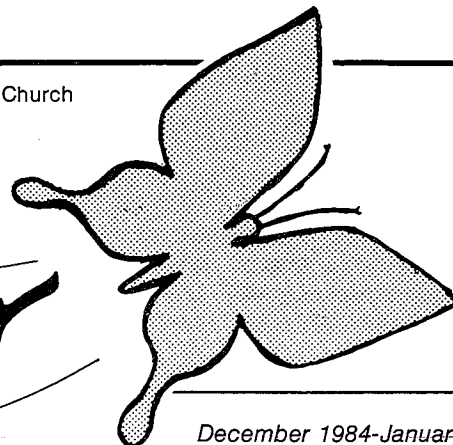


# The Flyer

VOLUME VI, No. 5

December 1984-January 1985



## IN THE BEGINNING: ACCSRWS MOVE TO ENABLE LOCAL CHURCH WORK AREAS ON STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

"We need resources and ideas that deal with ways we as a CSRW with a reduced membership and a limited budget can initiate local church CSRW's in a conference environment that is non-supportive at best."

The plea from Carol Burnett, chair of the Mississippi Conference CSRW, sums up succinctly the plight facing many ACCSRWs as they move into 1985 and begin the task of enabling and supporting local church work areas on status and role of women.

While some Annual Conference CSRWS (North Texas, for one) have had conference-legislated status and role of women work areas in the local churches for as many as five years, most CSRWs have taken their direction from legislation passed at the May, 1984, General Conference.

The legislation adds a work area chairperson of the status and role of women to the basic membership of the Council on Ministries and the Administrative Board (or the Administrative Council in smaller churches) and then outlines the responsibilities of the work area chairperson, (paragraphs 252, 253, 257 and 261 of the 1984 discipline.)

The dilemmas facing CSRWs, then, are limited budgets, non-supportive conference environments, and in some cases, a conference-level CSRW that is itself inexperienced or inactive.

Writes Odella Williamson, one of the co-chairpersons of the New York CSRW: "At our last CSRW meeting I was the only one present! We were therefore unable to plan our activities and how we will help local churches."

In many instances the first hurdle that must be overcome, in spite of the General Conference action authorizing the new work area, is opposition to even the establishment of such an office.

"Of course, we expect a minority of local churches to elect status and role of women officers," writes Rhonda Knight, chair of the Holston CSRW.

"I have heard 'through the grapevine' that many local churches in South Georgia are unwilling to support the new work area. So we have our work cut out for us!" writes Marcia Jane Cochran, South Georgia CSRW chair.

### LOCAL CHURCH WORK AREAS ON STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN: THE FIRST STEPS

ACCSRWs already have taken a number of steps to help local churches establish work areas. Strategies include:

- participating in district-wide local church leadership "job training" workshops being held in early 1985.
- mailings to local churches/pastors.
- working through District Councils on Ministries and district superintendents.
- training CSRW members who will in turn train local church representatives.
- offering CSRW members to local churches as trainers/helpers in district conference events to establish the work area.
- working with pastor/parish relations committees.
- contacting local church nominating committees to request the appointment of a local church representative.
- using the coordinated mailing to get materials to local churches.
- preparing an announcement to be inserted in the local church bulletin.
- sending teams of CSRW-trained persons directly into local churches.

From the ACCSRWs come these reports:

**Yellowstone:** At its February, 1985, meeting, in association with the Conference Council on Ministries meeting, the

CSRW will organize and plan for training for local church work areas. "Our tentative goal is to hook up with other conference agencies in district-wide workshops, available to all churches," writes Vicki Horn-Marine, Yellowstone chair.

This conference faces a similar dilemma to Mississippi's. Continues Horn-Marine: "Our conference is financially struggling and in our responsiveness to be good stewards, we have to find the least expensive, yet most widely-reaching way to touch the local churches in Montana and part of Wyoming. We have considered using a portion of our meeting time in February to train conference CSRW members to return to their areas and share their training with the local church reps in their area."

**Kansas West:** A flyer was distributed at Annual Conference in May, 1984 and then mailed to all local churches in September. The flyer outlines the functions of the Kansas West CSRW, how the ACCSRW serves the local church status and role of women work area, what resources are available in the conference office, and the names and addresses of CSRW contacts.

**Southwest Texas:** In its report to the 1984 Annual Conference, the CSRW noted progress in its goal to have a layperson in every local church appointed to be responsible for status and role of women concerns. "All seven district superintendents included this position on their Charge Conference nominations sheet," stated the report to Annual Conference. "Some districts reported a 30 per cent increase in filling the position over 1983. The January 'Ebb and Flow' contained a 'My Job' sheet of guidelines and contact has been made quarterly."

Plans made at the October, 1984, CSRW  
(Cont. on pg. 2)

# IN THE BEGINNING

(Cont. from pg. 1)

meeting included sending a letter to each local church pastor reminding him or her that each local church is expected by the Discipline to have a representative in the work area of Status and Role of Women. The letter was to include the Discipline paragraph describing the position. In addition, the Southwest TX CSRW planned to ask each District Council on Ministries chair to request a "My Job Workshop" for the new local church SRW representatives, "since this is the first year this position has been in the Discipline."

