

NEW WITNESSES

FOR THE ACCEPTANCE AND EMPOWERMENT OF UNITED METHODIST CLERGYWOMEN

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Martha Orphe, Editor

The Long Road to Baltimore for Clergywomen

By Kathy Nickerson

Amanda Rippey, Mary Ninde, Angie Newman, Lizzie Van Kirk, and Frances Willard were elected delegates to the General Conference—of 1888. They sat in the “balcony” while four days of debate finally denied their voice and vote. In addition to lay women’s representation, important issues of the 1880s included the formation of new mission societies by the women, the attempt to change language so that women would be included, and the nature of ordained ministry for women.

Sharon Brown Christopher, Susan Henry-Crowe, Janice Huie, Mary Ann Swenson, and Susan Davies were elected to the General Conference—of 1984, along with 37 other clergywomen and 223 lay women.

Some issues have a familiar 100 year echo. Formation of a mission society, inclusive language, a ministry study report, and an opportunity to fund The Women’s History Project, enabling the story of women in the church to be recovered and told.

For this issue, Editor Martha Orphe, researched the history of the interacting efforts for lay representation to General Con-

ference, lay women’s involvement, and the ordination of women. She also interviewed five clergywomen delegates who have served on general boards and agencies this quadrennium for their perspective on the upcoming General Conference.

All issues at General Conference are women’s issues; some will bear directly upon facilitating women’s full inclusive participation, some will directly affect clergywomen.

All women delegates have been invited to an orientation session May 1, sponsored by Commission on Status and Role of Women and the Women’s Division. In addition to delegates, many clergywomen and clergy couples will be attending as visitors. If you have interest in legislation affecting clergywomen and clergy couples, you are invited to a meeting May 2, 7:30-8:30 a.m., Room 411 of the Civic Center. If you have submitted legislation, please bring copies as this meeting is designed as an informal time to learn what issues will be before General Conference concerning clergywomen and clergy couples. I look forward to seeing you there.

Women Voices: Clergywomen Delegates 1984

By Martha Orphe

Five of the clergywomen delegates to the 1984 General Conference are also elected members of general boards and agencies. Martha Orphe interviewed them as they prepared for the arduous task of getting ready for General Conference.

THE REVEREND SHARON BROWN CHRISTOPHER is district superintendent of the Eastern District of the Wisconsin Conference and serves on the Board of Global Ministries. She says, “It is with a sense of excitement and apprehension that I prepare for the upcoming General Conference. I look forward to the re-gathering of our general church family and the responsibility we have to chart the future direction of our denomination. I am anxious that our fears and immediate loyalties will blind us, bind us, and divert us from our crucial witness in today’s world.

“Running through all the major issues before us—ministry study, missional priority, the sexuality issue, and the issue involving the theology and philosophy of United Methodist mission—is a testing of our sense of identity as a denomination and our commitment to theological, political, sexual, and racial inclusiveness in Christian community. It is a theme that pushes us to inquire about the nature and mission of the church.

“To put it another way, I believe the basic underlying issue before this conference is who are we as the part of the church named United Methodist and what are we called by God to be about.

“My prayer is that we may move beyond our anxieties and local opinions to discuss the larger vision to where God is

leading us. I pray that we will not be satisfied with immediate practical solutions that lead only to institutional maintenance and survival, but rather that we will be willing to lose our lives for the sake of the gospel and the healing of our broken world.”

“I believe the basic underlying issue before this conference is who we are as the part of the church named United Methodist and what are we called by God to be about.”

THE REVEREND SUSAN HENRY-CROWE is pastor of Shady Grove UMC in Irmo, South Carolina Conference. Susan has served on the United Methodist Commission on Communication for the last quadrennium.

On the Telecommunication Task Force Proposal:

“Serving on the Commission on Communications for the last four years, I have really had my consciousness raised. One of the purposes of the proposal is to give a percentage of the money gathered back to annual conferences to develop and strengthen the telecommunication programming in the annual conference. It is a new program of the church. But I think it could be an effective mode of communication for the entire church both clergy and laity. For example, United Methodist Women or any other agency or arm of the church could see it as a tool of networking for building community and unity in the ecumenical spirit of the Body of Christ.”

