examine the

continued on page 8

Status of Women 1972*

54%	of church members
25.2%	of general agency staff
21.9%	general board and agency members
13%	of General Conference delegates
less than 1%	of clergy

*From *The Journey Is Our Home: A History of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women*, by Carolyn Henninger Oehler; published by GCSRW.

Status of Women—More recently

>50%	of church members ¹
39.2%	of general agency staff ²
40.8%	of general board and agency members
33%	of General Conference delegates in 1996
19.8%	of clergy ³
18.4%	of district superintendents in the U.S. ⁴
15.3%	of active bishops in U.S. ⁵

¹ Statistics on gender of church members are not kept on an ongoing basis; the estimate is consistently over 50%.

² Includes general secretaries and associate general secretaries.

³ Includes clergy who are currently appointed to a local church or extension ministries, as well as retired clergy, serving on June 1, 1999.

⁴ Includes district superintendents serving on March 31, 1999.

⁵ Within The United Methodist Church to date, women have been elected bishop only within the U.S.

issues together. The joint task force never really came to grips with the issue. I think it was due in part to the perception that Status and Role of Women placed emphasis on working on issues that were more relevant to white women than to women of color. So, in effect, the issues of white women and men of color were addressed while the issues of women of color tended to drop through the cracks.

Flyer: *What was done to help women of color address this perceived gap in the ministry of the two Commissions?*

Thompson: As I mentioned before, in the early seventies there were not many women of color who were deeply involved in addressing women's issues because they did not want to be perceived as diverting attention from issues of racism to issues of sexism. So there was much intentionality given to trying to encourage women of color to address the intersection of racism and sexism. It continues to be necessary to have intentionality about this area of ministry.

Flyer: *Since you became general secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race, what changes have you witnessed?*

Thompson: I was encouraged by the GCSRW-sponsored consultations with women of the various racial ethnic minority groups.

The 1992 General Conference commended to the two commissions the request for information on the status of racial ethnic minority clergywomen. The request was the impetus for the two commissions to cooperate through a joint task force to gather the information. That report to the 1996 General Conference was the first major cooperative effort of the two Commissions.

Flyer: *What other important work continues?*

Thompson: Currently, the two commissions are monitoring the Connectional Process Team in its deliberations. In that role, the two Commissions worked together to develop some guidelines for communicating and interacting in a multi-cultural setting. (The monitors from the two commissions saw this as

necessary to facilitate the participation of central conference members of the task force as well as people of color from the church in the U. S.) That cooperative work was a helpful way to keep the issues of sexism and racism before the church.

The concerns of women of color are still present. When you talk with seminaries about inclusiveness in faculty, they are proud of the number of women, but those usually are white women. When you talk with general agency staff of the church, they are proud of the number of women in significant positions, but again, those women are mostly white.

In elections for delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conferences, the voting often comes down to competition between white women and men of color, and often the white woman prevails. People of color tend not to have as high a level of visibility as white women. Annual conferences elect people that are well known and people who look like themselves.

I believe there is a need to more forthrightly address the issues of the intersection of racism and sexism. Our church is becoming more multiculturally diverse. We claim many ethnic groups in our membership—African, African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander and Filipino—as well as persons of European heritage. So the challenge increases in magnitude.

Flyer: *How do we meet these increasing challenges?*

Thompson: One way is to keep plugging away at the systemic and institutional manifestations of racism and sexism. People do not really understand that the sins of racism and sexism are embedded in the systems and institutions of church and society. So even as the institutions and systems say they can address the sins from within, that is only one step in overcoming sexism and racism.

The United Methodist Church needs both Commissions—Religion and Race, and Status and Role of Women—to help in uncovering the manifestations of the "isms" and in devising ways to overcome them. The ministry of these two agencies has helped the church to move forward, but there is still a great distance to go in achieving the multicultural community of faith I believe God wants us to be. ■

Current make-up of the U.S. Colleges of Bishops

Jurisdiction	Total Active Bishops	White*	Racial Ethnic	Women
North Central	10	8	2	3
Northeastern	11+	6	5	2
South Central	11	9	2	2
Southeastern	13	11	2	1
Western	6	3	3	1

*Number includes white women.

