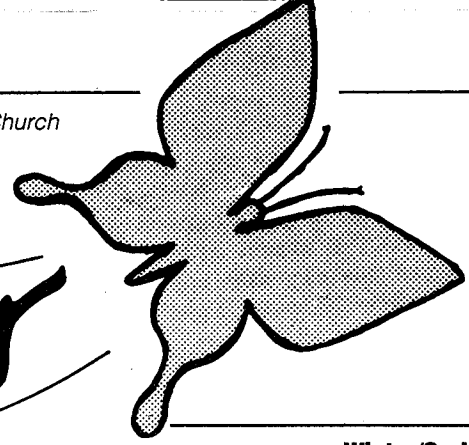


The Flyer



Vol XIV, No. 3

Winter/Spring 1994

Three of top 10 stories

Century reports related to women's concerns

In the Dec. 22-29, 1993, issue of *Christian Century*, an article entitled "The year's top stories" reviews the top stories in religious news in 1993. With their permission, **The Flyer** offers here excerpts from that story, pages 1291-1293:

Sexual abuse in the church (Ranked #1)

Last year [1992] sexual abuse in the church ranked number four on our list of the year's top religious stories, and we cited Cardinal Joseph Bernardin as having established comprehensive guidelines for responding to such charges. This year the issue has shot to the top of the list, and Bernardin himself stands accused of abusing a male student who was under his administrative care some years ago.

While Bernardin denies the charges and has asked for quick hearings to clear his name, the unambiguous severity of the problem was underscored by the recent sentencing of former Roman Catholic priest James Porter to an 18-to-20-year jail term for multiple charges of child molestation—charges to which Porter pled guilty. Victims in that case, as in others, were relieved to have been able, finally, to tell their pain-filled stories.

Conflict on sexual ethics (Ranked #3)

Sharp divisions over sexual ethics, and especially over the understanding of homosexuality, could not be sidestepped in mainline churches, however much some leaders might have wished to do so.

Leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America found themselves in a swirl of controversy following the October release of a task force report on human sexuality that apparently called on Christians to affirm gay partnerships.

Conservative groups blasted the document, the church's Conference of Bishops questioned the report's use of the Bible, and Karen Bloomquist, the staff member who had directed the study, was asked to leave the project.

The report, four years in the making, was designed for study and comment, and won't be acted on by the church until at least 1995. The reaction to the report made it clear how painful study and comment are, however.

On another front, the general Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), faced with a vote on whether to alter its ban on ordaining practicing homosexuals, in June decided to uphold the ruling and devote another three years to study of the topic. Further judgment on the issue is not likely to wait that long.

Women in the church (Ranked #9)

The role of women in the church sparked controversy in several arenas. Women priests will soon fill pulpits in the Church of England, having cleared the final hurdle—a favorable vote in the House of Lords. In the year since the church voted in favor of ordaining women,

continued on page 2

Healing
BROKEN LIVES
&
COMMUNITIES

A video-teleconference on **Sexual Misconduct by Church Leaders**

May 10, 1994
11:30 am to 5:30 pm Eastern time

- focused on prevention and healing
- designed for laity, clergy and other church leaders
- featuring professionals such as **Dr. Marie Fortune** and **Dr. Larry Graham** with presentations, questions and answers

Racism/sexism task force studies difficult issues

A task force comprised of membership from two general commissions of The United Methodist Church has organized to identify and address the areas of intersection of racism with sexism within the church at a meeting at Washington, D.C., Jan. 14-15.

Five members each from the General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women organized and adopted a time frame and context for addressing the issues identified in the purpose of the task force:

1. To name the effects of the intersection of racism and sexism on racial ethnic minority women and the church;
2. To develop action steps to address the issues and answers which will help bring reconciliation;

3. To prepare a report to be used by the church.

"The place where the intersection of racism with sexism is most often found is with racial ethnic minority clergy women. We feel that if we can make even a small impact on the pain and disillusionment felt by these clergywomen, we will have helped our church move forward," stated Douglas Grove-DeJarnett, a member of GCSRW. "The isolation and loneliness of racial ethnic minority clergy women is something that must be addressed," he emphasized.