On Attending General Conference:

"I am excited about it. I think it is worthwhile attending. I also think it is demanding, but I love it! In comparison, I understand the importance of the political process of Jurisdictional Conferences, but I love the legislative process of General Conference. I think the church has a chance of really being democratic."

On the Politics of General Conference:

"The politics are usually heated. But I hope this Conference is a visionary conference. I am concerned whether it will or will not be and whether it will remain stationary or not."

THE REVEREND SUSAN DAVIES is pastor of Conestoga Parish (Pleasant Dale-Malcolm-Denton) in the Nebraska Conference. Also, she has served on the Board of Church and Society for the last eight years.

Susan identified several important issues that will come before General Conference:

On Social Security:

"We are looking at the treatment of women in the United States under Social Security. The document calls for addressing the inequities which exist, especially around the concepts of earning, sharing, and allowance for child care. The church should be involved in supporting these types of efforts. We need to educate our members about both state and national legislation that is involved."

On Equal Rights of Women:

"We reaffirm the equal rights of women. It is our historic concern for equality. We must look at the laws and policies which have prevented equality. We need to continue to monitor public policies. We urge the passage of equal rights amendments as they relate to gender, race, and age."

On the Resolution on Economic Justice:

"We need to look at our economic values and the gospel from our United Methodist perspective. We need to look at our involvement personally and collectively."

On Issues of Sexuality:

"The primary issue is how women are accepted in the society and in the church. Issues of sexuality are directly related to women."

On Attending General Conference:

"I regard it with both excitement and reservations because it is strenuous emotionally and physically. The preparation beforehand is hard work. Also, the United Methodist Church puts so much into this event that we sometimes forget that our witness goes on beyond it and sometimes in spite of it. We must guard against the General Conference being our final work."

THE REVEREND JANICE HUIE is co-pastor of Mason United Methodist Church in Mason, Texas, Southwest Texas Conference and has served for the last eight years on the Board of Higher Education and Ministry. She addresses the Ministry Study Proposal:

"I am opposed to the Ministry Study Proposal as it is currently formulated. This proposal would reorder ministry in the United Methodist Church. It would create a diaconate ordained to justice, service, and liturgy. We would continue an order of elders set apart for Word, Sacrament, and Order. Persons would no longer be ordained deacon before being ordained elder. Elders would be guaranteed appointment and would itinerate. Deacons would not be guaranteed appointment and they would not itinerate."

"I believe that this proposal confuses the meaning of baptism and ordination. By baptism, all of us are called into ministries of servanthood. This proposal implies that one has to be ordained to be in ministries of service, justice, and liturgy. The practical consequence of this proposal is to devalue the

ministry of laity. I believe that diaconal ministers and many professional women in the church have raised significant justice issues that need to be addressed—for example, salary inequalities, hiring and firing policies, pension and insurance. This new proposal does not adequately address these issues."

"The reordering of ministry is a crucial issue for the whole church, and it also has particular importance for clergywomen for several reasons. Our current system of itineracy has made it possible for the United Methodist Church to deploy more clergywomen than any other denomination. And it also made it possible for the United Methodist Church to deploy a rainbow of ethnic persons to meet needs in different cultural and social settings. This proposal would create one order of clergy whose primary accountability is to the covenant community of the annual conference and another order whose primary accountability is to the congregation or employing agency. In my judgment, that weakens the system, a structure which has deployed so many women. We need to refine our current system rather than reorder ministry."

On the Basic Salary Option Plan:

"Some of the legislation that I believe is most creative and far reaching is the Board of Higher Education and Ministry's proposal to restore a basic salary plan option to the *Discipline*."

"One of the most fundamental issues in our church today is salary inequality. I believe that the church as an institution is called to model justice and equality. This proposal would make available to an annual conference the power to devise a basic/equitable salary plan for itself."

On the Bicentennial Scholars Program:

"Education has always been important for women. The Bicentennial Scholars Program is a proposal from the Board of Higher Education and Ministry to link scholarship sources of the Board of Higher Education and Ministry, United Methodist schools, and local churches."

On Attending General Conference:

"This is my first time to go. I am really excited and looking forward to being a part of the process that will make decisions for the United Methodist Church. Time spent in preparation for General Conference is some of the most important time that I am spending. Prior to General Conference, I am speaking to a number of local churches in my area about General Conference, both to give them information and to receive input."

