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April–June 2009

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Harassment still a challenge: Men call for accountability



By Joey Butler

A recent survey of United Methodist attitudes and practices found that 67.5 percent of all respondents—men and women—have observed or been subject to gender-bias or sexual harassment in their local church or in other church settings.

Jesus' commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you" is also the inspiration for the "equal worth in the eyes of God" (Par. 161, p. 101, *Discipline*). Further, church law defines sexual harassment as "any unwanted sexual comment, advance or demand that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive" (Par. 161). Under church law it is a chargeable offense to harass or abuse someone because of their gender or to undermine the ministry of an ordained man or woman because of their gender or race.

Despite laws on the books in church and in the secular world, sexual harassment happens in church and is often perpetrated by church people. But it's not just women who are offended by the notion that such a mindset still exists.

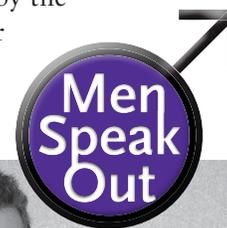
"I am embarrassed and angered when I hear of men sexually harassing women or other men," says Matt Johnson, a member of First United Methodist Church in Evanston, Ill. "These acts of harassment are fundamentally an abuse of power and lack of respect toward another human being."

"So many men just don't get it," says Marvin Shackelford, a layman at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Birmingham, Ala. Shackelford says the problem perpetuates itself through lack of education.

"Parents aren't teaching levels of respect. [They] need to model examples of behavior," he says.

"You need to talk [to boys] before puberty about appropriate manners to approach women," says Jim Gates of Wenatchee, Wash. "After that, hormones take over the brain."

Gates, a retired layman, says attempts to address sexual harassment go all the way back to biblical times. After all, he says, "we tried to do it with the



Matt Johnson (left) and Marvin Shackelford

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eye
The



'Transforming' harassing ways

It's pretty straightforward. The basic definition of sexual harassment is to bother, punish, threaten or penalize someone in a sexual (or gender-focused) way, often by abusing one's power and authority to demean someone else.



It is not mutual flirtation, or an isolated, unintentional act. Rather, harassment is unwanted and uninvited, and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to tear down someone else.

And it happens in the church a lot more than most people think, according to surveys, victims' complaint calls and SOS requests from bishops, superintendents and church agency execs. This is what it looks like in The United Methodist Church, based on recent calls to our office:

- The chairwoman of the staff-parish relations committee calls and sends sexually suggestive emails to her male pastor. When he refuses a sexual relationship, she successfully lobbies other SPRC members to have him moved to another church, allegedly because of his "unprofessional" behavior.
- A male pastor greets a woman visitor by rubbing her backside. The woman and her husband (who called us) vow they will never visit another United Methodist congregation.
- A congregation's male chief financial officer insists upon displaying pornographic photos of women on his computer. Each time the church's woman secretary walks into the office, he calls for her to "Come, look what I've got for you."

Many people assert that, compared to faithlessness, war, hunger and economic strife, sexual harassment seems a rather minor issue for the church. However, if our charge is to nurture and deploy Christ's disciples to transform the world, then the church must reflect a transformed and transforming way of relating to women and men based on valuing, respecting and protecting all who bear God's image.

If seekers of truth and of a spiritual relationship can find more integrity through membership in the chamber of commerce or a sorority than in the church of Jesus Christ, they will eschew church membership for the place that more closely reflects Christian values.

The United Methodist Church has said clearly, in our Social Principles and *Book of Resolutions*, that sexual harassment is sin. And so we are challenged to counter it with the same fervor with which we tackle any social circumstance or action that harms and demeans body and soul. As people saved and transformed by Christ, we are called to live out that salvation by ensuring that everyone who works with us, worships with us, seeks our assistance and visits our facilities will experience God's love and care and respect through us.

As the songs says, "Let it begin with me."

M. Garlinda Burton, General Secretary

The Flyer

April-June 2009

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Ten Commandments: Thou shalt not covet.”

The GCSRW assistant general secretary of advocacy and sexual ethics, the Rev. Darryl W. Stephens, suspects it’s not always a lack of education, but simple ignorance that makes some men behave inappropriately.

“Men in our society rarely encounter vulnerability because of their gender,” Stephens says. “When men do suffer sexual harassment, it is often not recognized as such since men are not conditioned with a vocabulary that would allow them to name what is happening to them.”

