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October–December 2009

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umsexualethics.org

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Can a woman be a ‘layman’? Does ‘all mean all’?

Reflections on an 1892 church action

By Darryl W. Stephens

There are important legislative parallels in Methodism’s path toward gender justice even as it relates to the 23 amendments to the UM Constitution as proposed by the General Conference in 2008.

In other words, The United Methodist Church and our predecessor denominations have long disagreed on whether so-called generic terms for “all people” really mean “ALL people”?

For instance, does *The Book of Discipline’s* use of the term “layman” include women being seated as delegates to General Conference?

No, according to the 1892 Methodist Episcopal Church’s Committee on Judiciary. This was not the final word on gender equality in Methodism, but it was the last obstacle to seating women delegates at General Conference. The legislative tactic that eventually succeeded in allowing women full participation as delegates to Methodism’s highest body provides an important parallel to our current debate about Amendment I regarding “Inclusiveness of the Church.” This article of our Constitution does not currently guarantee gender inclusiveness in the UMC.

A history lesson

Women gained the right to be delegates to General Conference in the late 19th century only after gender exclusion was specifically rejected as a proposed Constitutional amendment. When referring to delegates, the *Discipline* at that time used the terms “laymen” and “lay delegates.” Whether a woman could be a *layman* was not immediately clear, since masculine language could be employed either inclusively or exclusively.



Frances E. Willard

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Stop the physical—and spiritual—violence



Earlier this year, I was stunned by the news that three women were shot to death at a Pennsylvania health club by George Sodini, 48, who then turned the gun on himself. He reason for the massacre? Some women apparently had the effrontery to say 'no' to dating him.

Recently, I spent time recently with girls (the youngest 8) and women from Bosnia, Kuwait, Rwanda and Congo, were raped by soldiers while their countries were at war. Sexual violence against women and girls continues to be an accepted tactic of war and terror, even at the hands of soldiers who claim religious virtue and ideals as the reason they are in battle.

These are the most extreme expressions of violence and anger aimed at women in our society. But even among “civilized” people—and even in the church—women are often under emotional, spiritual and physical assault.

Across the church, we still encounter congregations and church leaders who openly challenge women as pastors and who are allowed to say, “We don’t want a woman!” and to be appeased. One clergywoman reports that her PPRC chairperson called her a b*tch in a meeting, and no other member challenged that verbal assault.

It’s past time for our church to speak with a loud voice and, more importantly, with actions to say that verbal and physical violence will not happen, starting with the church. Pastors must preach it, Sunday schools must teach it, women and men must model it, and denominational leaders must give public witness to it.

And we can’t just be anti-violence. We must also be pro-women, pro-partnership and repentant of the church’s history of excluding and dismissing women. As a Christian community, we must also say and live and affirm and teach and preach that women’s voices, women’s presence in all settings, women’s perspectives, women’s stories and women’s prophetic witness are absolutely necessary to the church’s worship, witness and work.

The step from “dumb-blonde” jokes and saying, “We don’t want a woman!” to verbal and physical assaults against women is sometimes a very short step—because it’s all about how we devalue women.

Happily, the steps toward wholeness are just as clear: Jesus demonstrated it in his encounter with the Syrophenician woman. When we finally agree as a church that we will fully embrace sisters of the faith as full and equal partners in ministry and mission, administration and discipleship, true healing in our world will begin.

Watch for God’s new thing!

M. Garlinda Burton, General Secretary

The Flyer

October–December 2009

The Flyer is published four times yearly by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women in The United Methodist Church. Primary distribution of The Flyer is through the Annual Conference Commissions on the Status and Role of Women and Response Teams. Women outside the United States, please ask your bishops’ office to make sure you get The Flyer.

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, an agency of the worldwide United Methodist Church, acts as advocate, catalyst and monitor to ensure the full participation and equality of women in the church.

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All means all *continued from page 1*

In 1892, after some 20 years of brewing debate about the permissibility of women delegates, the MEC's Committee on Judiciary ruled, in this context, that laymen applied only to men. The Judiciary report made clear that its decision was a narrow interpretation of the word of law, not "an opinion as to the wisdom of the law," implying that some members of this committee wished to see the law changed.¹

Supporters of women's rights decided to challenge the ruling by proposing a Constitutional amendment to state explicitly that the *Discipline's* use of male language for delegates was meant to refer to men exclusively. John W. Hamilton, a clergy delegate from the New England Annual Conference, proposed a substitute to the Judiciary report at the MEC's 1892 General Conference. The "Hamilton Amendment" resolved to put the matter before the annual conferences in the form of a vote to amend the second Restrictive Rule to read that "delegates must be male members."

