

The Foyer

Vol XXIV, No. 2

Fall 2003

To petition for creation of 'Council on Inclusiveness'

Members determine legislation for General Conference

During their September 2003 annual meeting, members of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women voted to petition the 2004 General Conference to agree that their commission and the General Commission on Religion and Race start planning and creating a single "Council on Inclusiveness."

That item was one of eight petitions the Commission submitted to General Conference for consideration during the April-May 2004 meeting in Pittsburgh. The petition recommends that planning would occur during the 2005-08 quadrennium, with the new structure to be submitted for approval to the 2008 General Conference. The work of the new Council on Inclusiveness would continue to include monitoring, advocacy and education on issues related to gender and race discrimination.

Gail Murphy-Geiss, GCSRW president, introduced the petition. She told Commission members that she saw the denomination's current financial crunch as an opening to

create an agency that advocates for social justice for people in any number of categories, not simply race or gender.

"I'm using the financial crunch as an opportunity to envision a new way to talk about inclusiveness," she explained.

The petition does not call for a merger of two existing agencies but the creation of a new body. Murphy-Geiss said she considered the new council "something you must do for fairness in the church."

The rationale for the petition notes that many instances of discrimination include both race and gender, while people with physical disabilities or other characteristics are not covered by either agency. "The new configuration would allow us to monitor our hospitality to all people in pursuit of truly open hearts, open minds, open doors," the petition said.

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Church must continue Hispanic outreach, GCSRW told

At its September 2003 annual meeting in Houston, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women continued its ongoing work of connecting with women across the connection. This meeting included Bible study, panel discussion, and visits to local churches—all led by and focusing on Hispanic United Methodists, particularly women.

As part of her Bible study, Minerva Carcaño recalled her own story of growing up in Edinburg, TX, where there were two Methodist churches in town—one for Hispanics and one for "Anglos."

She was thrilled when the two churches joined forces for vacation Bible school—held during the first summer at her own church and the

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Panel members speaking on issues of concern to Hispanic women greet one another at the Commission meeting: from left are Guadeloupe Diaz, pastor of Central Park United Methodist Church, Houston; Maria Teresa Santiago, commission member from Puerto Rico; Irma Turrubistes, a pastoral leader at Vida Nueva United Methodist Church; Minerva Carcaño, district superintendent in Oregon-Idaho Conference; and Maria Cantu, a candidate for lay missionary from Vida Nueva United Methodist Church in Houston.

Commission declines to renominate general secretariat

The general secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women will not be continuing with the agency. Commission members, meeting Sept. 25-28 in Houston, declined to re-nominate the co-general secretaries for 2004.

General secretaries of United Methodist commissions and agencies must be re-nominated by their boards of directors each year, with final approval coming from the General Council on Ministries.

Raponzil "Ra" Drake and Soomee Kim were nominated to the positions in September, 2002, succeeding Stephanie Anna Hixon and Cecelia Long, both of whom had reached the denomination's 12-year term limit for general secretaries.

"It was a sad, difficult decision," Gail Murphy-Geiss, president of GCSRW said. "We appreciate Ra and Soomee's willingness to come work for us as long as they did."

The Commission, which declined to elaborate on its decision, said its personnel committee would recommend an interim general secretary for 2004. In budget discussions, Commission members approved additional

2003 expenses that would include \$15,000 if an interim would start Nov. 1 and \$18,000 in relocation expenses for Drake and Kim.

Commission members also expect to hire only one person to fill the permanent position of general secretary in 2005. Currently, the Evanston, IL-based commission is the only general agency with two general secretaries.

Kim, born in South Korea, was pastor of First United Methodist Church in San Fernando, CA, and had been on the agency's commission since 2000. Drake, an African American and former pastor of Newman United Methodist Church in Lincoln, NB, had worked with Memphis and Nebraska conference commissions on the status and role of women. ●

Garlinda Burton chosen interim general secretariat of GCSRW

M. Garlinda Burton, editor of the United Methodist Church's *Interpreter* magazine, has been elected as the interim general secretariat of the General Commission on Status and Role of Women. Burton, 45, who has edited the magazine for eight years and is a former director of United Methodist News Service, assumed the position Nov. 1. She will remain interim executive for a year.

Commission members chose Burton through an Oct. 16 e-mail ballot, according to Gail Murphy-Geiss, president of the Commission. The election followed the Commission's decision not to renominate Raponzil "Ra" Drake and Soomee Kim as co-general secretaries for 2004.

"We are delighted to welcome a leader with such prominence and depth of experience in the church. Garlinda Burton can negotiate church structures and has developed extensive relationships across the church. Her gifts will help move us to General Conference with a strong voice," Murphy-Geiss said.

Said Burton: "As a lifelong United Methodist, I've learned a lot about what the church is and what the church could be if we took our commitment to justice for women and people of color seriously. I've always admired the mission and work of the Commission on Status and Role of Women in keeping the issue of women's empowerment before the church."

The United Methodist Church, she said, is called to become something new for Christ's sake. "We cannot become new as long as we are holding on to old stuff such as old sexism, old racism, and I'm just glad to be a small part of an organization that is looking at how we become that new creation."

She expressed a commitment to examining how "we put some teeth" into the commission's mandate of holding the church accountable. "I am concerned that we have not given COSROW the power to hold the church accountable when it fails to support women, to empower women and to fight for women."