Shackelford, a current member of GCSRW, and Gates, who was on the Commission from 2001-2008, say men of goodwill need to check

their own behavior and attitudes and challenge one another. One way is to be a good role model and educate boys from an early age what is appropriate behavior. Another way is to confront such behavior when it happens. Some men may feel uncomfortable calling out a colleague or friend, but it’s necessary to fight the urge to bite one’s tongue.

“If you’re a man of Christian standing you don’t put up with it,” Shackelford says. “If you don’t say anything then you’re just part of the problem.”

“It is difficult for a man to confront another man in these situations. These are uncomfortable situations for everyone

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“If you’re a man of Christian standing you don’t put up with it.”

CONFRONT!

“If you don’t say anything, then you’re just part of the problem.”

Courageous Christian response

Since the 1990s, The United Methodist Church has declared sexual harassment as “sin against individuals and communities,” and has challenged GCSRW and other leaders to help raise awareness to prevent it. A good starting place is to call upon our own sense of Christian compassion and justice and simply say “no” to words and deeds that demean.

“A clear, principled confrontation to the harasser, throws him—or her—off balance,” writes Marty Langelan, author of *Back Off: How to Confront and Stop Harassment and Harassers*. If you face or witness sexual harassment in your church, office or other setting, Langelan says, stand tall, make eye contact and speak calmly but clearly, and employ one or more of the follow tools:

Name it. “You are exposing yourself and I don’t like it. This is about respect. Zip it up now.”

Ask a rhetorical question. “What is it about your Christian faith that has taught you that it’s OK to touch my behind? Does that seem like a good way to demonstrate that you’re disciple of Christ?” The more outrageous the harassment, the more difficult it is for the harasser to explain it away.

Interrupt with a direct command. “Stop harassing women, Bob. You’re not impressing the guys—in fact, you’re making us all look like pigs.”

Put up a “stop sign.” Put your hands up in front of your chest, look the harasser in the eye, and say, “Stop right there, Lisa. Please do not put your hands on me.”

Be a vocal ally. Speak up, even if you’re not the target. You may have more job security or power in your church than the one being harassed. Speak up against racism, sexism, man-bashing, woman-bashing and other kinds of bigotry. Say directly, “I don’t want to hear that. That’s not what I expect in a respectful church or workplace.”



involved, but it is important to speak out on behalf of the victim," Johnson says.

"As men, we have to know how to deal with men," Gates says. "It's easier in

church to simply ask what's going on. For many, the knowledge that someone else knows what you're doing is enough to stop it. Confrontation often sets a person against you and affects how they think. You need to discuss things in a manner that will change the pattern, not reinforce it."

However, it's not always that easy, especially in a hierarchical structure like the church. Stephens describes an incident where he felt powerless to speak out against harassment.

"Power dynamics prevented me from reporting what I had seen," he says. "I felt powerless to

effect any change in an institutional culture that condoned such behavior and chose to remain silent."

Johnson says the church must play a role in educating boys and men to treat women with respect, and it must start with making sure both clergy and lay staff also "get it."

"Sexual harassment needs to be talked about more in your local church as well as the church overall," he adds.

"We have safe churches, but churches still tend to have dark corners. We have to make sure girls don't get caught in those corners," Gates says.

Local churches can get involved in educating about sexual harassment in a number of ways:

- » **Learn a new way together.** Invite a male social worker or therapist to lead classes in a Lenten season discussion about the everyday ideas, stereotypes

"As men, we have to know how to deal with men."

RESPOND!

The best policies and practices

In the best of cases, you'll never face a sexual harassment complaint by a church member, client or employee. Take these deliberate steps to prevent or eliminate sexual harassment in your church or church-related workplace.

Educate members through newsletters, workshops, posted policy statements, speakers, videos and United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men's groups.

Adopt a strong policy and procedures for addressing complaints, and train your paid and volunteer staff, trustees and staff-parish members about the policies.

Preach and teach respect, love, healthy conflict management and healthy relationships, using sound biblical and theological foundations.

Investigate complaints immediately, thoroughly, sensitively, as confidentially as possible—and with tact.