Furthermore, the resolution explicitly stated that if the amendment failed, the term "lay delegates" would thereafter be construed to include both men and women.²

The plan worked. As a change to the Restrictive Rules, it would have required a three-quarters majority of all annual conferences to pass, which its supporters could not muster. A compromise was soon reached and four women were allowed full participation as delegates in 1896.³ The Hamilton Amendment was a keen legislative tactic that effectively relocated the burden of support on this divisive issue to those who would make it a matter essential to the polity of the church.

Make gender-inclusion explicit

Now, in the 21st century, United Methodist women again confront an ambiguously worded polity that does not protect them from discrimination. The United Methodist Constitution, as recorded in the 2008

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Laywomen's participation in General Conferences 1888–1946

1888

Frances E. Willard, Mary Clarke Nind, Amanda C. Rippey, Angie F. Newman, and Elizabeth D. Van Kirk are elected delegates to the M. E. General Conference, but are denied seating.

1896

Four women delegates are seated at the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church (laywomen **Melissa M. Bonnett, Mrs. M. J. Morgan,** and **Mrs. A. E. Murphy;** and clergy woman **Eugenia St. John**).

1893

First women delegates are seated at the General Conference of the U.B. (**Mattie Brewer** and **Mrs. S. J. Staves**).

1904

Women are given laity rights and admitted to the M.E. General Conference as delegates.

1910

The M.E. Church, South General Conference denies women laity rights.

1922

First women seated as delegates at General Conference of the M. E. Church, South (18 women lay delegates).

1946

Irene Haumersen and **Mrs. Edward Stukenberg** are the first two women delegates attending the General Conference of the Evangelical Church. They are also delegates to the joint E.U.B. General Conference immediately following.

All means all *continued from page 3*

Book of Discipline, guarantees full and equal participation and inclusion of “all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status or economic condition.” However, gender is not specifically included. What is the legislative intent behind this omission?

Two different actions by the 2008 General Conference have served to confuse matters. A petition by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women to add “gender” to Article IV was rejected. A separate petition, which would have permitted the denomination to discriminate against persons because of their “sexual orientation, sexual practice, or gender identity” was also rejected.

(I submitted the latter petition in the spirit of the Hamilton Amendment, to challenge the church to explicitly exclude gender and sexual orientation as categories of inclusiveness in its Constitution, if this is what a super-majority of the church believes.)

Both actions were met with unanimous agreement within the same assigned legislative committee, and a compromise petition—to drop all the protected categories and let the Constitution read simply that “all people” should be

included in all areas of church life—was approved and forwarded for ratification by the annual conferences.

Specifically Amendment I, which was considered by annual conferences around the connection beginning last summer, replaces the list of included categories of persons with language that simply states “all persons shall be eligible.” The intent behind this “all means all” legislation is to

refuse to Constitutionally exclude any class of persons from being eligible for church membership and participation.

Does “all” mean “all,” though? The jury is still out. While the annual conferences in the United States appear to have defeated the amendments, the annual conferences in Europe and Africa have yet to complete voting.

Is the United Methodist Church willing to make gender discrimination a legal, non-negotiable, constitutive part of its polity? No, but neither has our church guaranteed

constitutionally that women will be *fully* included. ❧

Darryl W. Stephens is GCSRW's assistant general secretary for sexual ethics and advocacy.



Remember,
annual
conference
voting
continues
through
spring 2010!

For a proposed amendment to be ratified, two-thirds of the aggregate number of voting annual conference members must approve. The worldwide votes will be announced during the May 2–6, 2010, Council of Bishops meeting in Columbus, Ohio.

1 *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held in Omaha, Nebraska May 2–26, 1892, ed. by Rev. David S. Monroe, D.D. Secretary of the Conference. (NY: Hunt & Eaton; Cincinnati: Cranston & Curts, 1892), 486.*

2 *Ibid.*, 486–7.

3 *Lewis Curts, The General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, From 1792 to 1896 (Cincinnati: Curts & Jennings, 1900), 341–51.*

An artist and pastor reflects on the coming of Christ

Turning panic to peace during Advent

By Lauren Heather Lay

Photo by Kate Thomas

Peace on earth is such an elusive concept. The mere thought that “Christmas is coming” sends some of us into hyper-overload.

