

# The Flyer

Vol XXIII, No. 1

Summer 2002

*Emphasizes integrated approach to prevention, response*

## UMC continues effort against clergy sexual misconduct

Recently the United Methodist Church gathered a group of connectional leaders, including general agency staff and annual conference leaders, to launch a more coordinated effort to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct among clergy and laity. This July meeting in New York City represents "a comprehensive, holistic, and integrated approach to prevention and response," explained Stephanie Anna Hixon, general secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

"What is unique in the United Methodist Church is that every member of each local church has an avenue for contributing to the church's work on this vital issue," pointed out Hixon. "By bringing together this

network of grassroots persons and denominational staff, we offer our members the opportunity, as well as the responsibility, to prevent such painful conduct among us."

The annual conference leaders represented the Response Team steering committee, who participated last summer in the first-ever Response Team Training Event to train annual conference teams of both lay and clergy to intervene and care for congregations affected by clergy sexual misconduct. General agency staff included the Sexual Ethics Work Team, an interagency group that has been meeting for a number of years to work cooperatively to address clergy sexual abuse, and those who developed the Safe Sanctuaries program, designed to



Photo by Victoria Ealom

Attending the Response Team Resource Network Steering Committee meeting were: Back row, l to r, Mary Jane Wilson-Parsons, North Carolina Conference; Bonnie McOmber, Oregon-Idaho Conference; Marilyn Robb, New England Conference; Yvonne Sudduth, Kansas East Conference; Wendy Minnix, Central Pennsylvania Conference; Sally Dolch, Peninsula-Delaware Conference; and Varlyna Wright, Greater New Jersey Conference. Front row: Bob Hoover, Iowa Conference, and Stephanie Anna Hixon, general secretariat, GCSRW.

## *Bishops speak out on clergy sexual abuse*

Bishops of the United Methodist Church declared May 3 that clerics who "abuse children or who are sexual predators" will not be "shielded or protected" by church authorities.

With high-profile cases among Catholic clergy raising awareness worldwide, the 150-member Council of Bishops vowed at its semi-annual meeting in Bloomington, MN, to "prevent and eradicate sexual abuse and misconduct" from all levels of church life. In fact, the United Methodist Church has worked for more than 20 years to strengthen the laws in its Book of Discipline regarding ethical and moral conduct of clergy, said Bishop Sharon Rader, council secretary and leader of the church's Wisconsin Area.

"We had this issue on our agenda before all the media attention to the Catholic clergy story," Rader explained. Bishops are charged with reviewing denominational processes concerning clergy conduct, she added.

At their Bloomington meeting, the bishops spent several hours reviewing church policies and procedures for dealing with clergy and lay employee misconduct. Church legal advisers also were consulted.

—UMNews press release, May 3, 2002.

Complete text of UM bishops statement page 2

protect children from abuse.

As Hixon emphasized, "This meeting underscores the value of nurturing a network of leadership among annual conferences and local churches. This value, firmly held by the Response Team steering committee, undergirds the church's philosophy that preventing and responding to sexual misconduct is the responsibility of all persons who care about these concerns."

Over the past decade General Conference has passed resolutions (see note at end of article) that call for general agencies, annual conferences, local churches, and other UM entities to aid in prevention and response. Agency and annual conference resources, along with local church

continued on page 5

## What you should know about UMC clergy sexual ethics

**UMC strategy:** continue to educate-prevent-respond

**Who is involved:** both laity and clergy

**What is the purpose:** to continue to protect vulnerable children, youth and adults from sexual abuse, misconduct, or harassment.

**What United Methodists should know:**

What behaviors are considered sexual abuse, misconduct, or harassment;

• Ways to prevent sexual abuse, especially of children;

Where to go for assistance and resources about sexual misconduct.

**Emphasis of UMC strategy:**

Developing policies in local churches and other UMC bodies that declare the church's abhorrence of sexual misconduct and outline processes for responding to accusations.