Burton has worked at United Methodist Communications (UMCom) for 20 years. In addition to serving as the news service's director from 2002 to last July, she worked for many years as a staff writer. She edited *Interpreter* and oversaw the agency's Korean- and Hispanic-language ministries and InfoServ, the church's toll-free information service.

—United Methodist News Service, Oct. 20, 2003



Resources

Dissident Daughters: Feminist Liturgies in Global Context, Teresa Berger, ed. (Westminster John Knox Press, 2001). A collection of years of women's creative liturgical work. \$24.95.

Render Unto God: Economic Vulnerability, Family Violence, and Pastoral Theology, James Newton Poling (Chalice Press, 2002). Male dominance, white supremacy and now economic vulnerability play a role in domestic violence. The author points toward creative solutions. \$27.99.

Women and the Authority of Scripture: A Narrative Approach, Sarah Heaner Lancaster (Trinity Press International, 2002). This approach offers help for those who want to tread the line between those who consider scripture authoritative and those who feel it must be handled with less rigidity. \$24.

Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader, Elizabeth A. Castellis, ed., with Rosamond C. Rodman (Palgrave, 2001). A basic text for an academic introduction to the field, including diverse disciplines and varied perspectives. \$27.95. ●

Church must continue Hispanic outreach continued from page 1

second summer at the other church, which she had never been inside before.

Her joy turned to dismay when it became clear that the school's final program would be confined to the fellowship hall because the Anglo congregation "did not want their sanctuary soiled by brown children."

Carcaño, now almost 50 years old and serving as a United Methodist clergywoman in the Oregon-Idaho Conference, offered presentations and Bible studies that were part of an emphasis on Hispanic United Methodists. The denomination has encouraged the growth of Hispanic members and congregations during the past decade through its National Plan for Hispanic Ministry.

Jeannie Trevino-Teddle, a commission member from Dallas, pointed out that Latinos and Latinas would soon be the majority population in Texas, and she added that if the church is serious about its call to make disciples for Christ, it must be serious about mission with this population.

Trevino-Teddle, director of the Mexican-American Program at Perkins School of Theology, led commission members through part of *Pentecost Journey*, a basic resource that she helped put together for the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry. The curriculum sensitizes congregations to issues relating to Hispanics.



Commission President Gail Murphy-Geiss, left, expresses appreciation on behalf of the Commission to Guadeloupe Diaz, pastor of Central Park UMC.

Carcaño said she has celebrated the improvements in her own life because of her faith and involvement in the church, but stressed that she knows "people of my generation" who continue to struggle and live in poverty.

Maria Cantu, a candidate for lay missionary from Vida Nueva United Methodist Church in Houston, agreed that poverty, along with immigration status and difficulty with language, were the major problems faced by Hispanics today. She participated in a panel discussion with two other local Hispanic women and two Hispanic commission members.

But the Mexican native and grandmother of 11 had high praise for the freedom she felt within the church. "As Hispanic women, we are now free to express ourselves—we can preach, we can teach," she told commission members. "All women, Hispanic or not, have gifts to bring to the church."

Irma Turrubistes, a pastoral leader at Vida Nueva, also sees value in her neighborhood evangelistic work and involvement in the church, despite the lack of economic resources. "One of the reasons I have come to the United Methodist Church is that I see a big future," she said.

Maria Teresa Santiago, a commission member from Puerto Rico, still finds barriers for women, both inside and outside the church. In Puerto Rico, for example, men usually are pastors of the big churches, while "women tend to be sent to missions, sometimes impossible missions. We go where nobody wants to go."

Even low-income women can empower themselves. Turrubistes noted that every morning a small group of women comes to her home to pray, eat and prepare for the tasks of the day. In the church itself, about 35 women sell food to raise money for mission.

In the neighborhood around Central Park United Methodist Church, Guadeloupe Diaz, pastor of the church, has been organizing the women and other residents, many of them immigrants, for the past four years. Programs range from a counseling program for abused women to preschool classes to spiritual guidance. "We never close our doors, even if we can't pay our bills," Diaz said.

Commission members visited Central Park and witnessed the work that has been put into the building, with the help of volunteer labor and a \$25,000 grant. As she showed them around, Diaz mentioned it was not unusual, on a given day, to have a viewing organized by a nearby funeral home take place in the sanctuary as preschool kids played in the social hall and women prepared meals in the attached kitchen.

Commission members also visited Iglesia Metodista Unida San Marcos, the first Hispanic church chartered by the Texas Conference in 1989. In addition to a meal and lively worship, Silverio Sanchez, pastor of the church, shared his journey from Mexico to the United States and from small-business owner to pastor.

He told how his congregation bought and converted a former bank building into a house of worship. "We're still in the saving business," he quipped.

—Adapted from *UMNews Service*, Sept. 30, 2003

See related story "Sewing classes empower Hispanic women" with *Status Report* on p. 9.

The Flyer

Fall 2003

Vol. XXIV, No. 2

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 (ACCSRWs). Primary distribution of The Flyer is through the ACCSRWs; 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.

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Other 2004 General Conference proposals approved by Commission members include new resolutions on clergy spouses and families and celebration of full clergy rights for women. Updated resolutions are being offered on expansive biblical language and the eradication of sexism within the church.