+Bishop of Puerto Rico is, according to *The 1996 Book of Discipline*, a member with voice, not vote. He is included in "active" and "racial ethnic."

Status Report

Dell stands firm on same-sex unions

Despite impending suspension, the Rev. Greg Dell has declared that signing a pledge to no longer perform same-sex union ceremonies would be a "violation" of his ministry.

The United Methodist pastor's comment came after a 13-member jury of his peers found him guilty of conducting such a ceremony last September and decided that he should be suspended on July 1 until he signed a pledge or until the church no longer prohibited the action. Retired Bishop Jack Tuell, who presided over the trial, later amended the date to July 5 to allow Dell to perform a July 3 wedding ceremony.

Dell convicted of single charge

The penalty was handed down late on March 26, after two long days of testimony and deliberation in the sanctuary of First United Methodist Church, Downers Grove, IL. Dell, who is pastor of Broadway United Methodist Church in Chicago, was convicted of a single charge of "disobedience to the Order and Discipline of the United Methodist Church." [In April, Dell appealed the conviction.]

In a press conference immediately following the trial's conclusion, Dell predicted the decision will bring "an incredible amount of pain for an incredible amount of people way beyond my family," referring in particular to gay and lesbian United Methodists who have felt less than full acceptance by the church.

"When one hurts, all hurt in the body of Christ," noted Bishop Joseph Sprague of the church's Chicago Area.

Despite the verdict, the bishop declared that he continues to consider Dell "an exemplary pastor whose record of faithfulness is, in my opinion, beyond reproach." Sprague, who filed the charge, said he had hoped to frame it in a way to provide a "teachable moment" for the church. While he believes that occurred, he added that the trial also has shown the world "the box we have put ourselves into in this denomination."

He deplored the amount of time, energy and money spent on the trial process and wondered aloud how many of the poor could have been fed with the \$75,000 to \$100,000 spent by the Northern Illinois Conference. "I have an

idea that God isn't smiling tonight," Sprague said. [The cost had exceeded \$123,000 at press time.]

The Rev. Stephen Williams, pastor of First United Methodist Church in Franklin Park, who prosecuted the case for the conference, had asked the trial court for the most severe penalty available—revocation of ordination—but said he considered the suspension to be sufficient.

During the trial, Williams based his case along legal grounds, saying that Dell had explicitly violated Paragraph 65c in *The 1996 Book of Discipline* which states: "Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches."

But when asked later for a decision, the Judicial Council, declared that Paragraph 65c did have the effect of church law and "governs the conduct of the ministerial office." The council's August decision also said that violation of 65c "renders a pastor liable to a charge of disobedience to the order and discipline of the United Methodist Church under Paragraph 2624 of the Discipline."

Disregarded authority of UMC

Williams charged, and Dell agreed, that despite the ruling a month earlier, the pastor had performed the Sept. 19 union ceremony between Keith Eccarius and Karl Reinhardt at Broadway United Methodist Church. Along with disregarding the authority of the General Conference, Dell ignored the decision of its highest court, the church counsel said.

Williams also accused the pastor of failing the order of elders and pointed to Paragraph 311 in the Discipline, which calls the order a "covenant community within the church to mutually support, care for and hold accountable its members for the sake of the life and mission of the church."

The Rev. Larry Pickens, an attorney and pastor of Maple Park United Methodist Church in Chicago, led the defense, arguing that Dell's ministerial duty to serve as a pastor to all people—including the 30 percent of his congregation that is gay and lesbian—was just as important as church law.