Take action. If the harasser is a staff member, church member or volunteer, your church or organization may have legal responsibility. Make sure your policies stipulate the following remedies: order the harasser to stop; order counseling or training for the harasser; order restitution to victim(s), and dismiss or remove the harasser from the job or office if the infraction is severe or ongoing.

and actions that may hamper Christian relationships among men and women in the congregation.

- » **Covenant to treat women and girls with respect.** Develop a covenant on how Christians should treat others as children of God. Survey the congregation to learn if anyone has experienced problems with sexual harassment or put-downs, and use the information to improve how women are portrayed and treated in the church.
- » **Mentor boys to be better men.** Some adults complain about the negative image and language about women in hip-hop and rock music. But objectifying women, over-emphasizing female attractiveness and weight, and undervaluing the leadership of women and girls are long-standing practices in our church and society. Make sure boys see role models in their churches respecting and working collaboratively with women in church, at home and in the workplace. Host a men-boy Sunday school class to challenge boys' stereotypes and prejudices about women—and men.

- » **Bring women and men together.** How would congregations change for the better if their United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men co-sponsored a community forum on domestic violence? Or built a Habitat House together? As women and men spend time together in Christian community and mutual study and mission, they are better equipped to challenge the stereotypes, prohibitions and practices that may lead to sexual harassment and abuse.

After being a prominent issue for decades, it's easy to think sexual harassment will never go away, but Shackelford is optimistic.

"I think we're gaining ground. Most men are getting it but some just like to push the boundaries," he says. "My upbringing taught me to respect women and I'm passing that lesson on to my kids." 

Joey Butler is managing editor of Interpreter magazine. Portions of this article were adapted from the "I didn't mean it that way" article in the Winter (January-March) 2007 UM Men magazine.

Sexual harassment needs to be talked about more

EDUCATE!

Food for thought

Sexual harassment is behavior that is not only unwelcome but, in most cases, repeated. Many times offensive words and behavior are unintentional, born of ignorance and insensitivity.

True harassers, though, intend for the recipient to be uncomfortable. It is a way to exert power. Harassers will often target people they consider the most likely to be embarrassed and least likely to file a charge.

The goal of sexual harassment is not sexual pleasure, but gaining power over another person.

Women are more likely to be targets of harassment, but men or women may be targeted.

The church is uniquely poised to help model mutual respect in places of work and worship, a key in combating sexual harassment.

—From *The 9 to 5 Guide to Combating Sexual Harassment* by Ellen Bravo and Ellen Cassedy

Survey shows clergy spouses are finding their voices

Over the past few months, more than 3,100 women and men completed GCSRW's survey of clergy spouses.

Sample questions of the survey for clergy spouses included: who do you consider to be your pastor; what is your highest completed educational level; where do you participate in the church (if you do at all); and rate the happiness of your marriage.

While survey results continue to be processed and assessed, the Commission offers this helpful analysis of the experiences of our clergy spouses and their participation in the church life and ministries. Look for more survey information online beginning in April.

3,100 respond

Response

Clergy spouses want and need to talk about their experiences. GCSRW received nearly three times the expected responses to our survey.

42% have graduate degrees

Education

Our clergy spouses appear to be a highly educated group. Nearly 30 percent are college graduates and nearly 42 percent have graduate degrees.

55% are employed full-time

Employment

Among clergy spouses, 55 percent are employed full-time, 17 percent are employed part-time and 12 percent stay at home as a parent and/or homemaker.

80% in first marriage

Marriage

Eighty percent are in their first marriage while 18.5 percent are divorced and remarried.

Marital satisfaction is rated, as a group, to be very high.

70% have happy children

Parenting

Parents assessed their children's satisfaction with being a "preacher's kid" as mostly positive (nearly 70 percent); 18 percent of parents indicated they didn't know how their children would assess their experience.

78% are female

Gender

Among those surveyed, 78.2 percent are female and 21.7 percent were male.

49% are age 51-64

Age

The ages of clergy spouses who participated in survey are: 3.2 percent age 30 and younger; 34.6 percent between ages 31-50; 48.7 percent between ages 51-64; 31.6 percent age 65 and older.



Lessons from teamwork: clergywoman and laywoman

Occasionally power struggles exist between a female senior pastor and the laywomen in her congregation. However, *The Flyer* celebrates one congregation that models a successful relationship between a clergywoman and her laywomen.

The Rev. Ashley Crowder Stanley was appointed senior pastor of Wesley Memorial Church, High Point, N.C., in July 2008.