The resolution on full clergy rights for women marks the 50th anniversary of the granting of those rights by the 1956 General Conference of the former Methodist Church, and calls upon every conference and local congregation to celebrate that milestone.

Another resolution, "Life in the Fishbowl," addresses concerns over the stresses suffered by clergy spouses and families. It is a situation "filled with unrealistic expectations, virtually nonexistent boundaries for privacy and personal time, disrupted lives, crisis in careers and educational programs, unending demands of congregational needs and pressure for spouses and 'PKs' (preacher's kids) to be perfect 'model' Christians." The resolution offers a number of suggestions for how General Conference can address the crisis.

—Adapted from *UMNews* press release, Sept. 30, 2003.

Education opportunities

If one of your New Year's resolutions is to continue your education, you may want to explore classes and workshops offered by retreat centers. Here are some ideas to help you begin your search:

United Methodist Camping and Retreat Centers www.gbod.org/camping

The Alban Institute, Bethesda, MD
Phone: (301) 718-4407 or (800) 486-1318. Website: www.alban.org

Kirkridge Retreat Center, Bangor, PA
Phone: (610) 588-1793
Website: www.kirkridge.org

Leaven Center, Lansing, MI
Phone: (989) 855-2606 or (989) 855-2277 Website: www.leaven.org

Scarritt-Bennett Center, Nashville, TN
Phone: (615) 340-7500
Website: www.scarrittbennett.org

WITNESS, Holland, MI
Phone: (616) 395.7876
Website: www.witnesschange.org

Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual, Silver Spring, MD
Phone: (301) 589-2509
Website: www.his.com/~mhunt

Moving toward
General Conference

April 27-May 7, 2004
Pittsburgh

United Methodists around the world are preparing for the quadrennial legislative assembly the 2004 General Conference. To obtain frequent updates on news about General Conference, visit the following website:

<http://umc.org/gc2004>

Included in the information at that site are such items as the following:

- Proposed Plan of Organization and Rules for the 2004 General Conference
- Legislative Committees and Paragraphs of *The Book of Discipline* Assigned to Each Committee
- Music/Dance Information
- United Methodist News Service Stories
- Prior General Conferences
2000 General Conference
1996 General Conference

Petitions for 2004 General Conference

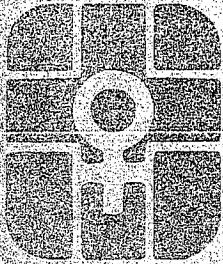
The following petitions were submitted by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women for consideration by 2004 General Conference. The full text of these petitions is available on the GCSRW website at www.gcsr.org

- Celebration of Full Clergy Rights for Women • *New resolution*
- Clergy Spouses and Families - "Life in the Fishbowl" • *New resolution*
- Restructuring of General Agencies • *New resolution*
- Biblical Language • *Amends Book of Resolutions No. 321*
- Eradication of Sexism in the Church • *Replaces Book of Resolutions No. 40*
- Inclusiveness of the Church • *Amends Book of Discipline Paragraph 4, Article IV of The Constitution*
- Appointment Making • *Amends Book of Discipline Paragraph No. 432.1*
- Chargeable Offenses and the Statute of Limitations • *Amends Book of Discipline Paragraph 2702*

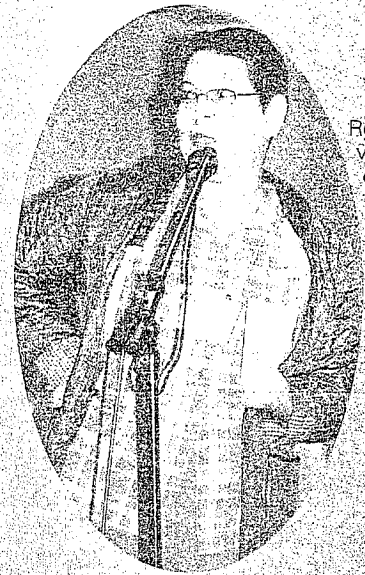
Summary of 2004 General Conference delegates

North Central Jurisdiction	164
Northeastern Jurisdiction	144
South Central Jurisdiction	170
Southeastern Jurisdiction	278
Western Jurisdiction	44
Central Conferences	184
Concordat Churches	10
Total	994

—United Methodist News Service



A parishioner, at left, from Central Park United Methodist Church greets Commission members and guests as they visit the church's neighborhood. Second from left is Guadeloupe Diaz, pastor, who introduces Lysette Perez-Salgado and Maria Teresa Santiago.



Rose Arroyo, vice president of the Commission, leads Commission discussion while chairing a plenary session.

GCSRW worships, listens, discusses in Houston

During the Sept. 25-28 annual meeting of the General Commission on the Status and Role on Women, members, guests, and liaisons addressed issues on the full and equal participation of women in the United Methodist Church. These photos offer a glimpse of that Houston meeting.



A member of Iglesia Metodista Unida San Marcos, on left, serves dinner to Commission members, from left, Sam Aguirre, Norma Wall Jones, Guadeloupe Diaz (pastor of Central Park United Methodist Church), and Maria Teresa Santiago.