The task force is preparing a research document to gather data, writing a theological statement, and evaluating other research that has already been done across this church and in other denominations. ■

Ovations

To **Cecile Adams**, who has been named council on ministries director of Detroit Conference. She is the first woman and first lay person to occupy the office in that conference.

To **Deborah Bass**, long-time consultant for the General Board of Global Ministries National Division, who has been named assistant general secretary of that unit.

To **Lydia Vervian Cincore**, a member of Holman United Methodist Church in Los Angeles, who has been named by the Women's Division as the recipient of the 1994 Theresa Hoover Community Service and Global Citizen Award.

To **Donella M. Clemens**, Souderton, PA, who is the first woman to be elected moderator of the Mennonite Church in North America.

To **Suzan D. Johnson Cook**, who is the first African-American woman to be elected pastor of an American Baptist congregation.

To **Roberta Diussa**, a member of Archer UMC in Allendale, NJ, who was elected president of the 9,000-member Goodwill Industries Volunteer Services.

To **Mary Jane Gibson**, former Massachusetts state representative and an active United Methodist, who presented the first Shaw lecture, a program of the Anna Howard Shaw Center at the Boston University School of Theology.

To **Virgie Cooper Holbrook**, pastor of Lakeway UMC in Pottsboro, TX, who is a winner of a 1993 Circuit Rider Award, given by the United Methodist Publishing House for outstanding work in church growth and evangelism. The previous issue of **The Flyer** reported that Sharee Kelly, pastor of Rushville and Hay Springs (NB) UM churches, also won an award.

To **Barbara Hora**, Western New York Conference treasurer, pension officer and director of administrative services, who has been named an assistant general secretary of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits, working with annual conference health insurance.

To **Margaret A. Krych**, who was elected to the Charles F. Norton Chair for systematic theology and Christian education at Philadelphia Lutheran Theological Seminary. She is the first woman at the seminary to be elected to a chair.

To **N. Sharon Leatherman**, Williamsport, MD, who has been named staff coordinator of the United Methodist Appalachian Development Committee. The committee is a mission coalition of 24 annual conferences, 4 churchwide program agencies and regional mission projects.

To **Sharon Maeda**, a former director of UM Communications and consultant to the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, who has been named deputy assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

To **Ruth Esther Wheaton Meeker** (1896-1990), former editor of *The Methodist Woman*, who was inducted into the UM Association of Communicators "Hall of Fame."

To **Bettie W. Story**, director of communications for the Central Illinois Conference, who was named "Communicator of the Year" by the UM Association of Communicators (UMAC).

To **Kathryn F. Wolford**, the first woman to be elected executive director by the Lutheran World Relief board of directors. ■

Copy deadlines for *Flyer* information

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 these dates:

March 31 Spring 1994

May 31 Summer 1994

August 31 Fall 1994

Send to: **Bonny Stalnaker Roth**, GCSRW, 1200 Davis St., Evanston, IL 60201. (708) 869-7330. FAX: (708) 869-1466.

Christian Century reports

continued from page 1

Anglican bishops have attempted to appease clergy who oppose the move. England's Catholic bishops voted to accept en bloc Anglican congregations—and their priests—who disapprove of women's ordination. Among those switching to Rome was St. Matthew's Church, one of London's largest.

In other developments, Southern Baptist officials rejected a proposal that would have allowed the SBC to expel congregations that ordain women. Mary Adelia McLeod became the first woman to head a diocese of the Episcopal Church when she was installed as bishop of Vermont. ■

The Flyer

Winter/Spring 1994

Vol. XIV, No. 3

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.

GCSRW officers:

Ann Sherer, President/Joyce Waldon Bright, Vice-President/John Campbell, Secretary

General Secretariat:

Stephanie Anna Hixon/Cecelia Long

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(708) 869-7330

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Printed on recycled paper. 

Status Report

Jury orders pastor to pay damages

A Denver jury has awarded \$164,000 Jan. 25 to Dianne R. Winkler, Aurora, CO, who sued Glenn Chambers, former pastor of Denver's Grace United Methodist Church for sexual harassment. Chambers was ordered to pay \$58,000 in damages; the Rocky Mountain Conference was ordered to pay \$106,000 for negligence and breach of fiduciary duty.