Educating clergy and lay leaders to understand sexual misconduct, what it is, how to prevent it, and how to respond to it.

Caring for victims of sexual misconduct in a church setting, whether the abuser is clergy, church staff or lay members.

• Healing the harm done to members when a spiritual leader engages in inappropriate conduct and offering abusers opportunities for treatment.

**Safeguards against misuse of clergy authority:** United Methodist clergy and other employees, as appropriate, meet regularly with the pastor-parish or staff-parish relations committee.

The 1996 General Conference adopted a resolution, "Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in the Church," that encourages churches to educate themselves about risks, rigorously screen workers and volunteers and implement safety procedures to protect children and teenagers from assault. Churches also are encouraged to become familiar with the reporting requirements in their states. Statutes on reporting allegations of child sexual abuse differ from state to state.

**Complaint process:** Allegations of clergy sexual misconduct typically go to the district superintendent. A written report sets in motion a complaint process, which is outlined in *The 2000 Book of Discipline*. A pastor may be suspended from the practice of ministry until an investigation is completed. The "chargeable offenses" that can be brought against clergy include child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct or sexual harassment.

## Sexual abuse in the Church

*This is the complete text of the UM bishops' statement on clergy sexual abuse.*

There is little doubt that sexual abuse by clergy or representative lay ministers in church and society is troubling for our communities and congregations worldwide. Such violations of sacred trust, particularly child or sexual abuse, are devastating to those victimized and all persons affected. Further, these acts damage the integrity of the church's witness.

As members of the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church, we affirm our resolve to prevent and eradicate sexual abuse and misconduct in the church. We reaffirm our commitment to compassion, justice and healing for those harmed.

We are committed to addressing sexual misconduct promptly and forthrightly for the healing of all concerned, especially victims and congregations. Clergy and other persons within our communion who abuse children or who are sexual predators will not be knowingly shielded or protected. They shall be held accountable as The Book of Discipline demands and Church order expects. Given these historic affirmations, we joined in the following actions in our semi-annual meeting:

- Prayed for victims, offenders, families and the world church including ourselves.
- Reviewed the church's response to this issue over the last twenty years.
- Re-affirmed our policies and protocol for responding to allegations of misconduct.
- Identified existing resources available for the church.
- Committed ourselves anew to the highest ethical standards of our Office and living lives that reflect the gospel.

—The Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church  
May 3, 2002, Minneapolis, MN

### *For more information...*

To obtain sexual ethics educational resources, visit the web sites of the *General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW)*, [www.gcsrw.org](http://www.gcsrw.org); the *General Council on Finance and Administration*, [www.gcfa.org](http://www.gcfa.org); the *General Board of Discipleship*, [www.gbod.org](http://www.gbod.org); the *General Board of Global Ministries*, <http://www.gbgm-umc.org>; the *General Board of Higher Education and Ministry*, [www.gbhem.org](http://www.gbhem.org); *Info-Serv*, <http://www.infoserv.umc.org>; or contact district superintendents, bishops' offices or annual conference councils on ministry.

The web site of GCSRW contains a variety of information, including pertinent resolutions, sample policies for local churches, and resources for further study.

# United Methodist history on sexual ethics

**1908** The original Social Creed of The Methodist Episcopal Church contains the prophetic call to stand "for such regulation of conditions of labor for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community."

**1981** General Commission on the Status and Role of Women called on all United Methodist agencies to adopt sexual harassment policies. All agencies complied.

**1988** Following the first major ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace, General Conference defined sexual harassment, named it as sin, and recognized sexualized behavior as a problem in churches, agencies and institutions. General Conference also recognized the importance of and called for clear policies establishing grievance procedures for victims and penalties for offenders.

A Council of Bishops' task force began to review existing complaint processes against clergy. Annual conferences engaged in training for clergy and in policy development related to sexual ethics.