Jesus was not born in a manger so that we would hock our homes to put presents under the tree or run ourselves ragged doing too many activities that neglect bringing us closer to the realities of Emmanuel, God with us.

As a clergy-artist, I’m all about balance. I choose to nurture my relationship with God in a very deliberate way. While the rest of my world is in chaos mode I set aside time for quiet contemplation. My favorite way to do this involves setting up a studio in the church sanctuary. I make space for listening to God by entering into a 12 hour period of prayer and art-making. One Advent, an icon-like mother and child image emerged from this time of prayer. Last Advent, more impressionistic swirls of color came from a meditation on the annunciation and birth narrative.

Peace comes from living out passion—that place where God has particularly gifted us. When that passion makes a difference in the lives of others, we nurture relationships with God, self, and neighbor.

Peace also comes from participating in the moment. Wherever “here” is and whoever shares this moment with you, do not relocate in your mind to the next place on your agenda. This moment demands your attention. If it didn’t demand your attention, why are you here?

Enjoying the chaos brings peace. Whether you are the type that is a minimalist when it comes to decorating for Christmas, or one who enjoys decking every last inch of the hall with boughs of holly, pay attention to the details! I am a collector of angels and my tree is one gloriously diverse choir of angels of wood, glass, paper, fabric and ceramic—a chaotic and fun tribute to the sounds and sights of that first Christmas.

Christmas cantatas and pageants are not for those allergic to chaos. But through that chaos of costumes, music, and live animals (Obviously the idea of someone who thrives on chaos!) and final presentation, the thread of the story of the birth of the Jesus binds this element of the Advent season into a way to peace. Even with a rooster (yes, a rooster!) interrupting the biblical reading at last year’s Live nativity, the story came through loud and clear. Peace. Peace. For unto us a child is born.

Live and love with your heart and your eyes open this Advent season. In the midst of the inevitable chaos, thrive in the promise of God’s peace. ✨

The Rev. Lauren Heather Lay is pastor at Christ UMC of Baltimore County, Maryland.



Make your holiday gift last a lifetime; give to empower women, end sexism



Scented candles and silk neckties make nice gifts, but what if the same dollars could transform the church and the world?

Your gift this season to the Advocacy for Women Endowment Fund, administered by GCSRW, will help us build a United Methodist Church where the gifts, perspectives and witness of women are fully embraced and honored, and women and men work together to make institutional sexism a thing of the past.

Your gift this season can help to create a Christian communion that is so transformed it becomes one more authentically working with Jesus Christ to bring justice, healing and grace to a hurting world.

The goal of the Advocacy for Women Endowment Fund is to:

- Support a permanent internship for UM lay and clergywomen;
- Seed regional women's advocacy and justice ministries through The United Methodist Church around the world;
- Fund research about the status and role of women in the life of the church, where we are making progress and what obstacles we must yet overcome.

Your gift of \$100 or more this Advent season will help usher in a new era of cooperation and justice-making, with women and men in partnership to stamp out institutional sexism in the church and to live the Gospel of Christian inclusion and

reconciliation. You can give online at <http://undesign.xgtech.com/gcsr/EndowmentsandGifts.aspx> or send your gift with the form below.

Please consider making an annual pledge or one-time gift today. To learn more about the Advocacy for Women Endowment, visit our website at www.gcsr.org and select "Endowment Opportunities" under "Highlighted Areas of Interest".

The pressures of sexism and racism still exist within our church. Some women and young girls think that it is impossible to become leaders. Let's continue to strive to bring God's justice into the world by liberating our sisters from the concept of sexism and racism. We can help our denomination "change" to reflect the racial and gender diversity.

Please pray and support our women by giving to our Advocacy for Women Endowment Fund. Also, support the voices, concerns, and gifts of all women, including young girls and women of color in our denomination.

Marvin Shackelford is a GCSRW board member and chairperson of the Advocacy for Women Endowment Fund Committee

Your gift can **Empower Women** Give to the Advocacy for Women Fund

<http://undesign.xgtech.com/gcsr/EndowmentsandGifts.aspx>

The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women receives .001 cents for every dollar that is placed in the offering plate at a United Methodist church (one of the lowest rates in our denomination).

With women making up more than half of the church's total membership, it's clear that the Advocacy for Women Fund—which provides research, scholarships, skill development, theological studies, and salary support for pastors outside the United States—is vital.

YES!

I would like to give \$ _____

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do do not consent to be thanked in an upcoming publication.