On Hopes for the General Conference:

"I hope the Holy Spirit will be able to work through all the legislative procedures in such a way that the church will be empowered for mission in the world."

THE REVEREND DR. MARY ANN SWENSON is district superintendent of the Puget Sound District in the Pacific Northwest Conference. She has served on the General Board of Discipleship for the last eight years.

This is her second time to attend General Conference. At the 1980 General Conference she served as the secretary of a legislative committee which she found to be an exciting experience. This experience helped her recognize the efforts General Conference makes to keep up with all the petitions. She remembers, "I would have nightmares of losing petitions."

On the Ministry Study:

"We must understand how we are ordering our ministry as a denomination. The influence of women will be very important because the results of the decision on this study will directly affect women. Women are important in shaping how we structure ourselves as the Body of Christ. In my opinion, women can help us move from hierarchy to a more participatory or more mutual style of ministry."

On the Missional Priority:

"Personally, I favor EMLC based on the fact of how I understand what mission is. 'Church Alive' does not meet the requirements for a missional priority in my definition. The General Board of Discipleship takes the same position, but maybe they do not utilize the same rationale that I do."

On the Book of Worship:

"Women must look at two areas:

- 1) Good liturgy—we must show faithfulness to good liturgy.
- 2) Inclusive language guidelines—I am certain that the *Book of Worship* language is not as inclusive as I would have hoped it could be. But it is the best that the committee could agree on at this time. I hope that it will not be a devious and alienating conversation. I hope to move toward inclusive language as our goal and move toward that goal with rapid speed."

A Brief History: Women in General Conference

By Martha Orphe

Some 265 women—223 lay and 42 clergy—will be among the one thousand voting delegates attending the 1984 General Conference of the United Methodist Church in Baltimore, May 1-11. The numbers in themselves are impressive. However, given that this General Conference marks the 200th anniversary of the church's founding "Christmas Conference," and that neither women nor laity were allowed any part in the decisions that were made at that historic conference, the very presence of these 265 women, lay and clergy, delegates is in itself noteworthy.

The history of the struggle for voice and vote in the life of the church is a history that interweaves concern for the participation of laity with concern for the participation and ordination of women. This article will give a brief overview of that history of struggle, from the Christmas Conference of 1784 to the General Conference of 1984.

The Christmas Conference was an assembly of some 60 itinerant preachers at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore. These preachers were ordained deacons and elders, put in place a governmental structure, and founded the Methodist Episcopal Church. The sovereignty of the new church resided in this group of travelling preachers. No lay persons—not even lay preachers—had a voice in the governing of the church.

Though the issue of lay participation in church governance surfaced in the years following the Christmas Conference, it was not until after the Civil War that the issue of lay representation came before the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. It was the post-war Methodist Episcopal Church, South, General Conference of 1866 which voted to allow laity to share in the work of General Conference.

Up until 1872 the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was still composed entirely of male clergy members. According to Saranne P. O'Donnell, "In order for lay delegates to be elected, new voting procedures were implemented. Special elections were held for the laity to choose representatives to electoral conferences which in turn selected delegates to General Conference." O'Donnell continues, "Lay women, at that time, had been authorized on the same basis as lay men, to elect as well as to be elected representatives of the electoral conferences."

In the meantime, women of the various branches of Methodism had been busy organizing missionary societies, rather than waiting on the sidelines while General Conferences debated lay representation.

On Attending General Conference:

"I am approaching General Conference like an athlete in training readying for the Olympics. I read all the stuff that comes to me. I try to learn for myself what are the issues. For example, I received some materials about lay speakers. I talked to my lay speakers. I study the people. My responsibility is to the constituency that I serve and the people I serve. I want to know what their feelings are and assess their opinions and what affects them so I can address their needs."

"General Conference is not a social time. It is very rigorous. At the 1980 General Conference, every other day I skipped supper and went out with another woman and played racquetball because of all the sitting. Doing something physical helped me to survive. It helped me get my mind off the Conference. Then when I went back into the meeting I was able to focus."