**1990** General Council on Ministries issued its report on a survey of United Methodist clergy, laity, college and seminary students, and nonclergy church employees. This study showed that unwanted sexual behavior occurred in a variety of circumstances in the church.

**1991** General Board of Higher Education and Ministry sponsored for boards of ordained ministry a sexual ethics in ministry workshop on clergy setting appropriate boundaries.

Council of Bishops issued a resolution on prevention of sexual misconduct in church and society.

**1992** In a "Women in Crisis" survey conducted by the Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries, sexual harassment and sexual abuse by a professional (including clergy) were among the crises identified by women. General Conference called for each annual conference, agency and United Methodist-related institution to have sexual harassment policies and procedures in place.

General Conference established an unlimited statute of limitations for sexual or child abuse.<sup>1</sup>

**1994** General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and the National Program Division of the General Board of Global Ministries held a nationwide event to train advocates for victims and survivors of clergy sexual misconduct.

**1995** General Commission on the Status and Role of Women surveyed and found that sexual ethics policies were in place in schools of theology and UM-related colleges and universities, general agencies and a majority of annual conferences.

**1996** General Conference adopted a resolution, "Sexual Abuse Within the Ministerial Relationship and Sexual Harassment Within The United Methodist Church," commending policies on sexual harassment and abuse for local churches, annual conferences and general agencies.

General Conference passed a resolution, "Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in the Church," urging local churches and annual conferences to implement ongoing plans for safety and risk-reduction.

**1998** The General Board of Discipleship published "Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church," to guide congregations in developing policies and procedures. A series of regional training events followed.

A coordinated agency "Sexual Ethics in Ministry Survey" of U.S. annual conferences identified tools and resources needed for healing, education, intervention and prevention of misconduct of a sexual nature.

**1999** The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry published "Living the Sacred Trust: Clergy Sexual Ethics," a resource for cabinets and boards of ordained ministry.

**2000** General Conference adopted "Sexual Ethics Within Ministerial Relationships," continuing the church's efforts for education, prevention and intervention. A separate resolution clarified the history and definition of sexual harassment.

**2001** General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and Rocky Mountain Conference held the Response Team Training Event for annual conference teams providing healing when there has been disruption in congregational life related to clergy sexual misconduct.

**2002** United Methodist Council of Bishops reaffirmed its commitment to preventing and eradicating sexual harassment, abuse and misconduct in the church. (See p. 2)

Sources: The 2000 United Methodist Book of Resolutions and UM Reporter May 17.

<sup>1</sup> In October 1993, Judicial Council Decision 691 ruled that "a change in a statute of limitations may not take effect retroactively, nor may church laws defining chargeable offenses be made retroactive."

## The Flyer

Summer 2002 Vol. XXIII, No. 1

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 65 Annual Conference Commissions on the Status and Role of Women (ACSRWs). Primary distribution of The Flyer is through the ACSRWs; individual subscriptions available from GCSRW, \$10.

**Editor:** Bonny Stalnaker Roth

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

### GCSRW officers:

Gail Murphy-Geiss, President  
Rose Arroyo, Vice-President  
William H. (Bill) Wilson, Secretary

**General Secretariat:** Stephanie Anna Hixon

GCSRW, 1200 Davis St., Evanston, IL 60201  
(847) 869-7330; (800) 523-8390

Web site: [www.gcsrww.org](http://www.gcsrww.org)

Permission to reprint is not required; a credit line is requested. This publication is on file with the Women's Collection, Special Collections Dept., Northwestern University, Evanston, IL 60201

Printed on processed chlorine-free, recycled paper.

# WRAP-UP OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE ACTIONS

For several weeks during May and June, U.S. annual conferences meet to worship, legislate, ordain, and otherwise challenge clergy and laity to live out their regional connectionalism. Below are highlights of decisions and celebrations that may be of particular interest to our readers.

These highlights are taken from United Methodist News summaries and from annual conference leaders on the Status and Role of Women.