Mail this form and your contribution to:
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Improved site offers tools for survivors, congregations, leaders



GCSRW will launch new umsexualethics.org in November

By Darryl W. Stephens

The sexual ethics website (www.umsexualethics.org), sponsored by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) is getting a new look and feel, with a revised access page, a new logo, streamlined visual presentation and updated content.

The website, first introduced by GCSRW in 2006, is currently undergoing beta-testing and is scheduled for a public re-launch November.

The website was created to promote awareness justice, and healing in The United Methodist Church through prevention training and just resolution of cases of sexual misconduct in church related settings.

Education is central to this ministry. The UMC has well-written, powerful resolutions on sexual misconduct. The new website is designed to communicate this information clearly and effectively. The site will also promote best practices from around the connection and provide new opportunities for collaboration among annual conference and agency leaders within the UMC.

Sexual misconduct is a continuum of unwanted sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay or clergyperson in a ministerial role (paid or unpaid). Behavior may include misuse of the pastoral or ministerial position by using sexualized conduct to take advantage of the vulnerability of another.

The site is organized around four primary audiences:

- » victims / survivors
- » conference leaders
- » local churches
- » “accused / confused”

Resources include: instruction and support for filing a complaint, definitions and denominational policies; sample policies and guidelines for local churches, annual conferences and agencies; information about sexual ethics training for clergy and laity, book reviews and bibliographies, and guidance for self-reporting by perpetrators.

New features planned for this website include a sexual ethics blog (weekly essay with reader comments), an informative “wiki” (online collaborative forum) with articles and definitions of important terms, and online tutorials for local churches, lay leaders, and clergy.

In addition to offering information for occasional users, the site will eventually become a virtual workspace for the denomination’s Sexual Ethics Task Force, the Crisis Response Team Leaders’ Network, and the Sexual Ethics Trainers’ Network. The quarterly *UM Sexual Ethics* newsletter will be integrated into the site in 2010. ✎

The Rev. Darryl W. Stephens is GCSRW’s assistant general secretary for sexual ethics and advocacy.



Conferences invest in equipping sexual ethics trainers

By Darryl W. Stephens

Leaders from seven United Methodist annual conferences attended 12-hour study sessions to equip trainers on the prevention, intervention, and adjudication of cases of clergy sexual misconduct.

Clergy from the the California-Nevada, Mississippi, Texas, and Florida conferences gathered in Phoenix in May for a “training of trainers” by the Seattle-based FaithTrust Institute. The workshop, “A Sacred Trust: Boundary Issues for Clergy and Spiritual Teachers,” addressed issues of professional boundaries for ministerial leaders, dating and dual relationships, gifts, and self-care.

The six United Methodists who attended the 12-hour seminar are now equipped to conduct workshops in clergy sexual ethics and boundaries. The three attendees from California-Nevada will lead a workshop in November for all elders, deacons, and local pastors in that conference.

Clergy from the Greater New Jersey, Kansas West, Texas, and Southwest Texas conferences were among those trained in June in Seattle at a session on responding to clergy misconduct. This workshop, also sponsored by the FaithTrust Institute, recommended models and best practices to help conference leaders respond to complaints, conduct investigations and adjudicate cases of misconduct of a sexual nature by clergy. The eight United Methodists who attended the Seattle training are




Participants in the May training included (from left to right): Lisa Garvin (Mississippi), Marie Fortune (FaithTrust), Dan Bell (Florida), Elmar DeOCera (Cal-Nevada), Kathy La Point-Collup (Cal-Nevada), Maggie McNaught (Cal-Nevada), and Darryl Stephens (Texas, GCSRW).

Join the Trainer’s Network!

GCSRW is now in the process of forming a UM Sexual Ethics Trainer’s Network to facilitate the efforts of people who provide sexual ethics and boundaries training for clergy in our annual conferences. This network is designed to promote collegial sharing, collaboration, and mutual resourcing among conference trainers, as well as to provide support and advanced training for trainers. If you would like to participate in this network, please contact Darryl W. Stephens in the GCSRW office. Email dstephens@gcsr.org or call 312.346.4900.

now better equipped to facilitate effective judicatory responses to misconduct within the UMC.

Identifying and deploying qualified trainers in sexual ethics is a key strategy to the work of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, as most U.S. annual conferences require clergy to attend at least one sexual ethics workshop each quadrennium. The Commission, in partnership with other church-wide agencies plans to train more trainers and create a network of trainers to better serve the denomination.