The February, 1985, meeting of the CSRW will be a training session, which CSRW members will in turn present this spring in each district to SRW local church representatives. The program will focus on biblical and theological foundations of the status and role of women.

**East Ohio:** Writes the CSRW chairperson: "We have planned an early January meeting to train our 12 district representatives to work with local church work area persons at late January district training events, already set in most of the districts. We have just established a task group to investigate further training/resourcing possibilities, for example: five fall, 1985, events around the conference following a training model this task group will establish."

**Southern New England:** The CSRW has sent a letter to all clergy reminding them of the mandate for a local church CSRW. It also sent a summary of the local church guidelines for the status and role of women work area, and offered to supply those complete guidelines when available. "We have offered our services to go into local churches as educators and/or helpers as needed to organize and aid these new commissions," reports Allison Cook, a consultant to the CSRW.

**Western Pennsylvania:** "Our project is to work with Pastor Parish Relations committees for the next four years," stated Janet Rice Flinn, CSRW chairperson. "We will not be able to resource local church work areas until strong district representatives are appointed. That is a slow process."

**Virginia:** "We have three (representatives) on district councils on ministries — but we have 18 districts," writes CSRW co-chair Maria Waters. "We are working with district superintendents to get all 18 in place. Then we plan a training session and one of the goals will be for that person to get local reps on Administrative Boards, Council on Ministries or on Administrative Councils (in smaller churches)."

**Louisiana:** The CSRW developed a packet which will be used in local leaders training. "I have a commission member or former commission member in each district for the district superintendent to contact to do the training," reports CSRW chair Betty Rowell. "Packets have been given to the district superintendents for this training and they will be distributed at the proper training meeting."

**California-Nevada:** The CSRW published and distributed a one-page flyer: "Ways to Increase the Inclusion of Women in all areas of Local Church Life." Included with the flyer was a three-paragraph announcement that could be inserted in a local church bulletin to inform congregational members of the new work area and a contact person.

**Iowa:** A two-sided information sheet, "What Is My Responsibility?" was devised and distributed by the CSRW through a coordinated mailing. The sheet included a summary of the local church leadership guidelines on Status and Role of Women prepared by the CGSRW and published by the UM Publishing House, as well as recommended resources, materials available from the Conference Media Resource Services, and names and addresses of district representatives.

**North Alabama:** "We are in the process of setting up a February or March training event for the annual conference commission members and any others interested, followed by district cluster training events for local church areas," writes CSRW chairperson Ann Lohr. "We are contacting district superintendents to see if we would be allowed to provide trained resource people for the January 1985 district leadership training workshops for local church officers."

"We are collecting materials and resources for distribution to district and local church representatives of our work area. We have plans for increasing distribution of the "Flyer" to all UMW district and conference officers and especially Mission Coordinators for Supportive Community and others on the conference and district level to raise awareness. We are planning a newsletter of our own and resourcing teams with Religion and Race and Church and Society to go into the local churches to speak and present programs."

"Some local church work areas chairs were elected this fall in the charge conferences. Many churches did not elect them. We tried going through the district superintendents asking them to lift up this work area and the 1/3 women rule on the trustees at each charge conference. Response was minimal. What really seemed to work was getting someone in a local church to approach the nominations committee and request a person be elected. Often they submitted several names when the request was made. This also worked in the District COM when the District Leadership Training was being planned."

**Central Illinois:** Two churches in each of the eight districts, selected by the CSRW, will be chosen to be part of a "pilot" training program. Teams composed of CSRW members and others will move into the 16 local churches, making three visits per church in 1985, and being available for correspondence, telephone consultations, etc. Among the factors to be considered in choosing the local churches are size, urban/rural, multi-church charges, ethnic churches. The CSRW is attempting to choose churches that will be responsive to this new work area, said Vaudra Rushing, CSRW conference staff person, in explaining the model at the North Central Jurisdiction Joint Training Event in November.

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# NEW VISTAS: THE LOCAL CHURCH WORK AREA ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN

In May of 1984 the General Conference approved legislation allowing for the creation of a work area on the status and role of women in local churches. Almost overnight, in 38,000 United Methodist local churches, concerns regarding the participation and inclusion of women in the life of the church found a home.

The task facing women (and supportive men) is how to begin — how to establish the new work area, and how to begin to impact the local church.

A good place to begin, perhaps, is with the legislation describing the functions of the new work area chairperson:

**"The work area chairperson of the status and role of women shall keep the Council on Ministries and the congregation aware of the meaning of the church's continuing commitment to the full and equal responsibility and participation of women in the total life and mission of the church.**

**"The chairperson shall be a woman. She shall maintain contact with the Annual Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women and the District Council on Ministries and shall cooperate with United Methodist Women in recommending to the Council on Ministries program opportunities for worship, fellowship, witness, study, nurture, and service with persons and groups which confirm anew the liberating message of Jesus Christ that recognizes every person, woman or man, as full and equal part of God's human family."**

(From the 1984 UM Book of Discipline, paragraph 261.8)

The legislation approved by the 1984 General Conferences places the work area chairperson on the Council of Ministries and on the Administrative Board, or if neither exists, on the Administrative Council (see Discipline paragraphs 257, 252, and 254 respectively). On each of these bodies, the status and role of women work area chairperson is accorded the same responsibilities and authority as the other work area chairpersons.