"The 'woman issue,' in a multiplicity of forms, was the most controversial question confronting the General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church from 1869 until shortly after the turn-of-the-century."

In 1875, the women of the United Brethren organized the Woman's Missionary Association. They were given General Conference recognition in 1877. In 1878, women in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, organized the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of their church and were recognized by the General Conference of that year. The following year, 1879, the women of the Methodist Protestant Church organized their Women's Foreign Missionary Society in Pittsburgh and were recognized by their General Conference in 1880. Their recognition was rescinded in 1884, but restored in 1888.

Keller writes, "The 'woman issue,' in a multiplicity of forms, was the most controversial question confronting the General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church from 1869 until shortly after the turn-of-the-century." (Keller, "Creating a Sphere for Women in the Church," 1980, pp. 83) Controversy continued as women of the various branches of Methodism became involved in various types of public ministries. Not only were women organizing into missionary societies and sending females into the foreign mission fields—at home some were evangelizing and preaching and others were being ordained.

Women Ordained Elder and Admitted to Full Membership

Where do United Methodist clergypersons go to seminary, is a question often asked. For the past three years, data has been gathered and are charted for your information. Separate information is shown for each United Methodist Seminary and for the four non-United Methodist seminaries with the largest number of graduates: Pacific School of Religion, Vanderbilt Divinity School, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, and Asbury.

Four hundred and fifty three women have been ordained elder in the last three years, or twenty-one percent of all elders. The five conferences reporting no women elders ordained in the three year period are; Puerto Rico, Alaska, Red Bird, North Mississippi, and Oklahoma Indian. The chart shows the conference membership at the time of ordination, although a few women have since transferred to other annual conferences.

In 1983, there were 1,183 women in full connection thus 38% were ordained in the three year period from 1981-1983. During the three year period, 34 ethnic women were ordained elder.

Seminaries of the Women Ordained Elder Between 1981 and 1983																			
United Methodist Seminaries					Non-UM Seminaries			Total	Women %										
Annual Conference	BU Candler	Claremont	Drew	Duke	GETS Gammon	Iliff	METHESCO Perkins	St Paul	United Wesley	Asbury	PSR	UTSTC	Vand.	Others	Total Non-UM	Total Women	Total All	Women % of Total	
NC JURISDICTION																			

Central Illinois		1	1	2		2		1	7						4	4	62	18	
Detroit			1	1		1		4	7							7	38	18	
East Ohio	1	1	1	1		4		3	2	13	1		2		5	18	90	18	
Iowa		2			1		2	1	6	1	1				2	4	10	18	
Minnesota		1						1	2			3			5	7	25	28	
North Dakota									1							1	ND	25	
Northern Illinois	1		11						12						6	18	NIL	32	
North Indiana		2							1	3	1				4	5	NIN	17	
South Dakota		1				2			3			1			1	4	SD	20	
Southern Illinois							1		1			1				2	SIL	24	
South Indiana	2		1					2	6						2	8	SIN	16	
Wisconsin			3			1			5					8	1	9	WI	35	
West Michigan	1		2			1	1		4						2	6	WMI	17	
West Ohio						3		3	6		3				1	4	WOH	41	
NC Jur. Totals	2	3	0	1	2	27	2	4	12	4	76	6	1	11	4	30	597	21	
NE JURISDICTION																			

Baltimore			1		1		1		23		1				1	1	BAL	36	
Central New York		1		1					3						1	24	CNY	20	
Central Pennsylvania		2					2	1	5						2	7	CPA	11	
Eastern Pennsylvania				1					1						4	4	EPA	36	
Maine	2								2						2	4	ME	10	
New Hampshire	1								2						1	3	NH	7	
Northern New Jersey		7							7							7	NNJ	27	
Northern New York															1	1	NY	11	
New York		2	1						3						8	11	NY	35	
Peninsula			1					4	5						1	6	PEN	18	
Southern New England	1								1						2	3	SNE	12	
Southern New Jersey								2	2						2	4	SNJ	29	
Troy									1						3	4	TR	16	
Western New York	1		2			1			4						2	6	WNY	29	
Western Pennsylvania						1		2	3						3	3	WPA	43	
West Virginia			1					1	3						2	6	WV	36	
Wyoming	1							1	1						1	2	WY	15	
NE Jur. Totals	6	0	0	11	8	2	1	1	66	2	0	0	0		32	100	458	22	
Seminaries of the Women Ordained Elder Between 1981 and 1983																			
United Methodist Seminaries					Non-UM Seminaries			Total		Total		Total		Total		Total		Total	
Annual Conference	BU Candler	Claremont	Drew	Duke	GETS Gammon	Iliff	METHESCO Perkins	St Paul	United Wesley	Asbury	PSR	UTSTC	Vand.	Others	Total Non-UM	Total Women	Total All	Women %	Women % of Total