If you have received recent training by the FaithTrust Institute, GCSRW or other groups in the area of sexual misconduct prevention and intervention—and if you would like to be part of our network please contact Darryl Stephens at GCSRW (dstephens@gcsr.org). 

National “Do No Harm” event scheduled for January 26–29, 2011

Ask your bishop to send you to this event if you are a Response Team leader, Safe Sanctuaries Team leader, sexual ethics trainer or judicatory leader involved in any aspect of addressing problems of clergy sexual misconduct in your conference. Watch for details next year.

First CSRW coming to Mozambique

In what may be a first among United Methodist annual conferences in Africa, the Mozambique Annual Conference will create a committee on the status and role of women, starting in December.


Bishop Joaquina Nhanala of Mozambique, a member of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and the first woman elected a United Methodist bishop in Africa, said her conference will name members to the committee at their annual conference session Dec. 9–12, 2009 in Inhambane Province.



Bishop Joaquina Filipe Nhanala

“We believe it is time. We will bring women and men together to work for full inclusion of women in our conference ministries,” the bishop explains.

The creation of the new committee coincides with the 30th anniversary celebration of ordination of women as United Methodist pastors in Mozambique, she said. Clergywomen are planning commemorative drama and special worship for the conference session; naming the new gender justice committee will cap the celebration.

M. Garlinda Burton, GCSRW general secretary, will attend the annual conference session to support the bishop and the new committee. 

Worth Repeating 

“ The women we honor today teach us three very important lessons: One, that as women, we must stand up for ourselves. The second, as women we must stand up for each other. And finally, as women we must stand up for justice for all. ”

> Michelle Obama at the International Women of Courage Awards

Women still pioneers as senior pastors, survey shows

A UMNS Report • By Vicki Brown

Women who lead large United Methodist churches are still pioneers, a new survey has found.

Nine out of 10 lead women pastors at churches with more than 1,000 members are the first woman to lead those churches, according to a survey of 94 women and 300 men who are senior pastors of large congregations.

The study, part of the Lead Women Pastors Project of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, also found that women have to work harder for acceptance and appear less likely than men to pursue appointments at large churches.

But those women leading larger churches are building the foundation for greater changes in the status of women clergy, said project leaders who met recently in West Palm Beach, Fla.

“Now that we are here in places above the stained-glass ceiling, we can begin to create a culture that affirms the gifts of women within our churches—from children and teenagers in the local congregation to women enrolled in seminary,” said the Rev. Trudy Robinson, a project leader who is pastor of First UMC, Cheyenne, Wyo.

Coaching younger women

The pastors’ project is moving into its second phase, in which 16 women nominated by bishops as having the potential to lead large-membership churches will go through a training program. Each woman will be paired with a coach who will help nurture the needed skills for a large church.

“The experiences of these lead women pastors will serve as a resource for the formation of younger generations of women leaders, not only for The United Methodist Church, but also in our society,” said the Rev. HiRho Park, director of continuing formation for ministry at the education agency.

In 1880, a woman was ordained as clergy in a Methodist denomination that later became part of The United Methodist Church. But women clergy didn’t have equal rights until the General Conference voted in 1956 to grant full clergy rights to women.



UMNS photo by Vicki Brown

The Revs. Trudy D. Robinson (left) and Constance Pak listen to the results of a leadership survey during the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry’s Lead Women Pastors Project held recently in West Palm Beach, Fla. Robinson is pastor of First UMC, Cheyenne, Wyo., and Pak leads the United Methodist Church of Sea Cliff (N.Y.). The survey showed women still face challenges in becoming senior pastors at large churches.

About 10,000 of the approximately 45,000 clergy in The United Methodist Church are women.

The women pastors’ project identified 94 women who serve as lead pastor of a church with more than 1,000 members. According to the General Council on Finance and Administration, there are nearly 1,200 United Methodist churches with more than 1,000 members.

The majority of the survey respondents noted that women have to work harder for acceptance and leadership roles.

“Clergywomen are still on trial in the large membership churches,” said Susan Willhauck, associate professor of Pastoral Theology at Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax, Nova Scotia, who worked with Park on the survey.

Willhauck noted that male lead pastors moved to larger churches quicker—within 3.75 appointments, compared to four appointments for women.

“That might not seem like that much difference, but statistically it represents a notable discrepancy,” she said. She also found a slightly different career trajectory, with more lead women pastors coming out of appointments beyond the local church, such as district superintendent. One-fourth of women were second-career elders, compared to one-third of men.