Methodists Make News, Feb. 4, 1994

SC clergyman, pastoral counseling service sued

A former South Carolina Conference clergyman and a pastoral counseling service have been sued for \$50,000 for alleged sexual misconduct. First UMC in Grand Strand, SC, housed the counseling service; it is also named in the suit. The lawsuit charges Ken Smith, now of Myrtle Beach, with seducing a female client, while charging \$50 an hour.

Newscope, Jan. 14, 1994

RCAR broadens mission, changes name

"From its roots in the clergy movement that contributed to legalizing abortion in 1973, the interfaith community is reclaiming its

leadership role in the pro-choice movement," declared Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, president of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights. "We can no longer permit a minority religious viewpoint to dominate the national discussion."

The Coalition has expanded its focus beyond abortion to include full reproductive choice. To reflect its broader mission, the Coalition has changed its name to Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. The organization's broadened purpose is "to ensure that every woman is free to make decisions about when to have children according to her own conscience and religious beliefs, without government interference."

"As religious people, we believe that abortion can be a moral, ethical, and religiously responsible decision," Ragsdale continued. "By adopting a new broadened mission, we're putting abortion back where it belongs—in the context of women's full reproductive health. All too often, abortion is perceived as an isolated issue, but it is not. We must view abortion as one of many complex decisions facing women and their families—and trust women to do what is right."

The Coalition will advocate for the full range of issues that affect women's family planning options, including prevention of

teen pregnancy, reality-based education about sexuality and reproduction, and broad access to family planning programs including safe abortion services and voluntary sterilization.

News release, Dec. 13, 1993

England's House of Lords approves women priests

The last big hurdle to women priests in the Church of England was cleared recently with a vote in the House of Lords.

This put into motion legislation that observers estimate will open pulpits to an estimated 1,000 women seeking priestly status.

The vote in Parliament's upper chamber followed by four days a similar vote in the House of Commons and came almost a year after the Church of England's historic vote last November opening the church's pulpits to women.

Although the Church of England's General Synod had given its assent to women priests last year, the approval of Parliament was necessary also because, as a state church, the Church of England cannot be structurally altered without the approval of Parliament and the royal household.

The United Methodist Reporter,
Nov. 12, 1993 ■

Flyer

Nominations sought for Circuit Rider Award

The United Methodist Publishing House is now accepting nominations for the Circuit Rider Award, which recognizes an individual(s) who has made a highly significant contribution to membership and attendance growth in a United Methodist Church and/or Sunday school in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

Nomination letters must be postmarked no later than June 30, 1994, to be eligible for the 1994 award. To request a nomination form and further details, contact Circuit Rider Award, ATTN: Dr. Walter H. McKelvey, Public and Church Relations, P.O. Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202. (615) 749-6327.

Applicants invited for Hoover award

The Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries invites applications for the 1994 Theresa Hoover Community Service and Global Citizen Award. Applications must be postmarked no later than Aug. 1, 1994.

The award honors Theresa Hoover for her service to the Women's Division, The United Methodist Church, and the ecumenical world. Hoover was a staff member of the Division from 1948-1990, and for 22 years was its chief staff officer.

The award is given annually to a woman age 21-35 without regard to race or nationality, who has demonstrated concern for her neighbors and community, shown that concern in service to her community, and exhibits an awareness of the total nature of our responsibilities in today's world.

The projected amount of the award for 1994 is \$8,000 to \$10,000 to be used as a grant for informal study, exploration, learning, research or observation in a subject area of the recipient's choosing in harmony with the current interests of the Women's Division. It is for travel to a country or region other than where the recipient resides.

To request an application, contact Barbara E. Campbell, Women's Division General Administration, Hoover Award, Room

1504, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115. (212) 870-3600.

Equality Now seeks human rights for women

Equality Now is an international human rights organization dedicated to action for the civil, political, economic and social rights of girls and women.

Taking advantage of both traditional and high-tech action techniques such as letter-writing and fax campaigns, video witnessing, media events and public information activities, Equality Now mobilizes action on behalf of individual women whose rights are being violated and promotes women's rights at local, national and international levels.

Historian Carolyn DeSwarte Gifford has formed a Chicago chapter, which meets monthly. For more information on this local chapter, call (708) 328-4010.