Wearing headphones for translation purposes, Commission members and guests listen to panelists sharing their experiences as Hispanic women in the UMC. From left are Rachel Scott (Louisiana Conference guest), Mike Minnix, Charlotte Fitzsimons, Chuck Hefley, John Hardeman, Eva Thai, and Soo-Jung Hwang.



Lynn Baker, Commission member, on left, exchanges perspectives with guests Sharon Stewart, pastor of Websters Chapel, Victoria, TX; Ruby Nelson, Texas Conference, and Rachel Scott, Louisiana Conference.



Lysette Perez-Salgado, executive secretary, Mission Contexts and Relationships, General Board of Global Ministries, leads the Commission in singing during her Bible study.



Training held for new DSs and DCMs

In August, newly appointed district superintendents (DSs) and directors of connectional ministry (DCMs) met for training at Lake Junaluska, NC. Above are the women participants. Front row, from left: Patricia A. Lewis, Western North Carolina; Sally O. Langford, Western North Carolina; Jan Marsi, Wyoming; Ann Burkholder, Florida; Bette Poe, Wyoming. Middle row: Kathleen Overby

Webster, Virginia; Debra Ball-Kilbourne, Dakotas; Natalie Hanson, Western New York; Sally Price, East Ohio; Linda Louderback, Kansas West; and Brenda Lear, Rocky Mountain. Back row: Donna Pritchard, Oregon-Idaho; Susan Garrett, Virginia, DCM; Victoria Sizemore Tandy, Mississippi; Paige S. Williams, Kentucky; DeDe Leetch, North Georgia; and Kim. M. Goddard, Holston.

Fly

Resource supports ministry of single clergywomen

Jan Witman, a clergywoman for 19 years in Yellowstone Conference, has developed a resource for helping support the ministry of single clergywomen in The United Methodist Church. This manual is designed for use by cabinets, boards of ordained ministry, and staff-parish relations committees. Witman's manual, which is a part of her doctoral dissertation at San Francisco Theological Seminary, was developed from data gathered during her interviews with U.S. clergywomen serving within the UMC.

For more information, contact Witman at Community United Methodist Church, 750 Electric Ave., Bigfork, MT 59911. Phone: (406) 837-5678. E-mail: janwit@digisys.net.

New website offers connections for women

What began in 2000 as an e-mail newsletter supporting New Mexico Conference Clergywomen and Lay Professionals has grown into a website with resources for all women serving the UMC around the world. The site, Connecting Women in Ministry, is available at <http://connectingnm.kf.dyndns.org>.

Women can submit personal stories, prayers, church news and other items for posting.

New book outlines rise of conservative groups in UMC

A group of active United Methodist lay and clergy leaders have released a book entitled *United Methodism at RISK: A Wake-Up Call*. The book focuses on organizations leading an ultra-conservative effort to control and reshape The United Methodist Church to fit their narrow political and theological framework.

The book was published by the Information Project for United Methodists, co-chaired by Bishop C. Dale White, widely known for his leadership on peace issues, and New York attorney and well-known United Methodist lay leader Beth Capen. Veteran Christian journalist Leon Howell is the author.

Among conservative groups named in the book are Good News and its Renew Women's Network, the Institute on Religion and Democracy and its UM Action, the Mission Society for United Methodists, the Confessing Movement, Lifewatch, the Association for Church Renewal, A Foundation for Theological Education, Transforming Congregations, and the Coalition for United Methodist Accountability. The book details attacks from these groups on United Methodist Women and the Women' Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, the General Board of Church and Society, the General

Commission on Religion and Race, and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Copies of *United Methodism at RISK: A Wake-Up Call* can be ordered from the Information Project for United Methodists (IPUM). Inquiries may be emailed to ipum@aol.com. Cost of the book is \$5 plus shipping and handling.

UMCom offers religious journalism scholarships

United Methodist students interested in religious journalism careers are invited to apply for scholarships from United Methodist Communications. The scholarships and fellowships are offered annually to students interested in religious communications. In addition, the agency is offering its seventh mentoring experience to address the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in annual conference communications.

The \$6,000 Stooddy-West Fellowship will help a graduate student pursuing a career in religious journalism study at an accredited graduate school or department of journalism. The agency also will award a \$2,500 Leonard M. Perryman Communications Scholarship for an ethnic minority student. This scholarship assists ethnic minority college students who will be juniors or seniors and are

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planning careers in print journalism, public relations and marketing or in audiovisual or electronic communications.

The \$30,000 Judith L. Weidman Racial Ethnic Minority Fellowship is a full-time, salaried fellowship given to a United Methodist and recent college or seminary graduate for a 12-month period beginning July 1 to work in church communications. The fellowship offers hands-on experience and mentoring in annual conference communications. It is aimed at building communications leaders of racial and ethnic minority background in the United Methodist Church. The fellowship, named for the former United Methodist Communications top executive, began in 1998.

The scholarship and fellowships provide opportunities for students with communications backgrounds to enhance their skills and pursue religious communications as a career option, according to Amelia Tucker-Shaw, a consultant in the agency's Communications Resourcing Team.

Application deadline for the Stoddy-West and Perryman scholarships and the Weidman Racial Ethnic Minority Fellowship is March 15.

