




JUNE 2012

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

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### WOMEN BY THE NUMBERS

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## WOMEN BY THE NUMBERS

# Women, people of color more likely to pastor smaller churches and to pioneer in cross-racial appointments

By Julie Kathleen Schubring

While there are few surprises in a recently released study on the status and career paths of U.S. United Methodist clergy, the findings still offer a blueprint for how the denomination can better address institutional sexism and racism in our clergy recruitment, compensation and deployment systems.

*The State of Female and Racial/Ethnic United Methodist Clergy in the U.S.* by Eric B. Johnson, was a joint project of by the General Commission on Religion and Race, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW), and the National Association of Commission on Equitable Compensation. The project found:

- » The number of U.S. congregations led by women grew by 45% between 1997 and 2008. During that same 11-year period, the number of racial-ethnic pastors leading church increased by 22%.
- » Women led a larger percentage of congregations (36%) in the Northeastern Jurisdiction in 2008, than in the Southeastern Jurisdiction (20%).
- » Larger congregations are far less likely to have a lead female pastor than smaller congregations. The percentage of female sole/lead pastors decreases dramatically as congregational size increases, from 25-45% of smaller congregations led by women to less than 5% of congregations with 5,000-plus members.
- » The denomination's push for more open itinerancy has resulted in greater increases in women (particularly white women) as pastoral leaders than for racial/ethnic persons. In 2008 women comprised 29% of the clergy serving U.S. United Methodist congregations, while only 13% of pastors were racial/ethnic.

The executive summary and full report of the study is online in each of the organizations' websites: [gcsrw.org](http://gcsrw.org), [gcorr.org](http://gcorr.org), and [gfa.org/nacec](http://gfa.org/nacec).

Most of the findings confirm what most people tend to believe in the clergy system: race and gender make a difference in the United Methodist clergy appointment system.

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Most of the findings confirm what most people tend to believe in the clergy system: race and gender make a difference in the United Methodist clergy appointment system.

Even now in 2012, too many United Methodist congregations reject the appointment of a pastor who is a woman or who is from a racial group other than their own. And bishops and cabinets too often affirm such biases, instead of challenging parishes to embrace new ways and become more open to such requests. Also, often neither congregations nor clergy are provided sufficient support, training and encouragement to make such appointments a success.

“Having a church ready for a woman pastor or a pastor that may be of a different ethnicity than the congregation should not be the work of the pastor going into the appointment. It should have been the work that is on-going in the church already,” according to Elaine Moy, GCSRW assistant general secretary who oversees research and monitoring.

Most pastors in cross-cultural appointments are people of color going to a white church. There are fewer white pastors trained to serve and be assigned to racial/ethnic congregations. Also, as the United States—and intercultural partnerships, friendships and families—continue to grow, new church members will seek congregations that model appreciation for and comfort with a multiracial, multicultural environment.

If we want to grow our membership, churches need to be open to welcoming and accepting all those who come through the door. The U.S. church is more than 90% white, while the U.S. population is only 63.4% white. The demographics are quickly changing. As of July 1, 2011 the U.S. Census Bureau reports that the number of new births is 50.4% non-white births.

As I am a young white woman, I think this report should be read by everyone in The United Methodist Church. It is an especially important read for racial/ethnic clergy, young clergy and those currently studying to enter the ministry. And I hope district superintendents, bishops and cabinet members and staff-parish relations committees read this study to see how their decision making processes when making appointments affects the entire denomination.

Having just returned from working with GCSRW at the 2012 General Conference 2012, where I heard about our denominational struggles to nurture vital leadership and vital congregations, I feel it is more important than ever to look at statistical information about where we have been.

Much has been accomplished in our denominational history in elevating female and racial/ethnic pastoral leadership. Yet this report reminds us that there is still much work to be accomplished to demonstrate an appropriate representation of clergy serving congregations.