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the legislation, local church status and role of women work area representatives can take a cue from the three primary roles identified by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW), and appropriated by many Annual Conference Commissions on the Status and Role of Women (ACCSRW), namely to serve as Advocates, Catalysts, and Monitors on behalf of women. (For further explanation see the "Guidelines," pages 10-11.)

The work area **ADVOCATES** for women's special needs by bringing issues before the Council on Ministries and the Administrative Board, (or the Administrative Council) and other persons and groups.

Supporting United Methodist Women in their mandate for missions, and presenting workshops for inclusiveness in cooperation with the worship or education committee for example, is a form of advocacy.

The work area **MONITORS** church groups and activities to determine how well women are being included. This can be either written or visual data gathering, on a quantitative or qualitative level. (See "Flyer" page 9 for further information.)

The work area acts as a **CATALYST** by bringing people and resources together to enable change to occur. In this way the work area works for inclusiveness by encouraging others toward it.

## HOW TO BEGIN

Individuals who are interested in seeing this office filled can talk with the pastor and the chair of the Administrative Council, Administrative Board or Council on Ministries, to get the work area chairperson included in the list of local church officers to be nominated by the Committee on Nominations and Personnel. Some groundwork probably needs to be done ahead of time, to communicate what the functions of the office are, and to identify potential leadership. Talking with members of the nominating committee ahead of time can be helpful in giving them information they need to fill the position.

Once an individual is selected, she can find helpful hints for how to get started in this job on page three of the "Guidelines for Leadership in the Local Church: Status and Role of Women Work Area," prepared by the GCSRW, published by the United Methodist Publishing House and available for \$1 through Cokesbury.

Others have also identified a process for getting started. The Iowa CSRW offers these suggestions for how to begin:

1. Contact and talk with your District Representative on the ACCSRW.
2. Become familiar with the programs and offerings of the ACCSRW.
3. Become familiar with resources, read and share them with other women, men and leaders. (See page 8 of this "Flyer" and pages 17 through 19 of the "Guidelines.")
4. Attend the Council on Ministries and Administrative Board or Administrative Council meetings regularly.
5. Observe and gather information about the participation of women in the total life of the church and community. What are their present roles? Why are things this way? How can your church move further toward mutuality and equality?
6. Call together others who share the concern of equality and inclusiveness to talk about your personal journeys and struggles, to exchange resources, and to define hopes and dreams.
7. Develop communication with the pastor, other key leaders and United Methodist

Women about your responsibility, resources, hopes and possibilities.

8. Become acquainted with and use the resources of other church and community women's organizations and leaders.

9. Develop goals and programs considering the present situation and progressive steps that could enable the church to grow. Act with conviction and with sensitivity.

"Find out what the issue is in your church, and go after that," advises Jean Wood, chairperson of the North Texas CSRW.

"Do things which will bring you success, where you'll see quick results, that will make people feel good," suggests Beverly Reddick, Iowa conference staff related to the CSRW. "Be realistic in terms of your audience — it may not be the total church, but a select group within."

"Don't set out 14 things to do at once," says Wood. "Take one step at a time, and look for little successes. If you look at how monumental the problem really is, you'll get discouraged before you start."

"The first step is in seeing ourselves as a part of the church, rather than as over against," says Ann Lohr, chair of the North Alabama CSRW. "Just as Paul identifies in the Epistles, we serve not a strange God, but the same God we've been serving all along."

Tie the work and agenda of the local church work unit into the theme and focus of the church as a whole, Lohr advises. If the emphasis is on discipleship, think and talk about equipping women for discipleship. Use the theme "Equipping All of God's Servants," and emphasize that women are part and parcel of the church.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Change does not come easily to any individual or system, and especially so when fundamental values and roles are being questioned and challenged. And matters of the status and role of women (and consequently men) are matters of fundamental roles and values.

Expect persons on both sides to have very strong feelings about the issues being raised. On the surface, a proposal to list women in the church directory by their first names seems easily accomplished and somewhat minor.

And yet the proposal sometimes raises fundamental questions about male/female roles husband/wife relationships, and women's status. For the woman who is finding — and liking — an identity more separate from her husband, the issue is important. And for the woman who has always been known and addressed as "Mrs. John Smith," the issue also evokes strong feelings.

Never underestimate the effect your suggestions may have.

"Expect change to come slowly and  
(Cont. on pg. 4)

## NEW VISTAS

(Cont. from pg. 3)

gradually," says Reddick. "Do not expect the Kingdom to come tomorrow. Realistically, some people will become supportive and enthusiastic, and some won't. There may be some discomfort in the congregation, because change often makes us uncomfortable."

"Expect some individuals to find this significant, important and empowering in terms of their own lives. Expect to affect *individuals* to a greater extent than you will affect *groups* at the beginning. And expect some people to think that everything is fine, just the way it is."

"Do expect some people at first not to understand the function or need," Lohr said. "There's a tremendous need for education." Those unfamiliar with the need will tend to marginalize the work area, suggesting that the concerns of women are not as important as . . . peace, racial justice, the stewardship drive . . .

"What they need to realize," Lohr said, "is that women's concerns, reaching and empowering women, are at the very heart of the Gospel."