## NORTH CENTRAL JURISDICTION

**Dakotas:** Annual conference commission presented Words That Heal Awards to Debra Ball-Kilbourne and Brook McBride. The group also sponsored Celebrating Women in Ministry lunch, an event that keeps growing in attendance every year.

**Detroit:** Conference participants urged each church to hold a congregation-wide study on homosexuality and scripture before the 2004 General Conference, using existing United Methodist materials and inviting dialogue from people with different viewpoints on the issues.

A prayer vigil after a business session marked the decision of a self-avowed lesbian clergywoman to ask for a leave of absence because she could no longer fulfill her vow of celibacy.

**Iowa:** Commission on the Status and Role of Women reported that participation in conference legislative sessions by laywomen and youth was at an all-time high.

**Minnesota:** The conference's five ministry areas are required to discuss the question "What would our United Methodist ministry in Minnesota look like if our annual conference vision and goals included all people, particularly those of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered orientation?" and submit results of the conversation to 2003 annual conference session.

**Northern Illinois:** Conference members approved an updated policy statement on sexual and gender harassment and misconduct. A resolution to establish a task force to assist victims of sexual abuse and misconduct in the church was referred to the Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

**West Michigan:** Members voted to encourage concern and support for Afghan women through prayer, education, and support of mission projects; to ask President Bush to support Afghan women in government positions and seek peace and rebuilding in Afghanistan; and to express support for Afghan refugee resettlement through UMCOR.

The conference updated its abuse prevention policy to clarify that an alleged abuser on the premises of a program site must be isolated from the program and have no contact with children, youth or adults with special needs; and to comply with state of Michigan regulations.

## NORTHEASTERN JURISDICTION

**Baltimore-Washington:** Commission on the Status and Role of Women received approval for a request to conduct a conference study comparing the remuneration, mobility and retention of women and men in ordained ministry. The study will include all probationary deacons and elders and all deacons and elders in full connection.

The conference established a policy requiring background checks on every candidate for ordained ministry and on clergy seeking transfer into the conference.

**New England:** Conference participants adopted a policy on racial harassment, including procedures for complaints and guidelines for those who experience harassment or those who are charged with such actions.

**New York:** Ernest Lyght, in his episcopal address to the conference, reflected on the need for growth and concern for several areas of conference life. Specifically, Lyght spoke of the carefully developed plan of the denomination for handling questions of sexual conduct by clergy, of the need for safe sanctuary for children and of the work of the sexuality task force.

## SOUTH CENTRAL JURISDICTION

**Central Texas:** The conference established a commission on wellness and wholeness for clergy and their families.

**Kansas West:** The conference approved an amendment to the board of

equitable compensation report, calling for the inequities between the salaries of men and women clergy to be resolved by Dec. 31 or a lump sum payment be made to the women included in the board's gender equity study.

**Louisiana:** A manual entitled *Guidelines for Protective Procedures on Misconduct of a Sexual Nature* was adopted. It supplements policies that are already in place and serves as a guide for congregations developing their own policies.

**North Texas:** A task force was named to study the status of conference clergywomen, including such factors as retention, appointments and salaries.

**Southwest Texas:** The conference witnessed the ordination of the first mother-daughter team in the Southwest Texas Conference. Susan Henderson Long, associate pastor of Bulverde United Methodist Church, was ordained elder in full connection. Her daughter, Laura Heikes, a May graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary, was commissioned a probationary elder.

**Texas:** The conference board of ordained ministry requires attendance at a sexual harassment/misconduct workshop before ordination.

## SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTION

**Kentucky:** Members of the conference turned down a proposal to change the Committee on the Status and Role of Women to an alternative structure and stressed the need to intentionally recruit more women clergy.

**Memphis:** The Sexual Misconduct Response team reported that the educational component will be offered to clergy annually.