To join the national organization, write Equality Now, P.O. Box 20646, Columbus Circle Station, New York, NY 10023. ■

Resources

Amazons, Bluestockings and Crones: A Feminist Dictionary, Cheris Kramaræ and Paula A. Treichler (Pandora Press, 1992). First published in 1985 as *A Feminist Dictionary*, this text illustrates the ways in which women have sought to describe themselves and the rest of the world. Paper \$19.00.

Beginning to Heal: A First Book for Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse, Ellen Bass and Laura Davis (HarperPerennial, 1993). Book outlines key stages of the healing process, from remembering and crisis times, to breaking the silence, grief, and anger, to resolution and moving on. Paper \$8.00.

Daily Fare: Essays from the Multicultural Experience, ed. Kathleen Aguero (University of Georgia Press, 1993). Seventeen essays in which writers representing a broad spectrum of the American experience ponder the meaning of living in a nation of diverse and competing cultures. Paper \$14.95.

The Dance of Deception: Pretending and Truth-telling in Women's Lives, Harriet Goldhor Lerner (HarperCollins, 1993). Author of *The Dance of Anger* and *The Dance of Intimacy* presents a thought-provoking rather than prescriptive exploration. Paper \$4.50.

The God We Worship, Sondra Higgins Matthaei (Abingdon, 1993). This text deals chiefly with the doctrine of the Triune God and connects Wesleyan/United Methodist doctrinal understanding with the historic discussions of the Christian faith. Paper \$8.95.

Goddesses and Wise Women: The Literature of Feminist Spirituality, 1980-1992, An Annotated Bibliography, Anne Carson (The Crossing Press, 1992). Paper \$12.95.

How Little We Knew: Collusion and Confusion with Sexual Misconduct, Dee Ann Miller (Prescott Press, 1993). A first-person story that demonstrates the revictimization by both the family and the system—the problem which almost every sexual abuse victim will agree is far more traumatizing than the primary sexual abuse. (800) 237-7737. Paper \$9.99.

Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide, George E. Tinker (Augsburg Fortress, 1993). An insightful look at the impact of Christian missionary efforts among tribal and non-Western peoples. Paper \$10.00.

On Earth as in Heaven: A Liberation Spirituality of Sharing, Dorothee Soelle (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993). An examination of how the power of religion and faith can be used to transform an unjust world. Discussion covers broad range of topics. Soelle deals with the freedom bestowed by the Spirit of God, biblical roots of social liberation, and the need for a new religious language. Paper \$9.99.

Perspectives on American Methodism, ed. Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt (Abingdon, 1993). These essays provide new perspectives and fresh readings on important Methodist topics; they

open up new avenues for Methodist self-understanding; they give in-depth or case-study attention to subjects that overviews must slight. Paper \$22.95.

Single Principles: The Single Woman's Ten Step Guide to Power, Sheron C. Patterson (Perseverance Press, 1993). The author offers a guide to solution-oriented empowerment of single women, complete with scriptural references. Paper \$9.95.

Sister Images: Guided Meditations from the Stories of Biblical Women, Mary Zimmer (Abingdon Press, 1993). A collection of twenty commentaries and guided imagery meditations written especially to help women make connections between their own lives and those of their female biblical counterparts. Paper \$7.95.

Soul Murder: The Effects of Childhood Abuse and Deprivation, Leonard Shengold, M.D. (Fawcett Columbine, 1989). Explores the devastating psychological effects of brutal or subtle acts against children in the adult lives of patients. Paper \$10.95.

The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible, Vol. 4: Old Testament Women, ed. Michael E. Williams (Abingdon Press, 1993). A comprehensive look at women's stories in the Hebrew Bible with an eye for retelling those stories. Text includes 27 stories, encompassing the Torah, the Prophets, the Writings, the Apocrypha (with Judith and Susanna). Hardback \$15.95. ■

Calendar

April 8-9

A Feminist Analysis of Power, Durham, NC. Led by Elizabeth Dodson Gray. Resource Center for Women in Ministry in the South, Suite 608, 331 W. Main St., Durham, NC 27701.