How men and women differ

Willhauck said it appears from the comments made by respondents that men are more likely to ask for specific appointments, while women are more likely to say “send me where I’m best suited, or where my gifts are most needed. Women are conditioned to wait to be asked.”

The survey, conducted by mail and online from October to December last year, also found men are more nurturing and empathetic than women, and women are more decisive and less confrontational in dealing with conflicts, or more collaborative, Park said.

The overall finding of substantial similarities in leadership style concerned Robinson.

“I worry about us trying to fit into a box that has been defined by men,” Robinson said. “We should consider that we might be wise to make room for a variety of leadership styles in all our churches.”

Among other findings:

- » Three-fourths of women senior pastors believe that serving a large church is a special calling.
- » All but three of the men and women senior pastors surveyed were white. “We have tried to be intentional about including racial-ethnic women in those selected for the coaching program,” Park said.
- » Ninety-nine percent of male pastors were married, compared to 69 percent of women.
- » Women pastors listed the three greatest gifts of ministry as preaching, leadership, and administration. Male pastors picked preaching, teaching and administration. ✨

Vicki Brown is associate editor and writer, Office of Interpretation, United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry.



West African women vow to fight disease, poverty

Women of the West Africa Central Conference met at Monrovia, Liberia, for the first time in a women’s gathering May 7–10 under the theme “We Are Better in Christ Together.” The four-day gathering at First UMC focused on how women could help combat the deadly HIV/AIDS disease, malaria and poverty, said Alfreda Anderson, Liberia’s Women Work coordinator. The women resolved to engage their annual conferences and communities in fighting disease and empowering women against poverty. Kim Lehmann, executive secretary of Women and Children at the General Board of Global Ministries, said Liberia was an appropriate venue for the gathering of women because of the strong female roles in the country’s recovery.



★ **Elka Sharma**, » ordained elder in the Oregon-Idaho Conference in June, is believed to be the first culturally deaf female ordained elder in the UMC connection. Her appointment is to extension ministry—pastor across conference boundaries to the Illinois Great Rivers Conference Deaf and Hard of Hearing Ministry where she has been the pastor of Jacksonville UM Deaf Faith Community Church and several outreach sites since July of 2006.



★ **Janine DeLaunay** » was commissioned at the Oregon-Idaho conference session on June 12. Janine, blind since birth, has been an active lay member for many years the conference. After hearing a call to pursue ordained service, she attended the Northwest House of Theological studies in Salem, Ore and UM-related Iliff School of Theology in Denver. She is appointed to serve the Metzger UMC in Tigard, Ore.



★ **Elizabeth Liebert** will become the first Roman Catholic sister named as dean of a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) school of theology when she takes over the position at San Francisco Theological Seminary. With more than two decades of teaching experience at the 138-year-old seminary in San Anselmo, Calif., Liebert will replace the Rev. Jana Childers, who stepped down June 30 after nearly eight years as dean.

★ Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center welcomes the **Rev. Carolyn Poling** as the director of ministries with young people, following the departure of Marty Cauley, who is receiving a local church appointment in the North Carolina Conference. Poling is a deacon in full connection in the North Georgia Conference.

★ **Kara Witherow**, takes on the role of editor for the new *South Georgia Advocate*, which is now a publication of the conference communications office. Her appointment was effective May, 2009.

★ The Wyoming Conference presented the Jefferson Award for Effectiveness in Urban Ministry to First UMC in Endicott, Pa. and its pastor, the **Rev. Susan E. Davis**. Davis also received the Guy Leinthal Award for Social Justice Ministry. The Akers Award for Excellence in Rural Ministry was given to the **Rev. Nancy J. Stanley** of the Sanataria Springs/Port Crane Charge in the Oneonta District. The Blair Memorial Scholarship was given to **Patricia Cardin**, a student at Asbury Theological Seminary. The Sister Spirit Award was presented to the **Rev. Jane O'Borski**, pastor of Stewart Memorial UMC in Old Forge, Penn., who is a seminary student at Drew University.

★ **Anne E. Streaty Wimberly** has received the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Award from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Wimberly graduated from Garrett-Evangelical in 1993 with a master of theological studies. She is Professor of Christian Education at Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), Atlanta, Georgia, where she has been a faculty member for the last 15 years.