**Mississippi:** Members approved a resolution affirming the use of male pronouns for references to the person of God.

## WESTERN JURISDICTION

**California-Nevada:** The conference approved an updated version of its 1998 policy statement on "Misconduct of a Sexual Nature" and outlined a series of workshops for clergy and laity.

to page 5

## Conference *from page 4*

**California-Pacific:** Members celebrated the election of Soomee Kim, a clergy member of the annual conference, to serve as a member of the general secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

**Pacific Northwest:** Members voted to commend a recent ordinance in the city of Tacoma protecting the civil rights of people "of all sexual orientations and identities."

**Rocky Mountain:** Conference affirmed the "inclusive intent and spirit" of the Western Jurisdiction's "We Shall Not Be Silent" declaration.

**Yellowstone:** Conference members adopted measures related to a newly revised sexual misconduct policy; affirmed the Western Jurisdiction's "We Shall Not Be Silent" declaration; commended the Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries, as well as the General Board of Church and Society and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, for their principled advocacy of peaceful measures in response to terrorism.

The conference concluded with a special worship service entitled "Miriam's Dance" celebrating "all women under appointment in the Yellowstone Conference from day one." ●

## Convene leaders *from page 1*

efforts, demonstrate ways of supporting this vital endeavor.

In the midst of these efforts to address sexual misconduct, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, serving in its role as catalyst, understands issues of sexual abuse as an abuse of power. As Hixon points out, "The reality in most cultures is that while boy and girl children, men and women can be victims and perpetrators of this sin, it is often women and children who are most vulnerable."

Hixon reminds United Methodists that we must not lose sight of systemic challenges associated with this problem. She emphasizes, "Practical tools and policies alone cannot unearth the root causes of and far-reaching pain caused by sexual misconduct.

## Resources

**The Flowering of the Soul: A Book of Prayers by Women**, ed. Lucinda Vardey (Beacon Press, 2002). A diverse collection of nearly 1,000 prayers by women from ancient times to the present. \$16.00.

**Giving to Your Heart's Content... Without Giving Yourself Away**, Linda R. Harper (Innisfree Press, Inc., 2002). The author looks at the dynamic between how we care for ourselves and how we care for others. Using self-inventories, contemplations, practices, and rewards, as well as a 5-session outline especially for church groups, readers can evaluate their style of giving and explore ways to prevent depletion and burn-out. \$14.95.

**Nick the Cat: Christian Reflections on the Stranger**, Roberta C. Bondi (Abingdon Press, 2001). Combining her storytelling skills with theological insights and reflections, Bondi tells the story of Nick, a stray cat who wheedled his way into her family's life, home and heart. \$15.00.

**Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us**, Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker (Beacon Press, 2001). The authors lament the inadequacy of how Christian tradition has interpreted the violence that happened to Jesus. They argue the idea that the death of Jesus on the cross saves us reveals a sanctioning of violence at the heart of Christianity. \$18.00. (See p. 7.)

**Reproductive Technology: Towards a Theology of Procreative Stewardship**, Brent Waters (Pilgrim Press, 2001). The author explores the issues of childlessness and parenthood, preventing and assisting reproduction, and quality control and experimentation. The book provides an overview of various reproductive technologies and a critique of the dominant ethical framework in which they are assessed. \$16.00.

We must address systemic realities such as poverty of spirit, broken webs of relationships, aspects of supervision, true reconciliation, restorative justice, and new and changed ways of relating with regard to gender, race, and power."

**Note:** For a comprehensive look at United Methodist resolutions, see *The 2000 Book of Resolutions*, "Sexual Ethics Within Ministerial Relationships," p. 135-140; "Eradication of Sexual Harassment in The United Methodist Church and Society," p. 140-148; and "Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in the Church," p. 180-182.

**Sacred Choices: The Right to Contraception and Abortion in Ten World Religions**, Daniel C. Maguire (Fortress Press, 2001). This volume shows how ten major religious traditions contain strong affirmations of the right to family planning, including contraception and, when necessary, abortion. \$13.00.