April 21-24

Is Nothing Sacred? A retreat for women survivors of clergy sexual abuse presented by The Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. Kirkridge Retreat Center, Bangor, PA. (215) 588-1793.

April 25-27

Ministry, Heterosexism, Reconciliation: Challenge and Hope for the Church. Sponsored by the Peace and Justice Center, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 2121 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60201. (708) 866-3942.

April 29-30

Annual Conference for Pro-Choice Activists, Washington, DC. Sponsored by the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights and the

Women of Color Partnership. Contact RCAR Conference, 100 Maryland Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002. (202) 543-7032.

April 29-May 1

Sanctuary: A Retreat for Women Survivors of Sexual Abuse. Led by Patricia L. Liberty and Elaine V. Shaw. Contact Associates in Education and Prevention in Pastoral Practice, 27 Pojac Point, No. Kingstown, RI 02852. (401) 884-3741.

May 10

Healing Broken Lives—Sexual Abuse in the Church: Prevention and Healing. A teleconference for interfaith local and regional groups. (See page 1.)

May 12-15

Is Nothing Sacred? A retreat for women survivors of clergy sexual abuse presented by The Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. Lake Okoboji, Methodist Camp, Spirit Lake, IA. (712) 336-2936.

June 27-July 1

The Power and the Danger: Women Teaching Girls. Led by Judith Dorney and Maria Harris. Auburn Theological Seminary, 3041 Broadway, New York, NY 10027. (800) 818-2911.

July 21-24

Wind & Fire: Spirituality in Action. Eleventh biennial conference at North Park College, Chicago. Plenary speakers include Miriam Therese Winter, Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, Nancy Hardesty, Rosemary Keller, Ann Sherer, and Jamie T. Phelps. Contact Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus, 6124 N. Byron St., Rosemont, IL 60018. (708) 299-2256. FAX (708) 299-9967.

Make a difference in The United Methodist Church

A model for building coalitions

On July 14, 1992 at 7:30 p.m., the South Central Jurisdiction (SCJ) elected its first woman bishop, Ann B. Sherer. This historic event marked the culmination of a three-year effort, led by the Women's Leadership Team and supported by the Coalition for an Inclusive Episcopacy.

Along with the election of Bishop Sherer, the Team celebrated the election of Joel Martinez, first Hispanic bishop in the United States, and Alfred L. Norris, an African-American bishop.

The story of the Women's Leadership Team (WLT) and its companion Coalition for an Inclusive Episcopacy, as told by Susan P. Davies and JoAnn Miles, informs the structure of this supplement. Davies, district superintendent in Nebraska, and Miles, lay person in Arkansas, served as co-conveners of the WLT. (See end of supplement for addresses and phone numbers.)

Electing women episcopal leaders is only one purpose of the Women's Leadership Team. At their Sept. 1993 meeting, the group decided to provide ongoing leadership training opportunities and networking to support effective leaders in all areas of the jurisdiction.

The WLT offers a model which other jurisdictions have begun to use. The Team has set a standard for inclusivity that the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women regards as a model for the whole United Methodist Church.

While no outline can reflect adequately the impact of these groups, our goal here is to point a way for others to follow and write their own inclusive stories.

Determine whether to build coalition and begin process

Building coalitions is long, hard work. Persons who take on the task must be committed to a vision of true inclusivity and to a broad view of the church that extends beyond a particular agenda.

A coalition, then, becomes a community in which individuals and small groups trust each other and can hold before them a vision and needs of the community and use those criteria as a higher priority than the sometimes disparate agendas of portions of the community.

The issue of gender inclusiveness is closely tied to racial/ethnic inclusiveness. Thus, working with established caucuses, as well as inviting representatives from constituencies not organized into caucuses, offers voice and support for the common interests of all.

■ Assess level of commitment to coalition building

Various women from the SCJ had tried to coalesce at Jurisdictional Conferences in 1980, 1984, and 1988, without achieving significant results. Toward the close of 1988 JC, a group committed themselves to gathering regularly through the upcoming quadrennium to bring about greater participation of women in the 1992 JC.

The Women's Leadership Team (WLT) began meeting in 1989, two or three times a year, usually in conjunction with other

jurisdictional events, such as Ministers Week at Perkins School of Theology each February and at Bishops Week at Mt. Sequoyah, AR, each June.