⤴ First UMC of Exeland, Wis., celebrated the 100th birthday of organist **Helen Aspseter** last July. Aspseter was playing the prelude, accompanying the hymns, and providing worship music throughout the service, just as she has done virtually every Sunday and holy day for the past 74 years. The church was overflowing with well-wishers at the morning worship and later at a musical program in her honor. From youth to grandparents, the program featured performers of all ages, many of whom had been her students.

★ **Sarah E. Wilke** has been named world editor and publisher of Upper Room Ministries, a ministry of the General Board of Discipleship. Wilke previously served as the CEO of UMR Communications and United Methodist Reporter, in Dallas, Texas. In her new post, she will lead an international staff of 81 with offices in Nashville and Johannesburg, South Africa.

★ The **Rev. Robin Wilson** has been appointed as the director of ministerial relations for the Alabama–West Florida Annual Conference.

★ The **Rev. Yvette Davis** was appointed Director of Urban and Global Ministries in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.

★ In the Yellowstone Conference **Sue King** was elected as director of connectional ministries, a position that had been vacant for the preceding conference year.

★ The **Rev. Bridgette Young**, a member of the North Georgia Conference, has joined the staff of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry as assistant general secretary for campus ministry.

★ **Bari Eason**, formerly director of athletic marketing for Belmont University in Nashville, has been named director of marketing and development for the General Commission on United Methodist Men.

★ On Saturday, July 25, **Bishop Ann Brookshire Sherer** and **Wayne Eldon Simpson** were married in a small family wedding ceremony. Wayne, a resident of Lincoln, Neb., is a retired industrial engineer.

★ The Harry Denman Evangelism Award was established in 1980 by The Foundation for Evangelism to honor pastors and lay persons who are doing the work of responsible evangelism in the local church. Originally a national award, the award is now given at the discretion of each annual conference. The Harry Denman Award for Evangelism in the West Virginia Conference was presented to an outstanding lay worker, **Marieta Reel**, a trained obstetric nurse from Peru, and clergy worker the **Rev. Judy Vetter** was the clergy recipient. Both received the award because of their work in the Hispanic community around Moorefield.

★ In the North Alabama Conference, Denman Evangelism Award winners were **Sherry Bassham** (laity) and the **Rev. Melody Traylor** (clergy), both of whom were recognized for their vibrant ministries with young people.

★ In the Louisiana Annual Conference, the **Rev. Leslie Stephens**, pastor of Faith Crossing UMC, was honored as the recipient of the Harry Denman Award, along with Brooke Dynes, a member of Jefferson UMC in Baton Rouge. ✨

Who are the elected board members to United Methodist general agencies?

By Lindsey Graham and Craig This

Women, lay and clergy, comprise 44% of the total membership of the general boards and agencies from the United States jurisdictions. Clergywomen represent 37% of the total elected clergy and laywomen represent 52% of the total elected laity (see Chart 1). These numbers compare quite interestingly to the overall United Methodist members.

Laywomen are nearly 60 percent of overall church membership in the United States; clergywomen represent 23% of active U.S. United Methodist clergy.

Women gain, lose representation

Clergywomen have less representation than clergymen in all agencies, except the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW) (see Table 1). In some agencies, the male-female representation is almost even. In others, such as General Board of Discipleship (GBOD), there are two clergymen for every clergywoman as a voting member. And the governing boards of the General Council on Finance and Administration (GCFA) and United Methodist Publishing House (UMPH), have five clergymen for each clergywoman. No clergywomen serve on the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits.

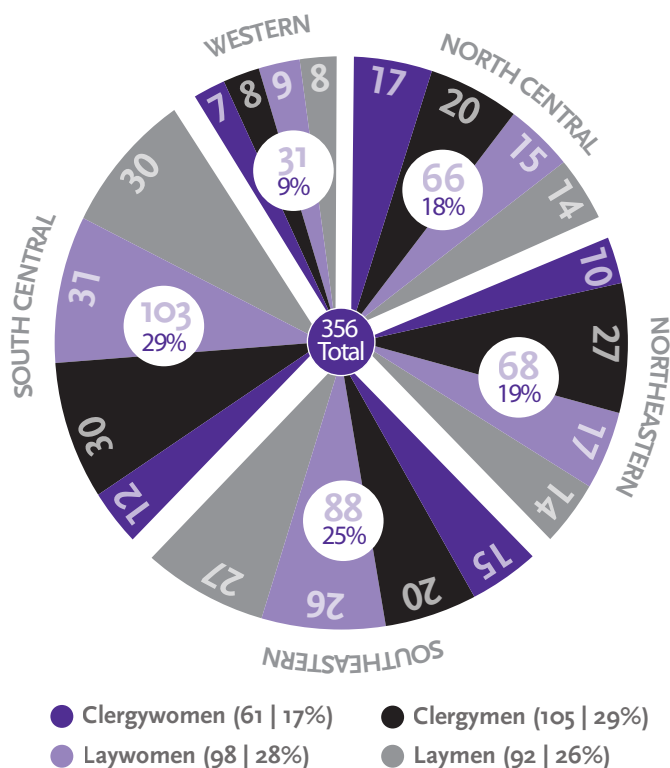
Laywomen fair better. GCFA and General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) have an equal number of laywomen and laymen on their governing boards. Laywomen have a numerical advantage to laymen at the GBOD, the Publishing House, the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns (GCCUIC), General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) and GCSRW.