**Seeing With Our Souls: Monastic Wisdom for Every Day**, Joan Chittister (Sheed & Ward, 2002). Reflections on twelve qualities of the soul that ask us to identify the political, spiritual, economic, and cultural choices we make. 14.95.

**Strength in the Struggle: Leadership Development for Women**, Vashti McKenzie (Pilgrim Press, 2001). This book is written for women seeking new direction for their personal and professional group. The author offers inspiring meditations on leadership that will provide all women with insight and encouragement to develop and grow as effective leaders. \$12.00.

**A Time for Honor: A Portrait of African American Clergymen**, Delores C. Carpenter (Chalice Press, 2001). Sharing the struggles and triumphs of African American clergymen, the author brings to the foreground the consideration of women pastors and provides information about black male ministers. \$19.99.

**Under Her Wings: Spiritual Guidance from Women Saints**, Kathy Bence (Upper Room, 2002). This book presents five women from the past as spiritual guides for today. Text includes brief biography of each woman, excerpts from their writings, a meditation, suggested scripture readings, and reflection questions. \$13.00. ●

### COPY DEADLINES

To ensure inclusion of job listings, calendar items, and other items to be published in *The Flyer*, please submit written details by the following dates:

Oct. 15, 2002.....Fall 2002  
Dec. 15, 2002.....Winter 2003

Send to: Bonny Stalnaker Roth  
GCSRW, 1200 Davis St. Evanston, IL  
60201

(800) 523-8390  
e-mail: gcsrww@gcfa.org

## Status Report

### Transgender clergy person leaves church, keeps faith

The United Methodist pastor that brought controversy to the Baltimore-Washington Conference after undergoing gender reassignment calls her decision to leave the denomination painful.

"I've been a United Methodist all of my life," Rebecca A. Steen told United Methodist News Service in a telephone interview just a few days after leaving the United Methodist Church. "To step away has been an extremely painful thing."

A formal complaint was lodged against her in early June. Bishop Felton Edwin May has said the contents of the complaint are confidential but that it pertains to ministerial effectiveness.

As a hearing on June 28 began that would determine whether or not she would be put on involuntary leave by the annual conference, she surrendered her clergy credentials and withdrew her membership in the United Methodist Church.

Steen had sought voluntary leave from the Baltimore-Washington Conference in 1999 and subsequently underwent gender reassignment. Prior to that process, Steen, who was then Richard A. Zamostny, had served

churches in three Maryland communities during a 17-year career.

Steen, 47, a parent and grandparent, said that prior to her withdrawal she realized the issue was going to become extremely divisive for the church, her family and herself. That's why she decided to stop the process. "I don't think it would be a good thing for anyone, to make this a topic of heated debate and controversy," she remarked.

She expressed her appreciation to the many clergy and laity that supported her. At the same time she acknowledged that many others have opposed a transgender clergy person. "My theology is one that says you need to love everyone. If it's not an act of grace—if it's not an act of love, then you shouldn't do it," Steen said.

She pointed out that the church preaches protection for all people out in the world but does not want to extend those protections within its framework. "I am not angry or bitter over this at all," she stressed. "I really care about the church. I am going to continue to pray for the United Methodist Church, but I am called to minister and I am going to go to those who have been disenfranchised, those who have been pushed out.

"I am concerned about the family of God. The family of Jesus Christ extends to all people—not to a specific group," she said. "I am going to go on preaching ... and go on loving in the name of Jesus Christ—wherever I'm called." —UMNews, July 2, 2002



Photo by Bonny Stainaker-Folli

Charles Yrigoyen, general secretary, GCAH, points out the boxes of documents from Methodist Federation for Social Action now being processed. In back l to r, are Ra Drake, general secretariat-elect; Bill Wilson; Mary White; Margie Briggs; Cynthia Bond Hopson; Soomee Kim, general secretariat-elect; Stephanie Anna Hixon, general secretariat; and Jim Gates.