■ Develop broad-based coalition with racial/ethnic groups

The WLT realized that the journey toward an episcopacy that reflected more equitably the racial/ethnic and gender diversity of the jurisdiction would require broad-based coalition building. To broaden their sphere of influence, the WLT worked through the summer and fall of 1991 seeking participation from a number of jurisdictional groups:

- Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR)
- MARCHA (Methodists Associated Representing the Cause of Hispanic Americans)
- Asian American representatives, contacted through the National Federation of Asian American United Methodists (NFAAUM)
- Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (The churchwide caucus is Native American International Caucus.)

Many phone calls and letters later, each of these constituencies joined with the WLT and selected two representatives, all of whom formed what became known as the Coalition for an Inclusive Episcopacy. Their first official gathering took place in February 1992, at Ministers Week.

■ Develop trust among all persons

The Coalition discovered that they had to work diligently and constantly to build and rebuild trust among themselves and their constituencies. After years of experiencing divisiveness often created by those outside their constituencies, they had to assess continually their combined strengths and to build a network that connected everyone.

Implement the dream of coalition building

From a foundation of commitment and trust, a coalition evolves through dialogue and visioning. Developing common goals and communicating those goals to a broader audience serves to solidify the work of the community. During the planning process, remember to consider funds for carrying out the work of meetings, publicity, travel, and related expenses.

■ Facilitate dialogue, visioning among coalition members

In April 1989, a Design Team organized by the WLT participated in a visioning process led by Lydia Martinez, clergy from California.

During the February 1992 Ministers Week, which is a politically-charged gathering in the SCJ, the Coalition invited members of all its constituencies to gather to claim common ground and introduce their episcopal candidates to one another and talk in an open forum.

Immediately following that gathering, the Coalition invited all

continued on page 6

A model for building coalitions *continued from page 5*

declared episcopal candidates to a reception to meet with their constituencies.

■ **Determine goals**

The WLT developed the following vision statement:

We are committed to inclusive church leadership. We believe all persons should serve the church according to their diverse gifts and graces. Our vision is the full inclusion of all members of the body of Christ, and representation in the episcopacy for all members of the body, especially women and ethnic persons.

During the February 1992 meetings, the Coalition developed a common agenda:

1. We will work to elect four inclusive bishops, including at least one female, one African American, and one Hispanic American.
2. This election will be top priority. We will not accept leftovers.
3. We will work together and not allow ourselves to be pitted against each other.

The WLT believed that their job was to empower emerging women candidates to offer themselves for the episcopacy. While traditional processes suggested they should select one woman as a candidate, the WLT resisted that pressure and held fast to their belief that viable women candidates would come forward. They also held that rather than their group, the Jurisdictional Conference, led by the Spirit, should elect from among those candidates. Moreover, their experience had shown that one woman put forward as a candidate became an isolated target for opposing forces.

■ **Foster communication and publicity**

To reach a larger audience and foster greater understanding, the Coalition issued press releases about their reception for episcopal candidates.

Before and after the reception and at 1992 General Conference, Coalition representatives met for strategic planning. From those meetings developed "The Coalition for an Inclusive Episcopacy Newsletter," which featured short biographies of episcopal candidates supported by the Coalition.

■ **Determine financial needs and resources**

The WLT began their fund-raising efforts by asking each other for contributions at their first meeting and has continued to take collections at every meeting. The WLT brochure contained a coupon inviting contributions that entitled one to receive the newsletter.

■ **Prepare to lend support at Jurisdictional Conference**

A key to assuring jurisdiction-wide support is to recruit representatives from each annual conference who can communicate and work with people across their annual conferences.

Visibility, communication, and community can be enhanced by organizing a central location at JC for episcopal candidates, strategy team, and other supporters to gather.

■ **Organize support within annual conferences**

The WLT enlisted annual conference representatives who sought and received commitment from their caucuses to support inclusivity. The Team connected with their annual conference network before and during JC.

■ **Plan centers for support and ongoing dialogue during Jurisdictional Conference**

The Coalition for an Inclusive Episcopacy hosted a hospitality room at JC that served as a meeting place for caucuses, a conversation area for supporters, and an inclusive room that heightened their visibility.