*A Ph.D. student at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, **Julie Kathleen Schubring** was recently an intern for GCSRW. She is also a commissioned Bishop Handy Young Adult Missionary.*



## GENERAL CONFERENCE 2012

# General Conference approves United Methodist Women autonomy

Delegates of General Conference 2012 transformed the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) into an autonomous organization within The United Methodist Church.

In addition, oversight of the denomination's deaconess and home missionary programs was placed with the new national organization, simply called "United Methodist Women."

While the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) is charged with advocating, monitoring and challenging the church to seek justice and inclusiveness, UMW is organized for international mission work within the denomination on behalf of women, children and youth.

The former Women's Division played a crucial role in the establishment of the General Commission of the Status and Role of Women. In 1968, the division petitioned the General Conference to create a study commission to document the extent to which women were involved in—or excluded from—at all structural levels in general program and policy-making channels and agencies in The United Methodist Church.

In 1971, a movement that would result in the formation of the United Methodist Women's Caucus drafted a proposal for a Commission on Women. In 1972, General Conference delegates approved legislation submitted by the caucus to create a free-standing GCSRW.

For more information, visit the website: [new.gbgm-umc.org](http://new.gbgm-umc.org).



*\*Compiled from United Methodist News Service and the Daily Christian Advocate.*



## SEXUAL ETHICS

# New church laws, guidelines to address misconduct and healing in the aftermath

By Darryl W. Stephens

The 2012 General Conference passed legislation designed to improve the comprehensive ministry of sexual ethics in The United Methodist Church. Specifically, the denomination's international law-making assembly:

- » **Affirmed and defined annual conference Response Team Ministry** following allegations of sexual misconduct. Delegates included these guidelines in *The Book of Resolutions* to encourage annual conferences to recruit, train and deploy Response Teams to assist bishops in fulfilling the mandate to provide “a process of healing within the congregation” that is disrupted by a sexual misconduct complaint.
- » **Approved new guidelines for Sexual Ethics in Ministerial Formation**, which applies to all University Senate-approved seminaries and Course of Study schools, and includes sexual ethics education as a foundation of professional preparation for ministry.
- » **Added work on sexual ethics as an official mandate of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, affirming GCSRW's leadership in addressing sexual misconduct.** Delegates added to *The Book of Discipline* a new Par. 2103.11: “The commission shall assist in addressing the problem of sexual misconduct in the church. The commission shall provide leadership in providing resources for the prevention of and education about misconduct of a sexual nature, training opportunities for clergy and laity, policy and procedural recommendations for transformative and administrative fair processes, victim/survivor support and congregational healing. The commission shall promote interagency coordination through its leadership of the Interagency Sexual Ethics Task Force and by assisting annual conferences, local churches, councils, boards, commissions, schools of theology, and other related institutions in witnessing to healthy boundaries within ministerial relationships.”
- » **Added to The United Methodist Church's Social Principles** a statement deploring acts of hate or violence based on “gender identity” (Par. 162 prologue).
- » **Revised definition of pornography** (*The Book of Resolutions 2008*, p. 149): “Pornography is sexually explicit material intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal that often portrays violence, abuse, coercion, domination, humiliation or degradation.” Also, churches, conferences and general agencies are now encouraged specifically to provide sexual ethics education and training to address the issue of pornography.
- » **Amended Resolution 2044, Sexual Misconduct Within Ministerial Relationships** (*The Book of Resolutions 2008*, p. 134): “Sexual misconduct within ministerial relationships is a betrayal of sacred trust. It is a continuum of sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay or clergy person within a ministerial relationship (paid or unpaid).”
- » **Added a new Social Principle in Par. 162**, which reads, “Sexual assault is wrong. We affirm the right of all people to live free from such assaults, encourage efforts of law enforcement to prosecute such crimes and condemn rape in any form. It does not matter where the person is, what the person is wearing, whether

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he or she is intoxicated, if he or she is flirtatious, what the victim's gender or any other circumstance.”

Additionally, General Conference updated and re-adopted the resolution, “Eradication of Sexism in the Church” (DCA p. 330), affirming the ongoing need for the ministry of GCSRW.