Harriet Austin Mattes is a lifelong member of Wesley Memorial, having been there for 67 years. The two have developed mutual respect and continually support each other.

When she first arrived, Stanley says Wesley members were very welcoming.

“I believe clergywomen face some unique challenges, especially serving a church that has never had a woman pastor,” says Stanley, who is the first senior clergywoman to be appointed to Wesley Memorial.

“I am not naïve in thinking that I will not face challenges because of my gender, but I do not go looking for them,” she says. “In the past, I have had parishioners who simply did not understand how I could be their pastor and be a parent and wife.”

Chairwoman of her church’s historical committee and a member of the choir, Mattes says choir members consider themselves part of the same worship team with Stanley. She also thinks that Stanley’s “nurturing female touch” is perfect for their congregation.

“I feel comfortable making suggestions, forwarding emails and frequently stopping by after services or meetings to express my affirmation or greetings,” says Mattes, who notes that her son is among the fourth generation of her family to attend the 2,400-member church.

“I’ve been outspoken about the responsibility of members to be involved at

all stages [of church work] and not just come with complaints,” she says.

Likewise, Stanley says she supports laywomen in her congregation.

“Sometimes, I have encountered women who seem interested and enthusiastic about a possible leadership role but are reluctant to take it because there has never been a woman in that role,” says Stanley, who previously served as senior pastor of Biltmore Church in Asheville, N.C., for nine years. “I have tried to reassure them that I will walk with them into this unknown territory, and I tell them to believe in their God-given abilities.”



Harriet Austin Mattes (left) and the Rev. Ashley Crowder Stanley

“I have also been approached by women who have said that their voices were ignored in meetings,” says Stanley. “I advocate for them and attempt to model respectful leadership that is inclusive.

“The church works only when people learn to work collaboratively and respectfully. I have always held on to the belief that no one can control who God calls into the ministry,” Stanley adds. 

Church, men called to confront pornography

United Methodist Church statement asserts that pornography addiction dulls the ability of men in ministry to view women as made in God's image

In this article, writer Robert Jensen dispels myths of "art" and "freedom of expression," and maintains that pornography use is rooted in misogyny and male privilege.

By Robert Jensen

Pornography is an industrial media in a male-dominant society that reflects a hyper-masculine sexual imagination rooted in a conventional concept of masculinity: sex as conquest and the acquisition of pleasure through the taking of women.

Evidence from laboratory studies and in-depth interviews indicates that men's habitual use of media that sexually objectifies and degrades women (1) adds to the cultural climate that increases the risk of sexual violence for women and (2) leads to women's dissatisfaction with male partners in many relationships.

The evidence makes it even clearer that this pornographic culture also is destructive for men.

This doesn't mean the harm of pornography is borne equally by all; in male-dominant societies, women bear

the brunt of the damage when a domination/subordination dynamic is sexualized. (This is a central theme of pornography.) Nor does it mean that all people experience pornography in the same way.

But while human behavior is variable, there are patterns we can observe. From nearly 20 years of research on the issue, I have concluded that one of the most damaging aspects of pornography (along with much of pop culture) is not only that it objectifies women but also that it encourages men to objectify ourselves, to cut ourselves off from the rich, complex experience of sexuality and intimacy. In hundreds of formal interviews and informal discussions with men, I repeatedly hear them describe going emotionally numb when viewing pornography and responding to it, a state of being "checked out." In

EDITOR'S NOTE: Last spring, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted a resolution by this Commission that asserts that use of pornography by a lay or clergy person is a form of sexual misconduct (No. 2082, "Prevention of the Use of Pornography in the Church"; The Book of Resolutions, 2008).

The resolution reflects a cornerstone of Wesleyan theology, namely that we do no harm. Further, the resolution reflects current psychological research, which suggests that men (the overwhelming majority of consumers of pornography) who become addicted to pornography are physiologically altered, as is their perspective, relationships with parishioners and family, and their perceptions of girls and women. "Persons who are addicted to pornography," the statement reads, "must be held accountable for the impact of their behavior, yet they also need prayer, care and therapy."



Pornography not only objectifies women but it also encourages men to objectify ourselves.



my own use of pornography as a child and young man, I remember how completely

I would shut down during the experience.