The question is do these numerical advantages translate into leadership positions at the general agency level?

Are the jurisdictional pools the problem?

The representation of laywomen and clergywomen appears to be worse at the jurisdictional level (see Chart 1). Overall, clergywomen make up 17% of the total membership of the general agencies. In no jurisdiction do the clergywomen outnumber the clergymen, but in both the North Central Jurisdiction (25%) and Western Jurisdiction (22%) their overall percentage of the general agency membership exceeds 20%. For the Northeastern and Southeastern, clergymen outnumber clergywomen 2.5 to 1.

Chart 1
Jurisdictional Breakdown



e numbers


PART 2

Laywomen make up 28% of the total membership of the general agencies and, as such, tend to have better representation than laymen in most jurisdictions. Except for the South Central Jurisdiction, laywomen outnumber laymen. However, the laywomen’s numerical advantage is nothing like that of the clergymen’s numerical advantage of clergywomen. Laywomen outnumber laymen in most jurisdictions by a total of two persons and not two times as many.

So, are the jurisdictions the problem? The general agencies can only disperse the membership from the people the jurisdictions elect to serve. If the jurisdictions elected more laywomen and clergywomen, there would be more women to serve the general agencies. Do these elections reflect a lack of qualified women to serve at the general agency level or do they elections institutional sexism that fails to nurture, identify and deploy women as agency board members? All that is available here are numbers, not reasons.

Conclusion

Paragraph 705 of the 2008 Book of Discipline recommends that the jurisdictional membership on each program board incorporate one-third clergy, one-third laymen and one-third laywomen. The general agency membership numbers show that this is not the case.

Clergy make up 47% of the total general agency membership and neither laywomen (28%) nor laymen (26%) approach one-third representation. The problem lies with the jurisdictions and their inability to provide a greater diversity of representation of individuals to serve at the general agency level. It is time to challenge all U.S. jurisdictions to claim our denominational call to be a more diverse and inclusive church at all levels. 

Lindsey Graham is website coordinator for GCSRW. Craig This is data analyst in the Department of Institutional Research at Wright State University in Ohio.

Table 1
Breakdown of Jurisdictional Elected Board Members

	Clergywomen % of Total	Clergymen % of Total	Laywomen % of Total	Laymen % of Total	Total % of Women
Connectional Table	5 23.81%	7 33.33%	3 14.29%	6 28.57%	21 38.10%
GBCS	8 20.00%	10 25.00%	11 27.50%	11 27.50%	40 47.50%
GBGM	6 17.14%	9 5.71%	7 20.00%	13 37.14%	35 37.14%
GBHEM	11 26.19%	4 33.33%	6 14.29%	11 26.19%	42 40.48%
GBOD	6 16.67%	12 33.33%	11 30.56%	7 19.44%	36 47.22%
GBPHB	0 0.00%	5 31.25%	3 18.75%	8 50.00%	16 18.75%
GCCUIC	4 18.18%	4 18.18%	8 36.36%	6 27.27%	22 54.55%
GCFA	2 5.88%	10 29.41%	11 32.35%	11 32.35%	34 38.24%
GCORR	4 14.81%	11 40.74%	8 29.63%	4 14.81%	27 44.44%
GCSRW	9 33.33%	3 11.11%	13 48.15%	2 7.41%	27 81.48%
UMCOM	1 6.25%	3 18.75%	5 31.25%	7 43.75%	16 37.50%
UMPH	3 10.00%	16 53.33%	7 23.33%	4 13.33%	30 33.33%
TOTAL	59 17.05%	104 30.06%	93 26.88%	90 26.01%	346 43.93%



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