



WOMEN BY THE NUMBERS

Central conferences have fewer female delegates to General Conference than U.S. jurisdictions

By Craig This

Of the 1,017 delegates elected to the 2012 General Conference, 63% are male and 37% are female, according to the data supplied by the General Council on Finance and Administration¹ (see Table 1). In comparison to the delegates elected to the 2008 General Conference, 60% were male and 40% were female. Women’s representation to General Conference is down by 3%.

There are 988 delegates who have voice and vote; 29 additional delegates—mainly from affiliated Methodist bodies—have voice. These additional delegates may speak and influence legislative committees as well as plenary sessions. This article and the statistics used herein include all 1,017 delegates because they all have the ability to speak at General Conference. (The next issue of THE FLYER will examine the 988 voting.)

¹ It should be noted that the 1,017 delegate count is above the 1,000 limit set forth by The Book of Discipline. Further, the data supplied by GCFA is preliminary based upon initial delegate lists provided by the annual conferences.

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**TABLE 1:
GENDER AND STATUS BY CENTRAL CONFERENCE/JURISDICTION**

	Clergy					Laity					Total
	Female		Male		Total	Female		Male		Total	
	#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%		
Central Conference											
Affiliated or Concordat Church	3	14%	19	86%	22	13	54%	11	46%	24	46
Africa Central Conference	5	28%	13	72%	18	9	50%	9	50%	18	36
Congo Central Conference	9	13%	63	88%	72	27	37%	46	63%	73	145
West Africa Central Conference	5	10%	44	90%	49	14	28%	36	72%	50	99
Africa	19	14%	120	86%	139	50	36%	91	65%	141	280
Central and Southern Europe Central Conference	1	14%	6	86%	7	3	43%	4	57%	7	14
Germany Central Conference	1	33%	2	67%	3	1	33%	2	67%	3	6
Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference	1	9%	10	91%	11	6	55%	5	45%	11	22
Europe	3	14%	18	86%	21	10	48%	11	52%	21	42
Philippines Central Conference	4	18%	18	82%	22	9	36%	16	64%	25	47
Central Conference Total	29	14%	175	86%	204	82	39%	129	61%	211	415
US Jurisdictions											
North Central Jurisdiction	22	20%	34	30%	56	29	26%	27	24%	56	112
Northeastern Jurisdiction	24	22%	31	28%	55	30	27%	25	23%	55	110
South Central Jurisdiction	21	16%	43	34%	64	28	22%	36	28%	64	128
Southeastern Jurisdiction	42	19%	68	31%	110	50	23%	60	27%	110	220
Western Jurisdiction	8	25%	8	25%	16	12	38%	4	13%	16	32
US Jurisdiction Total	117	19%	184	31%	301	149	25%	152	25%	301	602
UMC Total	146	14%	359	35%	505	231	23%	281	28%	512	1017



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In the 2008 General Conference, U.S. delegates made up 76% of the U.S. delegates and women were 44% of the delegation. Central conferences (from United Methodist annual conferences outside the United States) were 24% of the delegates and women were 28% of those delegates. In the 2012 General Conference, U.S. delegates make up 59% (-17% from 2008) of the delegates and women are 44% of the delegation (same as in 2008). Central conferences make up 41% of the 2012 General Conference delegation (+17% from 2008) and 29% of those delegates are women (increase of 1%).

While 37% is the overall representation, the U.S. jurisdictions have 44% female representation and the central conferences have 28% female representation (see Table 2). Representation of women has risen steadily over the last 40 years (in 1972, only 13% of General Conference delegates were women).

It is no surprise then that 266 of the 377 female delegates (70%) are from the United States, largely because the United States has more delegates, but also because gender-justice work has not been a priority among many central conferences. At least one annual conference outside the United States has yet to ordain a single woman.

Clergywomen and Laywomen

Women represent more than half of United Methodist membership around the world, but only about 19% of all clergy. While women, lay and clergy, represent 37% of General Conference delegates, clergywomen have the lowest percentage of representation at 14% of General Conference delegates (see Table 1). In terms of sheer numbers, there are more clergymen (175) from the central conferences than there are clergywomen (146) from the U.S. jurisdictions and the central conferences combined (see Table 2). The same is true for clergymen (184) from the U.S. jurisdictions and the clergywomen (146) combined.

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**TABLE 2:
RANKED BY FEMALES AS PERCENTAGE OF
JURISDICTION/CENTRAL CONFERENCE REPRESENTATION**

Jurisdiction/Central Conference	Female		Male		Total
	#	%	#	%	
Western Jurisdiction	20	63%	12	38%	32
Northeastern Jurisdiction	54	49%	56	51%	110
North Central Jurisdiction	51	46%	61	54%	112
Southeastern Jurisdiction	92	42%	128	58%	220
Africa Central Conference	14	39%	22	61%	36
South Central Jurisdiction	49	38%	79	62%	128
Affiliated or Concordat Church	16	35%	30	65%	46
Germany Central Conference	2	33%	4	67%	6
Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference	7	32%	15	68%	22
Central and Southern Europe Central Conference	4	29%	10	71%	14
Philippines Central Conference	13	28%	34	72%	47
Congo Central Conference	36	25%	109	75%	145
West Africa Central Conference	19	19%	80	81%	99
Total	377	37%	640	63%	1017

**TABLE 3:
RANKED BY DELEGATES**

Jurisdiction/Central Conference	Female	Male
	#	#
Southeastern Jurisdiction	92	128
Northeastern Jurisdiction	54	56
North Central Jurisdiction	51	61
South Central Jurisdiction	49	79
Congo Central Conference	36	109
Western Jurisdiction	20	12
West Africa Central Conference	19	80
Affiliated or Concordat Church	16	30
Africa Central Conference	14	22
Philippines Central Conference	13	34
Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference	7	15
Central and Southern Europe Central Conference	4	10
Germany Central Conference	2	4
Total	377	640



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Laywomen have the second lowest percentage of representation at 23% or 231 delegates (see Table 1). The 149 laywomen elected from the U.S. jurisdictions constitute 65% of the laywomen representation. There are more laywomen delegates from the U.S. than there are central conference women (111) combined (lay and clergy). Likewise, there are more U.S. laywomen (149) than central conference laymen (129). It is also interesting to note that while U.S. laywomen (149) and laymen (152) are nearly even in total numbers, the central conference laymen outnumber the laywomen 129 to 82.

Jurisdictions Ranked by Number of Women

Of U.S. regions, the Western Jurisdiction has the least delegates but the highest percentage of women delegates (63% of that region's total elected delegates are women), followed by Northeastern (49%), North Central (46%), Southeastern (42%), Africa Central Conference (39%) and South Central (38%) (see Table 2). The Congo Central Conference has the highest number of women delegates among central conferences (36 of 145 delegates are women). However, women comprise 25% of the total delegates from Congo, which makes the Congo Central Conference second to last when ranking female delegates as a percentage of a region's total elected delegation (see Table 2). Numerically, the Southeastern Jurisdiction has the largest number of women delegates (92), followed by Northeastern (54), North Central (51), South Central (49) and Congo Central Conference (26) (see Table 3).

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