"Do not expect the work to be done already, or for someone else to do your work," she said. "Do not expect the pastor to use inclusive language automatically in worship. Do not get discouraged if the church sings 'Rise Up, Oh Men of God,' fifty times one year. If it sings it only 25 times the next year — that's progress! Remember, we're in for the long haul."

### SIGNS OF SUCCESS

"Success" in the new work area can often be hard to identify. Observers say it takes any number of forms. When people begin to read resource material available in the church library, that's success. When parts of the worship service become inclusive, that's success. When the Status and Role of Women chairperson is working cooperatively with the President of United Methodist Women on mutual concerns, that's success.

"I rejoice over every single local church person we have," Lohr said. "Each is a gift. I don't see any advantage or benefit in focusing on the negative. It's just as easy to rejoice over ten local church work area persons as to lament we've got 850 that aren't there. And it's a lot more beneficial."

You know you're making progress when someone says "Gee, I didn't know that," instead of automatically dismissing the concern, says Wood. "When you begin to change feelings, as well as minds," that's progress.

### EXPERIENCES IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

In the end, one cannot generalize the experiences women and men will have along the way as they work towards inclusiveness in the local church. Two stories illustrate two churches' responses to concerns for inclusiveness and the full partici-

pation of women.

In mid-December Carolyn Vine was elected to chair the work area on the status and role of women at the First United Methodist Church in Hueytown, Alabama. Despite the fact that she was to officially take office in January, she found herself almost immediately taking on the responsibilities of the office.

As Vine tells the story, just after her election the nominating committee proposed two women and twelve men for the long-range planning committee. Vine moved that one-third of the committee be women. "Some people got huffy," Vine reports. "I reminded them I was *elected* to do this," and the motion passed.

"A man came up to me afterwards and said we shouldn't have quotas, to specify 'women' or 'men,' but just choose the most qualified persons. I suggested to him that out of a membership of 938 there were bound to be at least three qualified women."

For more than four years the First United Methodist Church in Phoenix, Arizona, had a work area on the status and role of women. Now it does not.

On November 2, 1984, the ten members of the work area formally resigned their membership.

The action came after months, some say years, of frustration and resistance to the proposals and suggestions coming from the work area. A request to have women addressed by their first names on the church's mailing list was denied. A request to obtain a computer print-out of women members with their backgrounds and qualifications in order to make nominations for church leadership positions was turned down. And a suggestion to change the name of the church's newsletter, "The First Churchman," to something more inclusive, was voted "too divisive."

And so the ten women on the work area voted to resign. And to refrain from filling the more "womanly roles." "I got a call last week to bake cookies," said LaRue Hubbard, past chair. "I told them, 'I don't bake.'"

"We're still members at the church — where would we go? I've been a member since 1952-53. I don't feel leaving the United Methodist Church will solve anything. And so I'm sitting in my traditional pew. But I'm not doing anything. I'm going to wait and see."

### "REMEMBER, WE'RE IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL"

If change does come slowly, if the task is monumental, if we're in it for the long haul, then women and men who care about evolving an inclusive church must develop strategies and structures that will enable long-term endeavor.

Some suggestions for the journey:

1. Find a supportive group, either within the local church or outside of it, that will nurture, listen and help strategize.
2. Keep your sense of humor, and use it

## MONITORING

(Cont. from pg.9)

women's and men's work evaluated equally, or are women somehow expected to do a superior (or inferior in some instances) job? Is it assumed that women and men have equal skills and capabilities?

9. Is the work that women currently do in the church seen as important and essential in the life of the church? Is it considered part of the "real work" of the church?

10. Does the language of the pastor, church leaders, the worship services, the church bulletin, etc., reflect a commitment to inclusiveness? How are hypothetical pastors, church leaders and other persons referred to? Is God referred to exclusively as "He," or are other (neutral and female) metaphors explored?

11. Is there room in the system for men and women to be real, to make mistakes and learn from them, to ask for and receive both positive and negative feedback, in order to struggle mutually and grow together?

The answers to these questions are inevitably subjective, i.e., will be answered differently depending on one's own experiences and perspectives. Women and men may often find themselves responding differently. The challenge, therefore, is for women and men to speak to one another and hear each other in new and dynamic ways.

It is not necessary to deny another's reality in order to affirm one's own. And it is important in this process of examination and in the dialogue to follow that individuals — women in particular — trust their perceptions and their experience of reality — even when the perceptions are contested or denied.

It is also important to take responsibility for one's participation in oppressive systems — for the ways in which one acts and thinks as victim, and the ways in which one acts and thinks as oppressor.

Out of the confession of complicity with oppressive systems, and a forthright representation of reality, emerges honest dialogue. And individuals will then be freed to recognize injustice, to move toward irradicating it, and thereby to create a more fully inclusive church.

in your work.

3. Recognize that the most vehement denial may mean the beginning of growth.

4. Acknowledge those persons who, though they disagree, are willing to dialogue and take the issues seriously.

5. And above all, keep sight of the vision, the Gospel's promise of full life for all of God's creations.

# VISION OF AN INCLUSIVE CHURCH: QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE MONITORING

Local church work units on the status and role of women are mandated to work for the full participation and inclusion of women in the life of the local church. It is not always easy, however, to determine whether or not a church is inclusive (regarding race, sex, age, etc.) or to get at the factors that hinder that inclusiveness.