In a corner of the JC meeting room, the WLT occupied a table at which constituents could gather and share information. That location also offered an on-site point for celebrating as inclusive candidates were elected.

■ **Affirm, support those elected and those not elected**

Because the journey toward the episcopacy is an arduous and often painful process, regardless of the outcome, inclusive groups need to plan opportunities for support and thanks to those persons who participate.

After the balloting process was complete and the meeting adjourned, the Coalition sponsored a service of thanksgiving for caucus representatives, episcopal candidates, and all who had worked on the vision. In the service the liturgy honored those who had offered themselves and those who were elected to the episcopacy. The new bishops received special stoles made from fabric sent from each annual conference. Those who offered themselves received similar wall hangings. These gifts reflected the diversity and symbolized the unity of the women of the jurisdiction.

■ **Seek the guidance of the Spirit**

Throughout the process of building a coalition, just as with any of our endeavors, we must seek the guidance of the Spirit. For the WLT the Spirit was an ever-present force.

For example, following the opening worship of JC, the Coalition held a prayer service in the chapel adjoining a key reception area. Participants sang, prayed, talked, and supported one another for the journey of JC. They reported feeling a powerful sense of the presence of the Spirit.

As Sandra Lydick, current co-convenor of WLT and clergy in Texas, reported in *Wellsprings* (Fall 1993, p. 62) in an article about the WLT, "Two critical factors were involved: the Holy Spirit was in, through and over this Leadership Team. In fact, I believe She called us into community for such a time as this. Second, we reached out to form a coalition with Hispanic and African-American brothers and sisters who also stand on the margins, and we worked in solidarity with them. The community turned out to be broad based and solidly built."

■ **For more information**

Susan P. Davies, district superintendent, Northeast District Office of the UMC, 1101 Riverside Blvd., #1, Norfolk, NB 68701. (402) 371-1313.

JoAnn Miles, 1100 Ronwood Drive, Little Rock, AR 72207. (501) 224-0803. ■

Late breaking news

Commission supports 'Re-Imagining' participation

At its Feb. 24-27 meeting at Gulfside Assembly, Waveland Miss., the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) discussed the recent controversy surrounding the November conference, "Re-Imagining God, Church, Community." That conference, held in Minneapolis, was an ecumenical celebration of the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Decade: Churches in Solidarity with Women.

Members of the GCSRW who attended the Re-Imagining Conference gathered to share their witness of the event. The Commission affirmed the following statement prepared by those members who attended the conference.

"1993 marked the mid-point of the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women. To celebrate this event, 2,200 women and a few men from all over the world came together in Minneapolis to the Re-Imagining Conference. The participants represented various denominations, faith traditions, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

"The roster of speakers read like a 'who's who' in the emerging world of womanist/feminist scholars who shared

their Biblical and theological understandings of God who is present with us in many and varied ways.

"This event was a celebration of diversity which expressed the fullness of God's creation. By God's grace, the church is a transforming and renewing community which, for us, is what Re-Imagining was all about. We honored God and one another in our diversity through song, dance, ritual, theology, and Biblical interpretations. We were challenged to re-imagine a church where all of God's children know justice, equity, and love.

"It saddens those of us who rejoice in the diverse expressions of faith, culture and God when other voices misunderstand and misrepresent such a unifying gathering. We affirm the right and gift of women to gather, to reflect, to name, to receive, and to share with each other, the Church, and the world the fullness of our Christian faith."

The members of the GCSRW also affirmed by consensus their support for the Women's Division in their participation in the Re-Imagining Conference.

See the upcoming issue of *The Flyer* for further details on the Feb. 24-27 GCSRW meeting in Mississippi.

Jobs

Please contact prospective employer when possible to confirm that search is continuing.

General Secretary, United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits, Evanston, IL. Applications for the position may be sent to Bishop Clay F. Lee, Jr. (president of the board), P.O. Box 51787, Knoxville, TN 37950-1787.

Associate Director, East Ohio Conference Council on Ministries, North Canton. Focus of portfolio is racial-ethnic churches and congregational redevelopment. Apply by April 15 to Dr. Marejoyce Green, Chairperson of Staff Supervisory Committee, East Ohio Conference COM, 8800 Cleveland NW, P.O. Box 2800, North Canton, OH 44720. (216) 499-3972.