SC JURISDICTION									
Central Texas	2	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas East									
Kansas West		1							
Louisiana	5		1						
Little Rock	1								
Missouri East									
Missouri West		3							
North Arkansas	1								
Nebraska				2					
New Mexico		1							
North Texas	7								
Northwest Texas	2								
Oklahoma	2								
Rio Grande	2								
Southwest Texas	2								
Texas	4	1							
SC Jur. Totals	3	0	2	1	4	0	0	0	0
SE JURISDICTION									
Alabama-West Florida	2	1							
Florida	5	1	1						
Holston	1								
Kentucky		1							
Louisville									
Memphis	1	2							
Mississippi	1	1							
North Alabama	1								
North Carolina	1								
North Georgia	7	6							
South Carolina	4	1	1						
South Georgia	3								
Tennessee									
Virginia	1	5	1						
Western North Carolina	1	4							
SE Jur. Totals	0	28	0	22	1	2	0	0	0
W JURISDICTION									
California-Nevada		2	1						
Oregon-Idaho									
Pacific Northwest	1	2							
Pacific and Southwest	1	4	1						
Rocky Mountain									
Yellowstone									
W Jur. Totals	1	2	8	2	0	4	0	13	0
Total Women	9	36	8	14	32	36	6	22	18
Total All	35	256	20	75	157	104	23	76	111
Women % of Total									
New Elders 81,82,83	25%	14%	40%	18%	20%	34%	26%	28%	16%

For example, as early as 1868, black women were ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Both the clergy and the laity of the late nineteenth century held women evangelists in high esteem because of their effectiveness in converting people. Evangelists such as Phoebe Palmer, Amanda Smith, and Margaret Van Cott were an important part of that early history. Phoebe Palmer worked at New York City's Five Point Mission. Amanda Smith, a black woman, was given a license to preach by the Methodist Episcopal Church. She won hundreds of converts, preaching at camp meetings, churches, and journeying abroad. Margaret Van Cott received her preacher's license in 1869. She began her work at Phoebe Palmer's Five Point Mission and soon became a popular revival leader. Also in the Methodist Episcopal Church, there was a small handful of women local pastors serving churches that otherwise would have had no preacher. (Elaine Magalis *Conduct Becoming to a Woman* pp. 110-114)

Anna Howard Shaw and Anna Oliver, both graduates of Boston University School of Theology and both licensed preachers, sought ordination by the Methodist Episcopal Church. In support, numerous petitions and a resolution signed by prominent lay women were sent to the 1880 General Conference asking that "masculine nouns and pronouns" pertaining to trustees, stewards, Sunday school superintendents, class-leaders, exhorters, and both local and travelling preachers be removed and that "the word male be expunged entirely" from the *Discipline* (Norwood, pp. 352). Norwood also points out several interesting contrasts:

the action of the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1868 removed the term "male" from regulations on ordination. A woman deacon was ordained in 1896 and an elder in 1898. (Norwood, Frederick A. *The Story of American Methodism*, Nashville: Abingdon 1974, p. 352)

Also, in 1894, the United Brethren's ordained a young school teacher named Sarah Dickey.

However, the 1880 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church refused to ordain Shaw and Oliver and denied women the right to preacher's licenses. The Conference's refusal to ordain the two women caused Amanda Smith to leave the Methodist Episcopal Church and devote her life to preaching in her ancestral denomination the Society of Friends. Anna Howard Shaw joined the Methodist Protestant Church, which stood on the forefront of the movement for the equality of women in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Shaw was ordained by the New York Annual Conference. Anna Oliver continued to preach, to serve churches, and to struggle for recognition from her church. In 1892, Anna Oliver and Amanda Smith shared a pulpit in a poverty-stricken New Jersey church. Support for preaching and clerical roles for women was not strong enough to oppose the actions of the 1880 General Conference. Women preachers remained a novelty in the ecclesiastical order of things.