### GCSRW Coordinating Committee tours GCAH

As part of its semi-annual meeting July 19-20, 2002, the Coordinating Committee of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) toured the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH) in Madison, NJ. As Charles Yrigoyen, general secretary, explained, "We are primarily a research center, not a museum."

One focus of the tour of the building on Drew University campus was a discussion with Yrigoyen about the upcoming 50th anniversary of full clergy rights for women. In preparation for the 2006 celebration GCSRW and GCAH are working together to encourage annual conferences to collect oral histories of their clergywomen. Yrigoyen pointed out that GCAH holds an important oral history taken with Maud Keister Jenson, the first woman to receive full clergy rights in the Methodist Church in 1956.

Other highlights from the tour included a visit to the temperature-controlled vaults, the library area where 600 periodicals are received each month, and an outline of the holdings on women's history. ●

Visit us on the web!

[www.gcsr.org](http://www.gcsr.org)

## Worth Repeating . . .

"I believe with every fiber of my being that for the UMC to become a true community of God's reign, gender equality and justice must be accomplished. Until that dream is fully realized, the UMC is like an eight-cylinder car running on four cylinders or even less. Imagine all the gifts and graces we are wasting!"

—Soomee Kim, general secretariat-elect of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

"We are committed to helping hurting people rather than hurting helpless people. We show compassion to others not because of who they are, but because of who we are. We are those who see beyond externals to see interior qualities that make us human and therefore sisters and brothers. In the words of Gandhi, 'we must be the change we want to see in the world.' We must risk more than what others see as safe, care more than what others think is wise, dream more than what others think is practical, and expect more than what others think is possible." —Douglass Fitch, to the Reconciling Ministries Network

## Ovations

To **Rebecca S. Chopp**, a United Methodist clergywoman and dean of the Yale University Divinity School, who has been named president of Colgate University in Hamilton, NY, effective July 1.

To **Carol Gallagher**, formerly a parish priest in the Diocese of Delaware, who became Bishop Suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia in April. A member of the Cherokee nation, Gallagher is the first indigenous female to be elected bishop of any church denomination.

To **Stephanie Anna Hixon** and **Cecelia M. Long**, who were awarded the Lee and Mae Ball Award from Methodist Federation for Social Action, an award that honors excellence in peace and justice ministry within and beyond the United Methodist Church, for their leadership as the general secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women. Hixon continues to serve in that role through Dec. 31, 2002, and Long left that position Dec. 31, 2001, to become conciliar officer of General Council on Ministries. The **GCSRW** also received the award for its work on behalf of social justice.

To **Lee Hee Ho**, the first lady of the Republic of Korea, who received the Outstanding Leadership in Peace and Justice Award from Scarritt-Bennett Center, the United Methodist retreat and educational facility that succeeded Scarritt College for Christian Workers, of which Ho was a 1958 graduate.

To **Martha H. Hutchinson**, a production editor at the United Methodist Publishing House, who joined the staff of the General Board of Discipleship as associate director of electronic communications.

To **Raquel Mull**, a Navajo and a member of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, who has been named organizing pastor of an All Nations United

Methodist Church in Albuquerque. All Nations Church will be the first United Methodist Native American congregation in the Albuquerque area.

To **Julie A. Robinson**, a member of the Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, KS, who was sworn in as a U.S. district judge on April 5 in Topeka, becoming the first African-American female district judge in the state and the second woman confirmed in the district's 141-year history.

To **Lorena Stone**, vice president of academic affairs at United Methodist-related Wesley College in Dover, DE, who has been selected to receive the Francis Asbury Award, sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, for significant contributions to fostering the church's ministries in higher education at the local, district or annual conference level.

To **Ekateria Teachout**, Ackerman, MS, who has received the Theresa Hoover Community Service and Global Citizen Award from the Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries, to research the use of alternative medicines in developing nations.