Individual petitions can be searched by topic at: <http://calms2012.umc.org/>. The updated editions of *The Book of Discipline* and *The Book of Resolutions* will be available in early 2013.

— *Darryl Stephens* is assistant general secretary for advocacy and sexual ethics for GCSRW.





## GCSRW AT 40

# Tennessee Women's Commission publishes 40th anniversary book

By Heather Peck Stahl

The Tennessee Annual Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women (CSRW) recently published a book celebrating their 40-year history to be distributed this month at annual conference.

The 48-page paperback book highlights “women firsts” in their conference, their conference commission’s history as well as a litany honoring women who prepared the way for the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW).

The Tennessee CSRW paid for the publication of 1,100 copies.

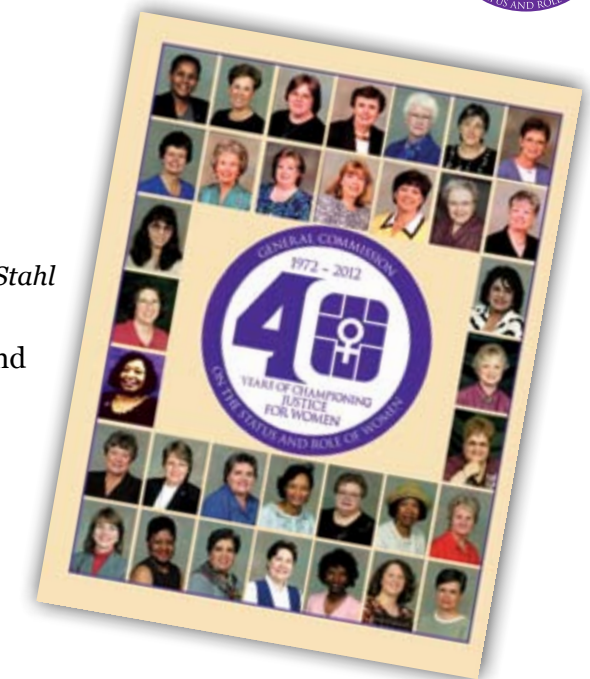
Chair of the Tennessee CSRW, Dawn Yelverton says she compiled information for the book because “we still have people in our conference who have never heard of the commission. It’s important to get the word out that we exist and to tell our history.”

Yelverton spent three weeks going through conference journals and another week organizing and fact-checking. She also recruited a few friends to assist her in the project.

The front cover of the book shows 34 Tennessee Conference women including district superintendents, district secretaries, lay women who were “firsts” in leadership positions, and M. Garlinda Burton, GCSRW general secretary. The back cover included mostly group shots of conference women in ministry settings.

The book is divided into four main sections, (1) a litany honoring women who prepared the way for the GCSRW and specific people from the Tennessee Conference as well as the creed of the GCSRW and its history; (2) description of the duties and responsibilities of GCSRW; (3) history of the Tennessee CSRW and its functions and responsibilities, and a list of those who have served on the conference commission since its 1972 beginning; (4) “women firsts” in the Tennessee Conference over the past 40 years, including first women clergy, district superintendents, delegates to General or Southeast Jurisdictional conferences, and chairs of boards or commissions.

She adds, it’s interesting to note that “we still have a couple of districts that have never had a woman serve as their lay leader, council on ministries chair, and/or director of lay speaking.”



*Dawn Yelverton*

—*Heather Peck Stahl* is editor of *The Flyer*.



## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

# How to become a member of a general agency

By J. Richard Peck

It's political. Well, the Spirit of the Lord is involved in everything, so the Spirit is surely involved in selecting persons to serve on general agencies, but the spirit needs politically savvy partners.

Persons are selected for membership on general agencies because 1) they hold an office that makes them ex-officio members; 2) they are accepted as at-large members because of special expertise; and 3) they are selected from a jurisdictional pool.