So, to enter into the pornographic world and experience that intense sexual rush, many men have to turn off some of the emotional and spiritual reactions typically connected to a sexual experience with a real person—a sense of the other’s humanity, an awareness of being present with another person, the recognition of something outside our own bodies, as well as a deeper connection to oneself. Many of those same men report that in intimate relationships with another person, this same emotionally shut-down response to sexual stimulation kicks in.

In short: Pornography helps train men not to feel during an experience that is most about feeling.

Compounding the problem is the way in which pornography intensifies men’s sense of control, over self and others. In pornography, men—the actors on the screen and the viewers at home—control everything. For viewers, technology has allowed more control of the sexual experience, first with the fast-forward button on a VCR to speed past a particular scene that may be less exciting. DVDs offer the same feature, enhanced further by the segmenting of movies by performer or type of sex acts.

So, men turn women into objects in order to turn ourselves into objects, splitting off loving emotion from body, in search of a

sexual experience in which we don’t have to feel and can stay in complete control.

Coming full circle, this is not only destructive for men but dangerous for women. Because sex is always more than a physical act, men seeking this split-off state often find themselves having uncontrollable emotional reactions that can get channeled easily into violence and cruelty, increasing the risk to women.

In the end, I believe men should reject pornography and resist the “porn-ifying” of the culture for two reasons. First is an argument from justice, a principled concern for the welfare of women. Second is an argument for self-interest.

Do we want to be shut down and cut off from one of the great mysteries of life? Do we want to trade our humanity, our sacred worth, for a quick, cheap thrill that ends up costing us all more than we may realize? 



Robert Jensen is a professor in the school of journalism at the University of Texas at Austin. Much of his research focuses on pornography and men’s violence, white privilege and institutionalized racism. His books include *All*

My Bones Shake: A Progressive Path to the Prophetic Voice (Soft Skull Press, 2009), and *Getting Off: Pornography and the End of Masculinity* (South End Press, 2007). He also was a consultant for the documentary film *“The Price of Pleasure.”*



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Women hold four top leadership posts

At St. James Church in Sumter, S.C., the Rev. Cathy Mitchell is only the second female pastor. Irene Richardson is the first female trustee chair, Angie Porter is the first female council chair and Michelle Jackson is the first female general contractor.

Mitchell, who was appointed to the 270-member congregation three years ago, says she encourages all members to serve, no matter their gender. And, if her gender becomes a stumbling block with congregants, she says she tries to “speak with authority, encourage all members to talk with me and explain that I am leading because that’s what I’m called to do.”

Porter says that while Mitchell may be the youngest pastor they’ve had, “she acts like the oldest and wisest. Under her leadership, church membership has grown, new ministries have been added and church construction has begun.”

Richardson, who was recently reelected for another term as chairwoman of the trustees, says that while she feels she has the respect of the congregation, she sometimes is aware of gender bias. Mitchell notes that sometimes church leaders try to “go around” Richardson for information instead of respecting Richardson’s authority.

Porter says, “In church council, everyone was so used to a man holding my position, that I had to prove that I could be equal to a man, standing up for what’s best for the church and pastor.”

Mitchell says that whenever necessary, Porter “whips meetings back to peace and order, just like a judge in a courtroom.”

Currently managing a 1,960-square-foot addition of the church and the renovation of the church sanctuary, Jackson says that she is constantly challenged in her career because of her gender. “I need to be well-informed and knowledgeable of my job;



From left: Angie Porter, the Rev. Cathy D. Mitchell, Michelle Jackson and Irene Richardson

I have to be firmer because people expect that I won’t know what’s going on,” she says. “I carry out my jobs to my utmost abilities and hopefully my work will speak for itself.”

Mitchell adds that Jackson also uses her skills and “female nurturing” when on the job.

Q What is your favorite hymn?
“Amazing Grace” (UMH No. 378) because it is a hymn I grew up singing.

—Irene Richardson

Q When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?
A nurse so I could help people.

—Angie Porter

Q If money were no object, what would you like to do? I’d like to restart the church renovations and additions and instead build our congregation a mega church that would take up a whole block.

—Michelle Jackson

Q Do you have any words of advice for our sisters in the UMC? Remember that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

—The Rev. Cathy Mitchell

What the numbers tell us:

Lessons from the ministry of monitoring

The Flyer recently asked members of the GCSRW monitoring team what they learned from our work at the 2008 General Conference. You may recall that the commission joined with the General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) to track how inclusive the proceedings were with regard to gender, race/ethnicity, nationality and age. Here are their responses.