MONITORING is the process of gathering data that can be used to determine if a local church is inclusive, and to pinpoint areas in which to work towards inclusiveness. Frequently monitoring is prompted by individual complaints of discrimination, the identification of similar complaints which seem more than coincidence, or a "hunch."

In monitoring data can be gathered either through paper/written means (questionnaires, surveys, random spot checks, specific targets) or through persons (observations, interviews and team visits).

In addition to gathering data, monitoring involves analysis of the data collected, making recommendations for improvement, and follow through to insure that agreed-upon recommendations are implemented.

MONITORING takes two forms: QUANTITATIVE, which involves counting, numbers and statistics, and QUALITATIVE, which attempts to look beyond numbers to attitudes, environments, and structures. The second, qualitative, is more difficult, but often reveals why there are so few women in the areas which can be measured quantitatively.

## HOW TO BEGIN MONITORING

The "Guidelines for Leadership in the Local Church: Status and Role of Women Work Area," prepared by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and published by the United Methodist Publishing House (available for \$1 from Cokesbury) provide opportunities for both qualitative and quantitative monitoring (See "Areas to Examine Within the Local Church," pages 11-13 and "Checklist for an Inclusive Church," pages 13-14).

Start in arenas in which you can count to determine inclusiveness. A September issue of "Newscope" listed eight questions from the Guideline's "Checklist for An Inclusive Church," most of which can be measured quantitatively. Local church status and role of women representatives might want to start, as one pastor recently did, by taking stock of the church in these eight areas:

1. Are women encouraged to work in posts traditionally held by men? (yes or no, which ones, how many?)
2. Are men asked to work in posts often held by women? (yes or no, which ones,

how many?)

3. Are men asked to work in kitchen or nursery? (how often, how many?)

4. Do women serve as ushers, liturgists, preachers? (how often, how many?)

5. Is the language used in worship gender-inclusive? (how much, in what areas: hymns, scripture, references to people or to God)

6. Do church publications refer to women by their names rather than their husbands' names?

7. Are the concerns of women both locally and globally considered and supported?

8. Are positive experiences of women included in sermon illustrations, celebrations, and research? (how often, how many?)

The afore-mentioned sections in the "Guidelines" give numbers of other arenas in which inclusiveness can be measured quantitatively.

## THE DIFFICULT TASK OF QUALITATIVE MONITORING

There are numbers of reasons why one moves from quantitative monitoring to qualitative. For one, qualitative monitoring, asking "why," often reveals the reasons women don't get elected as trustees, appointed as senior pastors, or nominated as general secretaries. Secondly, merely increasing the numbers of women in certain arenas will not necessarily change the system or structure. Often one needs to question — and change — the system or structure itself in order for the church to become inclusive.

The following are some questions which may reveal the "quality" of life for women in the local church, and the responsiveness and receptiveness of women and men in the congregation to being and becoming inclusive.

1. Is there room in all church leadership positions for all competent women, or is there an unspoken quota? Are certain positions or arenas in the local church understood to be reserved for men — or for women? Likewise, are women open to men moving into traditionally female roles and positions?

2. How do women and men relate, personally and in work situations? Are certain patterns of relationships, ways of doing things so firmly established that women can't break in? How can/do women fit into an "old boys network?" Are women greeted with "that's the way it's always been done," or is there openness to new ways of doing and thinking? How are women who don't fit

the female stereotype ("feminine, nice") treated? How much "deviance" is permitted; is a great deal of conformity required? What happens to women who ask embarrassing questions or don't act like "ladies?" Are both women and men expected to be sympathetic comforters as well as active tellers of their stories?

3. Is collegiality encouraged among committee members, between clergy and laity, between church leaders and congregational members? Is there undue accommodation to "superiors" or is there an attitude of mutuality? Are some addressed as "Doctor" and "Reverend" and others by their first names? Are there gender issues in how people are addressed?

4. Is cooperation or competitiveness encouraged among church leaders and committee members? Is there a sense of working together for a common goal and the common good, or does the church "ladder-climbing" mean women (and others) get stepped on as some move up?

5. Is information shared? How much orientation is there to both formal and informal practices and processes? Are historical background and information, skills and contacts shared? Are there hidden agendas and who knows about them? Are those unfamiliar with tasks helped to learn them? Are all suggestions given fair consideration, even from less experienced members?

6. Are all committee members and church leaders supported and encouraged, especially those with "unorthodox" ideas? Can those unfamiliar with "the ways things are done" participate fully? Are the processes of decision-making accessible to everyone? Is everyone listened to?

7. Are women treated as persons with gifts and talents to share? Are they subjected to familiarities, inappropriate compliments and sexual innuendos? Is attention called to their "femaleness," or to their status as equal creations of God? Are women inappropriately sexualized, called by endearing terms, flirted with, touched in sexually suggestive ways?

8. Are the standards of judgment and performance based on traditional (read "male") models, or is there openness to redefining and reshaping definitions and measurements of "success" according to standards which women might bring? Are

(Cont. on pg. 4)

# CONFESSIONS OF A RELUCTANT SHEPHERD

By Jack D. Heacock First United Methodist Church, Austin, Texas

As a White-Anglo-Saxon-Male-Clergy-Over-50-From-Texas, I am an unlikely candidate to comment on the benefits and rewards of working for an inclusive staff with male and female clergy, promoting women to lead in traditionally male positions, or encouraging men to joyfully serve in roles that have been traditionally roles for women. I wish I could say that our present state of spiritual, interpersonal and emotional health at First Church is attributable to my own managerial or spiritual genius. If wishes were money I'd be rich. What I have learned about the benefits and rewards of a more inclusive staff and lay leadership has come the hard way.