If you are elected as a delegate to a jurisdictional conference and you want to enter the jurisdictional pool, you will be given a form that asks for a 100-word biographical statement along with a questionnaire that asks about your gender, age range, ethnic origin and your top three choices for general agencies. Once that form has been submitted, you will be entered into the jurisdictional pool. Each annual conference may submit between 15 and 45 names for the pool.

## Not elected? You may still dive into the pool

If you are not a delegate to jurisdictional conference, you may still be entered into the pool. Talk with the head of the General Conference delegation and your conference lay leader about your interest. The 2008 *Discipline* (Par. 705.1) allows for nominations from the floor, but this is not a likely possibility.

“In the Florida Conference, members of the jurisdictional pool are submitted after the annual conference has adjourned,” says John Dowell, who was appointed to the General Board of Church and Society in 2000. He currently serves on the General Commission on United Methodist Men because of his position as the national president of the commission.

“My name was added to the jurisdictional pool through the nomination of both a lay person and conference clergy member,” says the Rev. DJ del Rosario, pastor of Lynden (Wash.) UMC.

“The lay person told me that she nominated me because she saw this as an incredible opportunity for growth and leadership development,” says del Rosario, who was later named director of Young Adult Ministry Discernment and Enlistment in the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

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## GCSRW board members reduced in size

The 2012 General Conference voted to have general agencies of The United Methodist Church **reduce their boards by 266 directors, or about half**. As a result, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women will be reduced to 19 board members (2 bishops, 3 central conferences, 5 from jurisdiction, 2 from United Methodist Women, and 7 additional members).

If you would like to be on our board, be sure you are in the jurisdictional pool. If you are a General or jurisdictional delegate, your name should be in the pool. If you are not a delegate, you need to have your name entered in the pool at your annual conference. Afterward, let the people on the nominating committee know your interest in serving on our Commission.

Be sure your annual conference's nomination process for serving on a general church agency is open and fair. Visit [www.gcsrw.org](http://www.gcsrw.org) (January-March 2008 issue of *THE FLYER*, page 13) for “myth-busting” information.





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## The nominating committee

A jurisdictional nominating committee composed of one clergy and one layperson from each annual conference makes nominations to the agencies. In order to provide balance, the committee will consider factors such as a person's age, gender, ethnic identity or ability challenges.

"I was assigned to GCSRW," says del Rosario. "I have to admit that my knowledge of GCSRW was very limited. What I learned is that the staff is excellent, patient and visionary. Within the first meeting, I felt like this was exactly where I was called to be. Accepting this nomination was truly a blessing and a gift."

Noting that there is less than an 18 percent chance of being nominated, Dowell says, "It helps to have friends on the jurisdictional nominating committee. I had three friends on the committee and I filled one of the categories of need, so I was quickly named to the Board of Church and Society."

## Late additions

All recommendations must be approved by the jurisdictional conferences. After jurisdictional conferences have adjourned, a national committee composed of one clergy, one laywoman and one layman from each of the five jurisdictions will name additional agency members to ensure proportionate membership of the jurisdictions. The 15-member group will review biographical data of persons submitted by the annual conferences, caucuses and general agencies.

## What qualities would add value to the next GCSRW Board?

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) is looking for men and women to serve on our board possessing a variety of qualities and characteristics. Specifically we are looking for people:

- >> with experience in mediation,
- >> with experience with civil and human rights and international women's issues,
- >> who have served on a Response Team,
- >> under age 35,
- >> who have been a successful conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women chair,
- >> who want to be an efficient board member, willing to meet more often,
- >> who want GCSRW to be among their top four priorities,
- >> with experience in looking at organizational systems,
- >> with experience in conducting research,
- >> who are able to look at a topic from various point of views,
- >> willing to speak on behalf of GCSRW, and
- >> with the time and energy to devote to the mission of GCSRW.

— A retired clergy member of the New York Annual Conference, **J. Richard Peck** is the former editor of Newscope, Circuit Rider, Daily Christian Advocate and International Christian Digest.