What did you learn from monitoring with a partner?

Being a white female it was helpful to have a racial ethnic person's perspective. There are a lot of nuances to conversations and comments that I miss, not because I am blind, I'm just not as sensitive to subtle racism. The partnership was mutually helpful as I was able to pick up on more of the subtle sexism and my partner on the subtle racism. It helped me open my eyes and be a better monitor. ... I think General Conference benefited because it was not just one commission beating its drum.

—Karen Alley, *previous lay board member of GCSRW, Montana*

What did you gain in monitoring together, more than alone?

I learned that it's good to communicate and share what was seen and heard. We sometimes had different perspectives that made for interesting conversations, but reached the same conclusions. During a legislative session I witnessed a person of color [having his personal space invaded]. What was clear to me as patronizing was not perceived that way by others. ... In several conversations during General Conference, there was a definite sense of gratitude to GCSRW and GCORR for being there.

—Marvin Shackelford, *current lay board member of GCSRW, North Alabama*

Did the experience change your view?

When my partner and I were in plenary, I realized that we picked up more signals for our own race. I was very uncomfortable when I saw a clip of a white boy acting like a stereotypical Asian karate kid. But when I talked to my partner, she did not see that. On the other hand, my partner picked up incidents about African Americans [that I didn't].

—Anonymous

What was challenging in monitoring as a team?

There were times that I was upset because something happened in the session; but when I talked to my partner, she gave me a different perspective. ...When [my partner and I] did not agree, it created tensions, but we made sure to talk more until we both felt comfortable. So, it was a blessing to have the challenges.

—Anonymous

What was your overall experience in being part of the joint monitoring team of GCORR/GCSRW?

Monitoring jointly with the GCORR certainly expanded my focus to include race and nationality as well as gender. Working with a writing team of six—three from each commission—and meeting a daily deadline was a challenge, but with the collegiality of our general secretaries, it happened!

—Susan Smalley, *previous lay board member of GCSRW, Alaska*

How did the General Conference (or any entity) benefit by having joint monitors?

In the legislative committee setting, participants knew that having two agencies monitor together [meant that] we were concerned with overall inclusiveness and not only gender.

—Debbie Pitney, *current clergy board member of GCSRW, Oregon-Idaho*

In comparison to the 2004 General Conference, more diverse voices were being heard. Legislative committees did a better job at this than the plenary sessions by being more intentional. We continue to need to give honest feedback in the larger plenary sessions where the voices are often overlooked when parliamentary and financial issues get dominated by male voices and time constraints do not allow for all diverse voices to be heard.

—Bill Wilson, *previous clergy board member of GCSRW, West Virginia*



- ★ **The Rev. Sherrie Dobbs Johnson** was elected in February as the first full-time executive director for the African American Methodist Heritage Center.
- ★ **The Rev. Dorothy Watson Tatem** will be the new superintendent of the East District of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, and the **Rev. Marilyn Spurrell** will be the new superintendent of the Three Rivers District of the Dakotas Conference, both effective July 1.
- ★ **Bishop Minerva Carcaño** of the Desert Southwest Conference joined two members of Congress and several religious leaders from diverse faiths in announcing the launch of “Prayer, Renewal and Action on Immigration” at a recent press conference in Washington, D.C.
- ★ The letter written to incoming first lady Michelle Obama by General Board of Higher Education and Ministry staff member **Cynthia Bond Hopson** was selected for a collection of letters published in a new book, *Go, Tell Michelle: African American Women Write to the New First Lady* (SUNY Press, 2009).
- ★ **Marjorie M. (Marj) Pon** has been elected editor of Church School Publications. She works with the Curriculum Resources Committee of the General Board of Discipleship and is employed by the United Methodist Publishing House.
- ★ **Bishop Rosemarie Wenner** was re-elected bishop of the German Central Conference of The United Methodist Church.

New GCSRW assistant general secretary hired

Institutional sexism and sexual misconduct are not just “women’s issues.”

That is one reason why GCSRW has hired a clergyman to coordinate efforts on sexual ethics. The position is a new one, both for the commission and the denomination, according to M. Garlinda Burton, the commission’s general secretary.