## 'THE BEST PASTOR AVAILABLE'

About ten years ago we needed an ordained clergy for a new staff position, and I looked for the best pastor available. After interviewing eight candidates at four seminaries, one person stood head and shoulder above the others: a young woman at Perkins School of Theology from Shaker Heights, Ohio. Since my first commitment is to competence and quality, I found myself recommending to our P-PR Committee that we ask our bishop for her appointment. It was a "surprise" to myself to make that recommendation. I hate to admit it today, but it was a surprise. One venerable member of the P-PR Committee met her in my office and candidly said, "Shirley, if it comes to a vote I'll have to vote against you." She responded, "On biblical or traditional grounds?" He said, "Because we've just never had a woman pastor before, and I don't think it will work."

Shirley was appointed associate pastor and began her work as a full colleague almost immediately. One week while I was out of town, the unwilling member of the P-PR Committee entered the Intensive Care Unit with diabetic complications. When I returned home, the layman met me in the office with tears in his eyes, and reported that he had "changed his mind" about Shirley. I asked why, and he said, "When I looked up into her face in my distress, and she took my hand in prayer, my whole being was affirmed and blessed."

## 'A WHOLENESS IN MINISTRY'

During the three years that Shirley was on our staff, I began to discover a wholeness in ministry when there are both male and female clergy. There is a unique woman's touch just as there is a unique man's touch, and there are times when one is more effective than the other. When Shirley left, I intentionally sought out the best woman clergy I could find to take her place.

I had never heard a Mother's Day sermon preached by a clergy who in fact is a mother! A mother can talk about the nuances and intimacies of birthing and mothering in ways that a male never could. Women clergy are more sensitive to values and concerns of women and are able to keep those concerns before the corporate staff. Our use of inclusive language in liturgy, preaching, and in all public communications has become measurably improved by all staff members since women clergy have become a basic part of our staff team.

We have also been richly blessed by women leaders among the laity. Our current general chairperson for the Fall Stewardship Campaign is a young mother of four and spouse of an attorney. She has a daughter in college, a son in high school and twin daughters in junior high school. This fall she returned to the University of Texas for courses toward her degree. Who could possibly turn her down when they were invited to serve on the executive committee or to be a visitor? I cannot remember when there was not a single negative response while building the team. Nearly 400 members have volunteered to serve as visitors, and first indications point to fully underwriting our first \$1 million budget plus another \$1 million for capital funds. I have never seen the morale so high or the spirit so genuine as it has been under the leadership of this attractive, gracious and tough young woman.

## 'I REALLY DO HAVE A PLACE'

Currently, our finance chairperson is a 28-year-old single woman; our intern committee is chaired by a 31-year-old single woman; and women share almost equal membership among our lay delegates to annual conference, trustees, administrative board, and council on ministries. The chair of the intern committee shared these words at a recent meeting of the board: "I was raised in a more conservative church where, as a woman, I knew my 'place'. I was almost overwhelmed the first time I came to First Church to find not one, but two clergy women leading the liturgy and sharing the pulpit. I cannot tell you what it means to me to know that as a woman, I really do count, I really do have a 'place' anywhere I can make a contribution."

In other areas of church life, we have been richly blessed by having men serve in roles that have traditionally been reserved for women. What a thrill it was for me to walk into the Sunday School class of 4-year-olds and see the bearded Federal District Judge sitting on the floor in their midst, speaking in clear, male adult tones about the wonders of God's love as found in flowers and ani-

mals of God's creation! Never again, if it depends upon our congregation, will little boys grow up to become men who are convinced that "church is for women and children only"! It is heartwarming to find some of our male lay leaders don the apron and staff the kitchen on Sundays for early breakfast or lunch.

## 'I LOOK FOR OUR COSROW TO EQUIP THE WHOLE CONGREGATION'

The Committee on Nominations and Personnel has nominated our first chairperson of the local COSROW for 1985. As a male pastor, I live with the assumption now that there will always be nuances and signals that mean one thing to me and perhaps another thing to a woman. To have a Committee on the Status and Role of Women at work in the local church will serve to keep before staff and lay leadership important insights that otherwise might remain hidden to do invisible but serious harm to some of God's children. I look for our COSROW to inform, advise, and propose events that might better equip the whole congregation for healthier inclusiveness.

We have learned some things in the process of going for excellence, competence and strength in leadership. The whole ministry of Christ must include women and men together. Women bring unique sensitivities to the work of Sacrament, Word and Order that can complement and complete the ministries of Christ. Competence and gifts and graces are no respecters of sexuality.

For the rest of my ministry I shall seek to maintain the wholeness, the completeness of ordained ministry and congregational leadership by making sure that the most competent and gifted men and women are invited to work together for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ. If old downtown First Church Austin, Texas can grow in numbers and missional outreach and internal health of Spirit, I'm convinced that any church anywhere in this country can do the same. I am convinced that the sooner we build on a more inclusive model, the quicker and healthier will be our spiritual growth into the future.