Details on the annual awards and applications are at: www.umcom.org/scholarships. More information and applications for the racial ethnic minority fellowship are at www.crt.umc.org/rem or by calling Amelia Tucker-Shaw, scholarship and fellowship coordinator, (888) 278-4862.

GBCS website emphasizes UMC's Social Principles

The General Board of Church and Society launched its redesigned website, www.umc-gbcs.org, designed around the UMC's Social Principles. The web resource offers visitors background on key issues, worship and study resources, and access to elected officials.

According to Jim Winkler, general secretary of GBCS, the site makes it easy for visitors to learn about social issues, study the biblical and theological foundations of the church's positions, and then take action. ☉

Worth Repeating . . .

"We are reaping many benefits from those who gave their lives for a vision of a world and church in which the full humanity of all might be realized. . . . It is up to us to break down mental walls that resist that vision and to work with the generation to come to refashion a society according to King's dream."

—*Trudie Kibbe Reed, president of the historically Black Philander Smith College, Little Rock, AR, and former general secretariat of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women*

"People around the world are searching with a new desperation for a sign of hope that acknowledges our differences, transcends them, and allows the human family to live together in both diversity and in peace. . . . There is among us a deep hunger for a real-life demonstration of the lion and lamb lying down with one another. We long for another way that pulls the human family together in a manner that leads to life, not death. We are hungering for hope."

—*Sharon A. Brown Christopher, bishop of Illinois Great Rivers Conference,*

"I have a soft spot for the de facto Saudi ruler, crown Prince Abdullah, who is a man of decency and moderation. . . . He needs to . . . revive his own peace initiative and begin to empower his women—because women's empowerment is the best antidote to extremism."

—*Thomas L. Friedman, columnist, New York Times, May 25, 2003*

Francis A. Quinn, Roman Catholic bishop emeritus of Sacramento, says that "an overarching crisis in today's church is a crisis of faith; not faith in God, not faith in Jesus Christ, but a crisis of faith in the institutional church."

Quinn quotes Italian writer Carlo Carretto: "How much I must criticize you, my church, and yet how much I love! You have made me suffer more than anyone, and yet I owe more to you than anyone. I should like to see you destroyed, and yet I need your presence. You have given me much scandal, and yet you alone have made me understand holiness."

Carretto continues: "Never in this world have I seen anything more compromised, more false; yet never have I touched anything more pure, more generous, or more beautiful. Countless times I have felt like leaving you, my church, and yet every night I have prayed that I might die in your warm, loving arms."

—*Excerpted from America, April 7, 2003. Quoted in Context, June 1, 2003*

Ideas for action



Texas requires workshop before granting license to preach

For the first time, the Texas Conference Board of Ordained Ministry required that persons being licensed to preach attend a workshop on clergy sexual harassment/misconduct. This has been a requirement for ordination for several years but this is the first year for those being licensed.

AC/COSROW provided this workshop for 64 participants. For more information, contact Ruby Nelson, ruby_nelson@hotmail.com

Status Report

Calendar features homeless women

Joyce Riggins says the worst thing about being homeless isn't the rainy climate in Seattle or the lack of privacy in crowded shelters. It's the way people look at her as if she's done something wrong, or make a point not to look at her at all.

"Being homeless is no fun," Riggins says. "I've battled with depression by being homeless; it's no picnic. And society really kicks us."

Homeless Seattle women want people to look closely at those whom many try not to see. They've posed for a 2004 calendar that captures their pictures and their stories of struggle and survival.

Riggins has been homeless for six months. Being in the calendar makes her both proud and ashamed, she says. She's had a rough time lately, but she thinks the calendar's title, "Beauty and Strength," captures her experience.

"I don't profess to be the prettiest woman in the world, but I know I'm not the ugliest," she says. "I want the strength, my strength, to come through."

"The thing that impressed me about these women was how completely dignified they were," says Eve Faulkes, who took the photos used in the calendar. "They also had probably a whole lot more strength than me, a whole lot more faith than me. We thought it was high time people met a few of those wonderful women."

"I am Miss January," says Hester Garrett, giggling as she holds the calendar up next to her face. Garrett says homeless women often feel invisible.

"That's a terrible way to feel about your life," she says. "No matter what you are in, you are somebody and your circumstances really have nothing to do with your inner feeling for what you are."

The calendar is designed to spread compassion and understanding. It's a project of Seattle's Church of Mary Magdalene and its Mary's Place day center, which are in the basement of First United Methodist Church downtown. The Church of Mary Magdalene serves homeless and formerly homeless women.

The calendar grew out of United Methodist missionary Rachel Small's wish to honor the women as she completed her two-year assignment working with them. Rachel's mother, Eve Faulkes, teaches graphic design in West Virginia and had given workshops to the women when she visited her daughter. Small and Faulkes thought a calendar could help the women raise money for their programs, and put a face on the issue of homelessness.

The calendars are available at www.churchofmarymagdalene.org for \$10 each. The proceeds benefit the Church of Mary Magdalene and Mary's Place.

The women in the calendar hope those who take the time to look closely at their pictures, and see their beauty and their strength, won't find it so easy to look the other way.

Says Faulkes: "Look them in the face, don't look away like they are some kind of lesser being."

—UMNews Service, Nov. 12, 2003

Council affirms Discipline in case of lesbian pastor

The Judicial Council has sent a sharp reminder about the authority of the *Book of Discipline* in its ruling regarding a lesbian pastor in Washington state.