The Rev. Darryl Stephens, currently a visiting assistant professor of Christian social ethics and Methodist studies at United Methodist-related Candler School of Theology, began working part time in March for the commission and will start on a full-time basis on April 27. He is an ordained deacon in the denomination’s Texas Annual Conference.

The plan, Burton explained, is to create a “strategic, coordinated and theologically solid program” for sexual ethics, focusing on prevention, intervention and education.

Stephens’ duties will include the creation of training resources specific to The United Methodist Church and its clergy and lay leadership; development and evaluation of policies and procedures within annual conferences and church-related entities regarding sexual misconduct complaints; and coordination of intra-agency resources on the prevention and just resolution of such complaints. *✍*

—Excerpted from a UMNS news release



*The Rev.
Darryl
Stephens*

Does the jurisdictional pool process allow diverse, new leadership?

Women are increasingly represented on churchwide agencies. However, more than half of churchwide agency members are also General Conference delegates. Is our leadership table still more insular than truly inclusive?

By Lindsey Graham and Elaine Moy

Overall participation of women directors of general church agencies has increased, (although men are better represented), when one compares churchwide membership.

However, we found the five U.S. jurisdictions were more likely to give seats to the board of directors of general agencies and those already holding leadership positions than to new-to-leadership people.

What does it mean that so many U.S. agency voting members were (or are) General Conference delegates? A positive interpretation is that the five regions recognize and send to the agencies persons with a proven commitment to church leadership and to participation in the global work and witness of this denomination. There is also more likely to be continuity in our corporate Christian work.

However, a potential drawback to the jurisdictional nominating process is that the task of setting churchwide policy, practices, mission and ministry has remained in the hands of a minority of persons, and a new, broad, more diverse group of leaders is missing from the denomination's leadership tables.

Current U.S. lay membership in The United Methodist Church is about 8 million. Of those, nearly 60% are women and 40% are men.

Additionally, there are nearly 45,000 United Methodist clergypersons in the United States (including elders, deacons and local pastors). Men represent 77 percent of the clergy, women 23 percent.

In the January-March 2009 issue of *The Flyer*, we explained that the jurisdictional pool is the collection of persons from which the five jurisdictional nominating committees name regional representatives to the churchwide agencies every four years.

In 2008, each nominating committee of the five U.S. jurisdictions recommended from the pool—and their respective jurisdictions approved—356 persons to serve as board members of general agencies. They have decision-making power to direct and guide where these agencies will be working and serving the church in the next four years. (These numbers do not include General Commission on Archives and History and the General Commission on United Methodist Men, which have different processes for membership.)

In 2008, laywomen represented the largest group in the total U.S. jurisdictional pool, with 596 (29%), followed by 587 clergymen (29%), 473 laymen (23%), and 376 clergywomen (19%). In total, women comprise 48% of the jurisdictional pool, slightly less than parity according to total U.S. membership, and men are represented at 52%.

Current U.S. lay membership in The United Methodist Church is about 8 million. Of those, nearly 60% are women and 40% are men.

e numbers

The Book of Discipline (Par. 705) recommends that the jurisdiction membership on each program board incorporate one-third clergy, one-third laymen and one-third laywomen. However, the aggregate number of people in the 2008 jurisdictional pools—and those finally assigned to agencies—do not follow that recommended formula.

Of those 356 elected board members last year, 105 were clergymen (29%), 98 were laywomen (28%), 92 were laymen (26%), and 61 were clergywomen (17%).

Clergymen make up 61% of the clergy in the jurisdictional pool while they were 64% of the clergy assigned to agency boards. Clergywomen made up 39% of the jurisdictional pool and were 37% of the clergy assigned to boards, which is above parity.

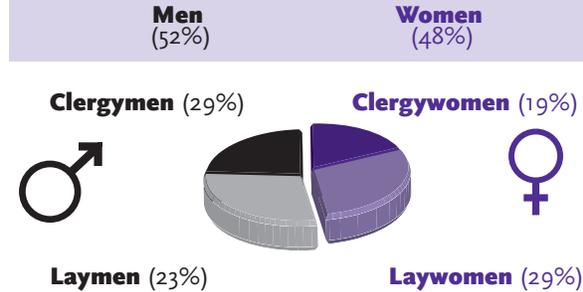
Laymen were 45% of the laity in the jurisdictional pool and 48% of the laity named to boards of directors. Laywomen were 56% of the laity in the jurisdictional pool and 52% of the laity elected.