P.S. During the time of learning about inclusiveness of men and women at every level of church leadership, First Church has grown from a membership of 1926 to its present 2290; average attendance at worship is up from 500 to 801; Sunday School from 325 to 554; our budget from \$172,000 to next year's \$1.2 Million; and 25% of our 1985 budget will be designated for Missional Outreach and Global Ministries. All this in twelve years.



# OVATIONS

To the women elected to chair five of 13 ministry units and sections of the General Board of Discipleship. **JEAN EPPLE** heads the Spiritual Formation ministry unit and the following chair sections within ministry units: **JUDY GEBHARD** (Evangelism), **LA VON WILSON** (Missional Priority), **MYRTLE FELKNER** (Christian Education), and **ELIZABETH SWEET** (Ministry of the Laity). Among the standing committee chairpersons are **RHODA PETERS** (Evaluation) and **NANCY STARNES** (Relationships).

To **ANITA J. BURROUS**, a laywoman from Peru, IN, who will chair the General Board of Publication, the first woman chairperson in the nearly 200-year history of the UM Publishing House.

To **GLADYS CAMPBELL**, executive secretary of town and country ministries for the General Board of Global Ministries, who has been elected chair of the Commission on Religion in Appalachia — the first woman to hold that position.

To **SUSAN CARROLL** and **ROBERTA SAPPINGTON**, who were hired as staff writer and associate editor of the *United Methodist Reporter*. Three of the seven members of the writing staff are women. And to **KAY FIELDER**, who was hired as manager of the local church editions department, with responsibility for the weekly production of some 400 local church editions of the *UM Reporter*.

To **REV. T. ANNE DANIEL**, who was ordained as the first woman minister of The Methodist Church in the Southern Caribbean region.

To **RUTH A. DAUGHERTY**, of Reading, PA, who was elected a vice president of UM Communications (UMCom).

To the **GENERAL COUNCIL ON MINISTRIES**, which elected four women among its six officers. Elected were **TWICK MORRISON**, of Vicksburg, MS, first vice president; **LORETTA**

**YOUNG**, of Charleston, WV, secretary; **MARJORIE BURNS**, of Crawford, TX, treasurer; and **DEE ANN KAHN**, of Dayton, OH, recording secretary. Bishop James S. Thomas of the Ohio East Area was elected president and Arturo Fernandez, of Berkeley, CA, second vice president.

To **NEWTONIA V. HARRIS**, director of communications for the General Board of Discipleship, who has been named assistant general secretary for planning and administration of UMCom.

To **LOLA KEELER**, of Antlers, OK, who was elected secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race.

To **TAI-YOUNG LEE**, an attorney in Seoul, Korea, and a champion of women and the poor in that country, who was chosen to receive the 1984 World Methodist Peace Award.

To **REV. KAREN FARISH MILLER**, a UMC clergywoman, who was named "Kentucky Young Career Woman 1983-84" by the Kentucky Business and Professional Woman's Club, Inc., the first clergywoman to be so honored in the club's 21-year history. Miller is the first woman clergy to serve in the rural community of Fairdealing, KY.

To **LAURA JANE OKUMU**, of Newcomerstown, OH, who was recently made an associate editor of *The Interpreter*, and an editor of program materials.

To **MARGARET SONNENDAY**, of St. Louis, MO., a member of the UM Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, who was named to head the National Council of Churches (NCC) nominating committee.

To **RENA YOCUM**, a UM diaconal minister from Overland Park, KS, who has been elected third vice-president of the NCC.

## ON THE CALENDER

Jan. 20-23, 1985 **WOMEN'S STAFF FORUM**. Sponsored by Church Women United. At Stony Point Center, Stony Point, NY. Contact CWU, 475 Riverside Dr., Room 812, NY 10115.

Jan. 23-25 **THE POWER EQUITY GROUP: NO ROOM FOR DOMINANCE**. Workshop exploring the dynamics of groups working toward power equity among women and men. With New Dynamics associates Carol Pierce and David Wagner. Cost: \$150. In Stony Point, NY. Write Carol Pierce, 21 Shore Drive, Laconia, NH 03246. (603) 524-1441.

Feb. 5-8 **WESTERN JURISDICTIONAL UMC CLERGY-WOMEN'S CONSULTATION**. In Danville, CA. Write Rev. Kim Smith, Wesley UMC, 1343 E. Barstow, Fresno, CA 93710.

Mar. 25 **MARY AND THE FEMININE IN CHRISTIANITY**. Continuing education course at Perkins School of Theology, Dallas. Led by Dr. Edwin Sylvest and Isabelle Collora. Write Perkins Continuing Education Office, Southern Methodist Univ., Dallas, TX 75275. (214) 692-2251.

April 9-11 **WOMEN IN MINISTRY: 1970-2000**. NCC Council on Women in Ministry spring 1985 forum to celebrate the gains of women in ministry over the last 15 years and strategies on support and advocacy in the coming 15 years. At Lake Junaluska, NC. Write COWIN, NCC, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115-0050, Rm. 770. (212) 870-2144.

April 12-14 **KEEPING YOURSELF TOGETHER WHILE CHANGING THE WORLD: A Workshop for Women Movers and Shakers**. Led by Mary Abu-Saba, counseling psychologist. Cost: \$75. Contact Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South, PO Box 1365, Greensboro, NC 27402.