Librarian, Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Require ALA accredited MLS and graduate degree(s) in theological education. Experience as professional librarian. Send letters of nomination or application, with supporting documents to Frederick C. Tiffany, Academic Dean, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, P.O. Box 1204, Delaware, OH 43015. (614) 362-3341. Review of applications began Jan. 3 and continues until position is filled. ■

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Local church presents sexual harassment skit

The following dialogue on sexual harassment was presented at the January Charge Conference at Claremont United Methodist Church, Claremont, CA. This skit serves as an example of how a local church, working within its annual conference sexual harassment policy, has developed its own policy as part of its ministry to all parties involved in sexual harassment situations. The skit was written by Lynn Jackson, chairperson of the church's combined work area on the Status and Role of Women/Religion and Race and co-chair of the California-Pacific Conference CSRW.

Question-Person 1: Hey, Lynn, I understand that the church has a sexual harassment policy. Is there some reason why we need that now? Is something going on that I haven't heard about?

Answer-Person 2: No, no problem! The best time to develop a sexual harassment policy is when there is no problem. Having a policy and procedure in place may keep us from ever having a problem, or at least give us a way to deal with it if it should occur. Besides, our annual conference passed a formal resolution in 1991 that all churches in this conference do sexual harassment training. And we are just beginning this.

Q-Person 3: Do some churches really have this problem?

A-Person 2: Two churches in one district of our conference are facing legal suits right now for sexual harassment. A policy is the best way to avoid such a suit.

Q-Person 4: Okay, then, what is sexual harassment?

A-Person 2: Our church's combined work area on the Status and Role of Women/Religion and Race has been studying this topic for over a year. We have accepted the United Methodist definition of sexual harassment as "Any sexually related behavior that is unwelcome and/or offensive, or which fails to respect the rights of others. This behavior includes any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favor, and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment in an organization."

Q-Person 1: So, suppose someone does something I don't like. What should I do?

A-Person 2: We have developed a three-step process, including keeping records, informal efforts to resolve the problem, and a formal process.

Q-Person 3: What would record-keeping mean?

A-Person 2: A person should keep a log of the date, time and place and a summary of what happened. In addition, the person should tell a friend or ask for a representative from the conference Commission on

the Status and Role of Women to confide in. That person can assist the person who feels harassed.

Q-Person 4: Then what happens?

A-Person 2: The second step is informal resolution. We hope that the person who feels harassed will attempt to tell the other person that the conduct is unwelcome and ask them to stop. This could be in person or by telephone.

Q-Person 1: What if informal resolution doesn't work?

A-Person 2: Then the person would move to the third stage, formal resolution.

First, the person chooses an advocate to assist and possibly resolve the problem without going further.

Second, the problem would then be presented to the senior pastor (assuming the senior pastor is not the problem) or to the chairperson of Staff-Parish Relations, if the senior pastor is involved. This person will attempt to resolve the problem by a meeting of the parties along with a friend or advocate for each.

Q-Person 3: What if the problem cannot be settled by negotiation?

A-Person 2: If there is still disagreement, the senior pastor or Staff-Parish chairperson will investigate the allegations and make a recommendation to the parties.

Q-Person 4: What if the parties don't accept the recommendation?

A-Person 2: Either party can request a hearing from the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. Staff-Parish will designate a hearing board of up to five members to hear the matter.

Q-Person 1: What if everyone in the church hears about this?

A-Person 2: The policy asks that all information regarding the accusation be kept confidential until the charges are substantiated.

Q-Person 3: So can anything happen as a result of the Staff-Parish hearing board decision?

A-Person 2: The hearing board can make recommendations against either the person accused of the sexual harassment or a person whom it finds to have made false charges. Some of the possibilities are admonition, counseling, apology, or even referral for legal action.

Q-Person 4: Will we, as a church, deal with this problem any differently than another organization?

A-Person 2: We, as a church, will make every effort to provide ongoing ministry and pastoral support for all parties involved. The bonds of Christian love call us to effect healing for all parties. ■



**The General Commission on the
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