In an Oct. 27 decision, the Judicial Council affirmed the church's *Book of Discipline*, which forbids the ordination and appointment of "self-avowed practicing homosexuals." By sending the case back to two lower-ranking judicial bodies, the court also set into motion a series of events that could lead to a clergy trial—and possible loss of credentials—for Karen Dammann.

If that happened, it wouldn't be the first time a gay United Methodist pastor has been brought before a church court. However, Dammann's case is shaping up to be a precedent-setting one, observers say.

"I do think that it's the first case that has challenged (the church's) laws this openly and directly," said Elaine Stanovsky, a member of Elias Galvan's episcopal cabinet in the Pacific Northwest Conference, where the pastor

serves. She also noted that a clergy trial is not a certainty.

Dammann informed her bishop in February 2001 that she was living in a "partnered, covenanted homosexual relationship." The following November, at the direction of the Judicial Council, Galvan filed a complaint, charging that she had violated the *Book of Discipline*. The case wound its way through the church's legal processes, finally ending up back at the Judicial Council, which met Oct. 22-24.

In its latest ruling, the court reversed the decisions of two lower-ranking church bodies, the Western Jurisdiction Committee on Appeals and the Pacific Northwest Conference Committee on Investigation. In split votes, both committees had supported the dismissal of charges against Dammann.

The Judicial Council said both committees had committed "an egregious error of church law" by refusing to apply the *Book of Discipline* and the council's earlier decisions to the case. The court ordered the jurisdictional appeals committee to send the case back to the conference committee on investigation for a new hearing.

If members of the committee on investigation are "unwilling to uphold the *Discipline* for reasons of conscience or otherwise, such members must step aside in this matter," the court said. The court also said it was retaining jurisdiction "for the purpose of ensuring that its decision is implemented."

The court seems to have taken a new step in defining its own role and that of the annual conference in overseeing the judicial process, Stanovsky said. Clearly, she said, the Judicial Council members "were dissatisfied with procedural matters...and are wanting to exercise more influence at the annual conference level than they have in the past."

However, she said, she didn't hear the Judicial Council take away the committee on investigation's responsibility for determining grounds for a church trial. "I wouldn't say (a trial) is a certainty" in Dammann's case, she said.

Dammann said she expects the

case to go to trial—a possibility that she and her partner, Meredith Savage, have discussed. Currently serving at First United Methodist Church in Ellensburg, WA, Dammann remains a pastor in good standing, according to the conference.

In 1987, Rose Mary Denman of New Hampshire underwent a clergy trial after declaring that she was a lesbian. She lost her clergy credentials as a result.

The Judicial Council's ruling pleased groups in the church that are pushing for stricter adherence to the Book of Discipline, while advocates for more inclusiveness of gays expressed dismay.

The provision in the *Book of Discipline* that was used to bring Dammann's case to the Judicial Council was added at the 2000 General Conference, said Kathryn Johnson, director of Methodist Federation for Social Action, an unofficial group that advocates for full inclusion of gays and lesbians in the life of the church. The provision "reflects a growing tendency within the UMC to resort to trials and litigation as a means of settling our differences," she said.

The timetable for resolving Dammann's case is unclear, but the Judicial Council directed the appeals committee to move expeditiously.

—UMNews, Oct. 29, 2003

Giving rises among United Methodist women

Giving by members of United Methodist Women has remained strong in 2003, despite a general dip in donations throughout the denomination. Directors of the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, which serves as United Methodist Women's administrative body, received that news during their Oct. 17-20 annual meeting.

Connie Takamine, division treasurer, reported that undesignated giving had increased by 7.6 percent through August compared to the same eight-month period in 2002. "There is an increase in giving in every channel," she added. Undesignated giving in five different funds was at about \$6.4 million.

On a denomination-wide level, the amount of apportioned funds sent from annual conferences to the general church has decreased by about \$3

million, or 5 percent, for the first three quarters of 2003 compared to that period the year before.

The Women's Division increase, Takamine explained later to United Methodist News Service, brings the 2003 giving totals in line with 2001. In 2002, undesignated giving had dropped as it traditionally does during a year when the organization holds its quadrennial Women's Assembly and members divert funds to assembly participation and related offerings.

However, she noted that it is not unusual for United Methodist Women giving to remain steady during declines in general church income.

In items for action, directors approved the division becoming an organizational co-sponsor of an April 25 march in Washington supporting reproductive rights, including access to birth control and abortion.

The women also celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Church Center for the United Nations, owned by the Women's Division and built in 1963 to reaffirm religious support of the United Nations. The event included remarks by Cora Weiss, a tenant of the building who was recently named the first recipient of the William Sloan Coffin Award for Peace With Justice from Yale Divinity School. Weiss is a longtime activist who has worked for years with United Methodists on U.N. and peace-related issues.

"War," Weiss declared, "must be rejected as a means of settling disputes, and we're going to see how women can make that happen." She pointed to U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 as a tool women can use to achieve that goal.