In addition, of the 356 persons assigned to agencies for the current quadrennium, 216 (61%) were delegates (172 people or 48%) or reserve delegates (44 people or 13%) to the 2008 General Conference. Of the 172 board members who were also General Conference delegates, the largest group was clergymen with 32% (56), followed by a tie of 26% laywomen/laymen (44), and 16% clergywomen (28).

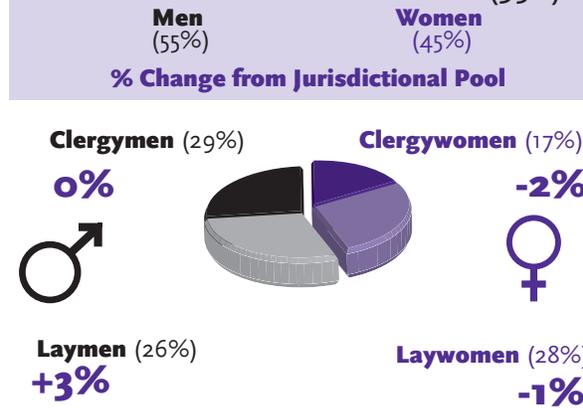
Of the remaining 140 persons assigned from the jurisdictions to churchwide agencies, 60% had been delegates to previous General Conferences.

Lindsey Graham is website coordinator for GCSRW. **Elaine Moy** is assistant general secretary for GCSRW.

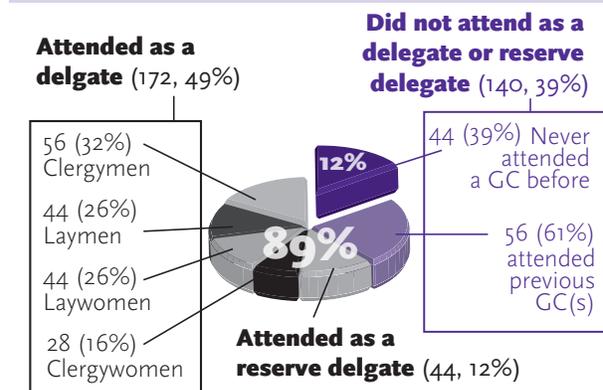
Jurisdictional Pool (2,032)



Elected Board Members (356)



Elected Board Members at the 2008 General Conference



Please go to gcsr.org for more detailed information regarding comparison to General Conference delegations.



General Commission on the Status and Role of Women
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Get set! *The Flyer* is going green (and online) in 2010

Starting next year, our official newsletter, *The Flyer*, will become an online-only publication, available at no additional cost to current and new subscribers.

The decision was a tough one. Many of us in church leadership are “print people,” and we’re most at home with an information tool we can tuck in a briefcase or tote bag, read on a plane or in a waiting room, and archive for easy reference without having to flip a switch or boot up.

Even as I write this, I’m surrounded by volumes of books, stacks of magazines and newsletters and a hefty collection of bound-for-posterity issues of *The Flyer*, which was first published in 1972.

At the same time, however, GCSRW is connecting with people around the church and around the world in record numbers, thanks to our stellar new website. Last fall, the first month we offered a survey for clergy spouses, we received over 2 million hits at www.gcsr.org. Women and men who use our resources are demanding more stuff more often, and they want more answers, resources and news delivered to them more quickly. An electronic format makes that delivery possible.

In its current print format, our newsletter—mailed to about 7,000 readers on a quarterly basis—costs us about \$70,000 a year to produce, publish and mail. That doesn’t include the cost of updating subscription lists. By contrast, in 2010 we will email a monthly news bulletin to those same subscribers for about \$30,000, and readers can subscribe and update their mailing information online at no additional cost to the denomination.

As important to finances is our commitment to protecting the natural world. We’ve always printed *The Flyer* on recycled paper using environmentally safer ink. However, our e-newsletter will allow readers to print only what they need.

In the final upcoming print issues, you’ll be given instructions on how to register online to receive the new *Flyer*; and we’re planning a test run this fall to make sure we work out any bugs before Jan. 1, 2010. Stay tuned! 

—**M. Garlinda Burton** is general secretary of GCSRW.