"The church would have you believe that this is about the law and the letter of the law," Pickens said in his opening

statement. "This case, however, is about the people, the faces, the personalities, the real life stories of persons who have been affected by the ministry of Gregory Dell. This case is not about a single act. This is a case that reflects a single ministry of over 30 years."

John Wesley broke church law

Pickens noted that John Wesley himself broke a centuries-old law of the Church of England when, out of need, he ordained elders himself. Later, through the testimony of the Rev. Thomas Frank, an expert witness on church polity, he poked at the church counsel's legal argument.

While Frank agreed that Paragraph 65c was legal and binding, he said his interpretation of the Judicial Council ruling was that being liable for charges of disobedience did not automatically constitute disobedience. "That requires the judgment of a committee on investigations and a trial court," he added.

The prosecution called three witnesses in presenting its case: Bishop George Bashore, president of the Council of Bishops, Dell himself, and Bishop C. Joseph Sprague of the Chicago Area.

Pickens called eight witnesses for the defense, including Eccarius, Reinhardt and other members of Dell's church. They testified to Dell's ministry.

Dr. Terry Vanden Hoek, a University of Chicago physician, described his struggle as a gay man—a struggle that led him to attempt suicide—and how Dell's ministry drew him into the church. Asked about the impact of last fall's same-sex union at Broadway, Vanden Hoek said: "I guess, for the first time, I felt like a full human being in the United Methodist Church."

After the trial, Sprague said the verdict "sends a difficult signal to that significant community in Chicago." He noted that many people don't understand the issue of "contextual ministry," the need to serve the community that surrounds the church—in this case, a community with a significant gay population.

"People upset about this issue probably have never had the vantage point to see a neighborhood and live in a neighborhood like the one in which (Broadway church) is set," he said.

—United Methodist News Service,
March 29, 1999

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

Status Report continued from page 9

More women likely to be elected to General Conference

It is likely that more clergywomen will be elected delegates to the 2000 General and Jurisdictional Conferences due to a shift in the status of people who were previously diaconal ministers.

A large percentage of the 1500 diaconal ministers in 1996 were women. Of that group, approximately 24 women and 9 men were elected as lay delegates to the 1996 General Conference.

The 1996 General Conference, meeting in Denver, took action creating a new order of deacon and eliminating diaconal ministry as an option for new candidates. Subsequently, 767 diaconal ministers became deacons in full connection and are eligible for election as clergy delegates to the 2000 conferences.

Today, 75 percent of both deacons and diaconal ministers are women, according to Jimmy Carr, director of the deacon and diaconal ministries section of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. —United Methodist News Service, Feb. 26, 1999

Volunteer pages, marshals needed for General Conference

Volunteer pages and marshals are being recruited for General Conference 2000, the church's top legislative body, which meets in Cleveland May 2-12, 2000.

About 150 volunteers are needed, according to staff working with the Commission on the General Conference. Marshals and pages will be responsible for the cost of their own expenses, including travel, housing and meals.

Application forms may be requested from the Rev. Mark Wharff, P.O. Box 576373, Modesto, CA 95357-6373; or by e-mail to MarkWharff@aol.com.

—United Methodist News Service,
Feb. 25, 1999

*Visit the Commission
on the web:*

www.umc.org/gcsr

Qualities for General Conference delegates

In the newsletter *East Ohio Today*, Bishop Judith Craig (Ohio East) suggests qualities members of annual conferences should look for when they vote for delegates to General Conference:

- 1) able to read quickly and to comprehend complex issues in fast moving discussions;
- 2) open to hearing differing convictions and open to being shaped by what unfolds in conferencing;
- 3) healthy and with stamina;
- 4) loving of Christ and the church;
- 5) knowledgeable of United Methodism historically and of its current positions and practices;
- 6) aware of surrounding culture;
- 7) knowledgeable of parliamentary procedure;
- 8) able to read people's skills and abilities with limited exposure to the person;
- 9) ready to seek consensus where possible, but unafraid to stand on principle;
- 10) able to work collaboratively with other delegates. ■