Passed unanimously Oct. 31, 2000, the resolution supports the equal participation of women at negotiating tables and the protection of women and girls during armed conflict. Information about the resolution and ideas for implementation can be found at

www.peacewomen.org/un/ngo/wg.html, the home page of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.—UMNews Service, Oct. 21, 2003

Sewing classes empower Hispanic women

Tools as simple as a needle and thread are helping Hispanic women in Phoenix contribute to their family's income—and to their community.

The Wesley Community Center offers free sewing classes to those living in one of Phoenix's poorest areas, the *Nuestro Barrio*. The program began seven years ago, at the request of women in the neighborhood. The response has been so positive that the center has a waiting list for the lessons.

"In our service area, total family income on average is \$12,000," explains James Bottorf, executive director of the center. That's less than the federal government's poverty level for two people. In the *Nuestro Barrio*, large families—some with as many as eight children—are getting by on less than that.

In the Hispanic culture, women are expected to care for the family and not work outside the home. The program helps women cut costs, and in some cases, donations enable them to take sewing machines home and work.

Anna Herrera, in her late 30s, started sewing classes two years ago. "I save money on uniforms," says the mother of two. "Uniforms are expensive." She also makes decorations for her home and dreams of the day she can sew her daughter's wedding dress. "My husband is so proud of me. ... He tells me, 'Everything you make is so pretty.'"

United Methodist volunteers staff the center. Bottorf estimates 300 women (and one man so far) have taken the classes. The center offers classes three days a week for 36 people, but Bottorf hopes the lessons will expand to every weekday. The biggest challenge is finding volunteers who know how to sew and are available during the day.

The students aren't the only ones empowered by the program, Bottorf says. "The volunteers feel empowered. In a sense, they are learning a new culture, growing and experiencing new ideas and new traditions - and giving back to the community."

The Wesley Community Center offers a variety of services in the bar-

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rio, including health clinics, youth programs and home repair classes. Bortorf says he and the volunteers share a philosophy of "making a difference in the lives of individuals, one at a time."

"And if we can't stem international poverty, that's not our mission," he adds. "Our mission is to help those whom we can."

More information on the Wesley Community Center is available at: www.wesleycenterphx.org/pages/395449/index.htm.—*UMNews*, Sept. 2, 2003

Willa Player, pioneering college president, dies

Willa B. Player made a difference. Lives changed because of her. In 1958, when other colleges and churches in Greensboro, NC, would not let Martin Luther King, Jr. speak in their halls, Player opened the campus of Bennett College, a United Methodist-related, historically black, liberal arts college for women.

When the chapel overflowed, the speech was piped into other campus buildings. An estimated 2,000 people—some students and many local residents—heard King that night. From that event, the Greensboro civil rights movement grew.

Player, the first African-American woman to head a four-year college in the United States, died Aug. 27 in Greensboro, NC, at the age of 94. She was president of Bennett from 1955 to 1966, having joined the school in 1930 as an instructor in the language department and going on to hold several other leadership positions there. When she resigned to join the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, she ended 35 years of service to Bennett.

She is remembered for hosting King but also for her staunch and unwavering support of Bennett students who were incarcerated for their efforts to integrate restaurants, theaters and other local institutions. At one time it was reported that as many as 40 percent of Bennett's students were behind bars. Most of all, perhaps, Player resisted strong pressure from the community to force her students to abandon their activism.

Player was born in Jackson, MS, and raised in Akron, OH. She earned degrees from Ohio Wesleyan Universi-

ty and Oberlin College before receiving her doctorate in education from Columbia University.

In 1961, she was an education consultant for the Agency for International Development, working with women educators in Kenya and Nigeria. The following year, she became the first woman elected president of the National Association of Colleges and Universities of the Methodist Church.

A Sept. 4 memorial service will be held at the Annie Merner Pfeiffer Chapel, where King spoke 45 years ago. A funeral is being planned in Akron, OH.—*UMNews*, Aug. 29, 2003

Historian: women's place in Methodism inconsistent

Early Methodism may have accepted women's participation more than in subsequent years, according to a historian who has specialized in the topic.

Jean Miller Schmidt said John Wesley, who founded the Methodist movement in England in the 18th century, did not feel he could authorize women preachers as the Quakers did in his time, but he extended "the extraordinary call" to them as well as to men.

He encouraged women to perform a diaconal role, often calling on them to be the "visitor of the sick," a specific office in the classes or small groups he created to foster the spiritual life of believers. Women were welcome to pray in public, witness and exhort, noted Schmidt in an address to the Fifth Historical Convocation Aug. 16, held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the General Commission on Archives and History.

Schmidt, the Gerald L. Schlessman professor of Methodist studies at United Methodist-related Iliff School of Theology, Denver, received the 2003 Distinguished Service Award for her contributions to United Methodist history. She is the author of *Souls or the Social Order: The Two-Party System in American Protestantism* and *Grace Sufficient: A History of Women in American Methodism*.

Although women were pioneers in the Methodist movement, men held the institutional power and eventually told women that their place was in the home, she said.

Schmidt cited Mary L. Griffith of

Mauch Chunk, PA, who appealed to the General Conference—in writing because women were not allowed to speak. Like others, she felt called to preach but ordination was denied to women. She pointed out that women were two-thirds of the membership of the church and that women were being shut out of the functions of the church because of their gender.

"If God calls, how can the church refuse the call without coming into controversy with its divine master?" Schmidt quoted Griffith's message of 1880.