April 26-27 **WEEKEND EXPLORATION: WOMEN'S THEOLOGICAL CENTER STUDY/ACTION PROGRAM**. Join program participants for a "Sojourns with Black Women" event to find out more about the alternative theological education program. Katie Cannon and Joan Martin speak: "Rage and Redemption: Stories from Black Church Life." Free. Write Women's Theological Center, 400 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02215. Call (617) 277-1330.

May 7-9 **FEMINIST BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION**. Workshop led by Dr. Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, professor at Notre Dame and author of "In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins." Write to Thompson Center, 12145 Ladue Road, St. Louis, MO 63141.

Oct. 25-27 **COWIN FORUM: ASSESSING RECENT RESEARCH ON WOMEN IN MINISTRY**. Evaluations of research methods and findings as well as using research to impact denominational strategies. In Savannah, GA, during the Religious Researchers Association fall meeting. Write COWIM (see April 9-11 above).

## COMMISSION TALENT SCOUT

**DIRECTOR OF TELEVISION/TELECOMMUNICATION PROGRAM, UNITED METHODIST COMMUNICATIONS.** Will administer Television/Telecommunication Program of UMC, working with conferences, districts and local churches. Requires communication experience in the UMC, production experience and skills. Salary: \$25,000 - \$35,000. Apply to Roger L. Burgess, UMC, 810 Twelfth Ave. South, Nashville, TN 37203 by January 10, 1985.

**DIRECTOR INNER CITY PASTORAL COUNSELING SERVICES.** Provide counseling, conduct retreats for Cincinnati inner city residents — particularly women, promote fund-raising. Qualifications: Christian, prefer a woman, experience and training in pastoral care and inner city ministry. Salary: \$10,000 plus insurance, transportation. Apply Rev. Joel Hempel, 1522 Race St., Cincinnati, OH 45210.

**UMC CAMPUS MINISTER, DIRECTOR OF UNITED CAMPUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY BOARD,** Ecumenical House, San Francisco State University. Begins July 1, 1985. Deadline for applications: March 1. Write Search Committee, Ecumenical House, 190 Denslowe Dr., San Francisco, CA 94132.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASSOCIATION FOR CREATIVE CHANGE.** Part-time position responsible for nurturing a network of people committed to effecting change through applied behavioral science and theology. January 1, 1985 deadline. Write Roy W. Pneuman, Chairperson, ACC Executive Director Search Task Force, Box 147, Bluffton, OH 45718.

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, GAMMON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.** To succeed Dr. Major J. Jones at his retirement June, 1985. Deadline: December 31, 1984. Contact Bishop L. Scott Allen, chair of the search committee, PO Box 92281, Atlanta, GA 30314.

**AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE.** Openings in the national office in Philadelphia (receipt clerk/typist, International Division assistant secretary) and in regional offices of Atlanta (community organizer, immigration paralegal), Dayton, and Seattle. Overseas positions available in Mali, Somalia, Mexico, the Middle East, and Asia. Contact AFSC Personnel Office, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102. (215) 241-7105.

**EXECUTIVE POSITION VACANCIES, GENERAL BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES, UMC.** Apply to John J. Dalton, Personnel Administrator, Room 1476, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115.

**National Division:** Treasurer.

**General Administration:** Board Planner

**World Division:** Assistant Treasurer

**Missional Education & Cultivation:** Director of Audiovisual Resources, Editor of Spanish Language Resources, Associate Editor: Literature and "New World Outlook".

**Women's Division:** Assistant General Secretary, Section of Mission & Membership Development; Secretary for Financial Interpretation; Secretary for Women's Concerns, Executive Secretary for Constituency Education; Executive Secretary for Research, Planning and Coordination.

**Health and Welfare:** Executive Secretary, Ministries with Annual Conferences.

**ASSOCIATE COUNCIL DIRECTOR, CALIFORNIA-NEVADA ANNUAL CONFERENCE.** Major responsibility for managing the Missional Priority.

**THREE ASSISTANT COUNCIL DIRECTORS, CALIFORNIA-NEVADA ANNUAL CONFERENCE.** Primary portfolios for youth ministry, new church development, and camping respectively. Affirmative Action Employer. Send inquiries for above four positions to Robert W. Moon, 4322 Alderwood Way, Sacramento, CA 95825.

**SEMINAR DESIGNER, UM SEMINARS ON NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, NEW YORK OFFICE.** To administer all phases of planning and implementation of educational seminars for adults and senior high youth. Requires background in national and international affairs, ability to communicate linkages. Deadline: Jan. 9, 1985. Salary: \$19,000 - \$21,000. Send resume and three references with letter of application to Carolyn D. Minus, Seminar Program Administrator, 100 Maryland Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20002.

**PRESIDENT, SAINT PAUL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY.** (Graduate) United Methodist Seminary, Kansas City, MO, seeks president mid-1985. "Opportunity to provide leadership for institutional direction toward 21st Century." Informational packet available. Salary negotiable. AA/EOE. Contact Bishop W.T. Handy, Jr., Chair Presidential Search Committee, 5123 Truman Road, Kansas City, MO 64127.



the commission on the status and role of women  
the united methodist church

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