To **Jeannie Trevino-Teddie**, General Board of Global Ministries' missionary for Hispanic Ministries in the Central Texas Conference and member of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, who has been named director of the Mexican American Program at United Methodist-related Perkins School of Theology in Dallas.

To women campus ministers who have received Baker Graduate Awards from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry: **Jennifer Copeland**, a doctoral student at Duke University; **Marjean Eihers**, doctoral student at the University of Missouri-Columbia; and **Theta Wagner Miller**, who plans to complete a doctoral program at the University of Missouri. ☉

## Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us

Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker (Beacon Press, 2001).

In a combination of memoir and theology, Rita Brock and Rebecca Parker show how emphasizing Christ's obedience to God and sacrifice on the cross sanctions violence and exacerbates its effects, blesses silence about the abuse of human beings, and hinders the process of recovery—giving another full critique of the theology of atonement.

Brock and Parker, writing alternating chapters, witness to the legacies of violence in their own lives, and in the lives of those they have known and loved.

In the last section, the authors reflect on their arduous journeys to recover from violence, to discover an alternative vision of healing and love, and to articulate a theology of presence.

Watch for an interview with the authors in an upcoming issue.

## Calendar

Oct. 3-8

By **Rivers of Living Water**, Norfolk, VA. The Christian Educators Fellowship of The United Methodist Church holds its 16th national conference. For information, contact the conference website: [www.cefumc.org](http://www.cefumc.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.

Yes, I would like to continue to receive **The Flyer**:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 for one year    | <input type="checkbox"/> New subscription |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$18 for two years   | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 for three years |   |

Make check payable to GCSRW and send to:  
GCSRW, 1200 Davis, Evanston, IL 60201.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Conference (if United Methodist) \_\_\_\_\_



**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.



By Kathryn Johnson, editor and executive director, MFSA

## The future of the UMC: What's at stake for women?

If the conservative "renewal movements" within the United Methodist Church accomplish the goals they have set for themselves, the impact on women in the UMC will be devastating.

Among the goals are:

- Eliminating the General Board of Church and Society;
- Eliminating the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women;
- Drastically changing the direction of the General Board of Global Ministries, particularly the Women's Division;
- A return to "classical Christianity as stated in the historic ecumenical creeds";
- Limiting UM articulation of the trinity to "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" and opposing feminine references to God (e.g. God "giving birth" to creation); and
- Withdrawing UM support for a woman's right to choose in regard to her reproductive health, specifically withdrawing from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

I wish I could say the goals as stated here are exaggerated, or that the groups promoting them are so marginal as to be ignored. In fact, each of the above goals is taken

directly from documents, United Methodist News Service articles and/or the web pages of the Institute for Religion and Democracy (and its UM program, UMAction), RENEW (a network of evangelical UM women) and the Good News Movement.

As to the strength of these movements, General Conference 2000 served as a wake up call for many people who have assumed that the UMC will always allow for a diversity of theological opinion and expression as we grow in our understanding of God and God's grace.

The invitation to those 1,185 clergywomen attending the 2002 International United Methodist Clergywomen's Consultation in San Diego, Jan. 7-11 was to "enter a time of Sabbath...to rest in God." I pray that the women gathered in San Diego [found] themselves refreshed and strengthened through their experience. Further, I pray that they, and other clergy and laywomen across the church, will use the gift of strength and clarity received through Sabbath experiences to claim the church for the God of love, inclusion and diversity. There is too much at stake to do otherwise.

*This article is reprinted by permission from Social Questions Bulletin (Jan.-Feb. 2002), the newsletter of the Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA). For further information, contact MFSA, 212 East Capitol St., NE, Washington, DC 20003. (202) 546-8806. Web site: [www.mfsaweb.org](http://www.mfsaweb.org). E-mail: [mfsa@mfsaweb.org](mailto:mfsa@mfsaweb.org).*