Today's ordained women "stand on the shoulders" of laywomen who struggled to serve, Schmidt said. She noted that the United Methodist Church, beginning in 1980, has elected 14 women bishops.

"We give thanks for all that has been accomplished," she said. "But the struggles still go on and go on."

—*UMNews*, Aug. 20, 2003

College in top 10 healthiest workplaces for women

United Methodist-related Green Mountain College has been named one of the "Top 10 Healthiest Companies for Women" in the July/August issue of *Health* magazine.

The magazine places the college shoulder to shoulder with companies that have, according to the article, demonstrated "flexible, accessible programs to help women accomplish the ultimate multitasking feat: balancing professional and personal responsibilities."

"At Green Mountain College, a two-year-old wellness center offers professors and staff an array of alternative tension-taming treatments and classes at low cost," the article states.

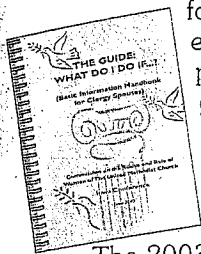
"Other perks include picking up fresh vegetables at the campus farm, which sells produce from the school's 10,000-square-foot garden," it says. "Plus, the only doctor in town works at the college's health clinic," which offers services such as blood work, pregnancy tests and Pap tests.

Founded in 1834, Green Mountain College is a private, four-year liberal arts institution that takes the environment as a unifying theme across the curriculum. It is one of more than 100 colleges and universities related to the United Methodist Church.

—*UMNews*, Aug. 20, 2003

Iowa resource offers help for clergy spouses

The Iowa Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women has developed a new resource for clergy spouses entitled *The Guide: What Do I Do If...?* The purpose of the guide, as stated in the preface, is to give information about the United Methodist Church, policies, practices, programs, and benefits applicable to "non-clergy" spouses of The United Methodist Church in the Iowa Conference.



The 2003 volume is the third edition of the resource, last revised in 1985. Contents include quality of life protection programs, widow/widower information, dissolution of clergy marriage, and building healthy relationships. Each general section contains detailed discussions of related topics.

Kim Coffing, assistant to the general secretariat for annual conference and constituency services, GCSRW, says "We are delighted with this booklet. One of the challenges in our work to bring about the full and equal responsibility and participation of women in the church is to address the concerns of clergy spouses and families. This book offers a model for other annual conferences as they support clergy spouses."

For more information, contact Commission on the Status and Role of Women, c/o Secretary to the Council on Ministries, 500 East Court Ave., Suite C, Des Moines, IA 50309. Phone: (515) 283-1996, ext. 114. Fax: (515) 283-0836. ●

Ovations

To **Susan R. Andrews**, Presbyterian pastor from Bethesda, MD, who was the first female pastor elected to lead the Presbyterian Church (USA) and serve as its spokesperson for a one-year term.

To **Deborah E. Bass**, who is the new deputy general secretary for administration of the General Board of Global Ministries.

To **Wanda Bigham**, immediate past president of United Methodist-related Huntingdon College in Montgomery, AL, and president of the University Senate, who has been named assistant general secretary of schools, colleges and universities at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

To **Hee An Choi**, who has been named director of the Anna Howard Shaw Center, Boston University School of Theology.

To **Janice Dunn**, formerly of the *Ocala* (Florida) *Star-Banner*, who is the new communications coordinator in the Florida Conference.

To **Nancy Heisey** of Harrisonburg, VA, who will be installed as the first female president of the Mennonite World Conference.

To **Gary Oba**, member of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and former district superintendent in the Oregon-Idaho Conference, who has been named director of church relations and planned giving at United Methodist-related Claremont School of Theology.

To **Victoria Rebeck**, director of communications for the Minnesota Conference, who has been elected president of Associated Church Press.

To **Ciona Rouse**, who has been named director of the Shared Mission Focus on Young People. She joined Shared Mission Focus on Young People in July 2002 as the communications project intern. Rouse

was the recipient of United Methodist Communications' 2001-2002 Judith Weidman Racial Ethnic Minority Fellowship in religion communications.

To **Carol Thompson**, director of the Western Small Church Rural Life Center and a pastor in the Oregon-Idaho Conference, who will head the Office of Town and Country Ministries of the General Board of Global Ministries.

To **Leslie C. Tune**, Bethesda, MD, who has become the communication officer in the Washington Office of the National Council of Churches/Church World Service.

To **Ann Walle**, who has been appointed to the new position of director of marketing and communications for Church World Service in New York. ●

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 date:

Jan. 15, 2004..... Winter 2004

Send to: Bonny Stalnaker Roth,
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60201

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

For better health for women and a healthier environment for our children, our newsletter is printed on chlorine-free, acid-free paper.



Give a Christmas gift that supports women

This Christmas you may give a gift that supports advocacy for women. When you give in honor of a woman who has blessed your life, you continue the giving through the Advocacy for Women Endowment Fund, established by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

Gifts to this fund, which is an important mission and ministry of the Commission, will provide monies for emerging ministries related to advocacy for women. When giving reaches \$50,000, then the interest generated will be distributed annually. Those entrusted with the fund will be invited to ask, "What does advocacy for women mean in this moment within the UMC?"

For more information, please contact GCSRW at (800) 523-8390.
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