It is ironic that the General Conferences that gave official sanction and support to the major female service organizations of the denomination, notably the Women's Foreign Missionary Society and the Women's Home Missionary Society, were the same General Conferences that denied women the right to preach, to be ordained, or to serve as lay delegates in the church's governing councils. Keller writes,

Though the struggle for women's rights in the church has centered on ordination...it was not the center of controversy in the late nineteenth century. (Keller, "Creating a Sphere for Women," *Methodist History* 1980, pp. 85)

The central issue was whether females could be elected lay delegates to General Conference.

By the 1880s vigorous support had surfaced for voting rights for women at the General Conference. Since 1872, lay women were authorized both to elect and be elected as delegates to General Conference. Women were being elected as alternate delegates, but in 1888 five women—Amanda G. Rippey, Kansas Conference; Mary G. Ninde, Minnesota Conference; Angie F. Newman, Nebraska Conference; Lizzie D. Van Kirk, Pittsburgh Conference; and Frances E. Willard, Rock River (Illinois) Conference—were elected as regular delegates.

Their election was due in large measure to the efforts of some of the same women who participated in the women's missionary societies, and who had begun to exert their energies toward empowering women in the governing bodies of the general church.

Saranne P. O'Donnell makes an important observation about the election of these women:

When five women, legally elected by the laity, sought admission to the 1888 General Conference, issues emerged that were not only significant to women's movements in the late nineteenth century, but are also significant today as women's role in the church continues to change. (S. O'Donnell, "The Question of Eligibility of Women to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church—1888," pp. 11 *Woman's Rightful Place*)

Even before the opening session of the 1888 conference in the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City, the news of the five elected women spread quickly. When they appeared at Conference they were not seated with the other delegates. After several days of debate, the issue was put to the vote. The vote favored the Report of the Committee, which was against the admission of women. Further debate about the "woman question" was so intense that the delegates referred the decision to the membership of the entire church. The 1888 General Conference declared women ineligible as delegates. At the next General Conference in 1892, the tally showed that both the membership and the ministers affirmed the change, but the necessary majority in favor of admission of women had not been attained.

A ruling by the Judicial Council was sought to clarify the meaning of the vote. That ruling read:

the intent of the law-makers in using the words "lay delegates," "lay men," and "members of the church in full connection," in paragraphs 55 to 63 inclusive, in the *Discipline*, was not to apply them to both sexes, but to men only. (Keller "Creating a Sphere," pp. 86)

Once again, the decision was left to the membership and ministers of the entire church. Four more women were elected delegates to the 1896 Conference. Finally, Conference members agreed that they could not agree, and passed the "compromise" plan that "no formal decision of the question for the eligibility be made at this time." The General Conference of 1900 of the Methodist Episcopal Church quickly adopted its first written constitution. The so called "language" issue around women's participation in church governance was not resolved until 1904. That year, women were given laity rights and admitted to the Methodist Episcopal Church General Conference as delegates.

Elaine Magalis writes,

...the real quarrel was not linguistic nor constitutional and many men were frank enough to admit it. Women held a subordinate position in the church, and it was understood that they were to stay there. The full weight of traditional and Biblical authority was brought to bear. "It had never been otherwise; why should there be a change now?" was the common cry, accompanied by scriptural quotations from Genesis to Revelation. (Magalis, pp. 120)

Since then, women have taken their rightful place as delegates in the General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church and its successor bodies. Women in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, were not given laity rights until 1920.

The struggles for laity rights for both males and females had been a difficult one, but these rights were finally won. But the battle for women's ordination and guaranteed appointment were longer in coming.

The resistance and opposition to ordination and guaranteed appointments for women is obvious in the lives of women like Anna Howard Shaw and Jennie Fowler Willing. At every point of her journey for ordination, Anna Howard Shaw experienced lack of support and rebuff from her family, her seminary, and her church, the Methodist Episcopal Church. She was ordained in 1880 by the Methodist Protestant Church, but later that ordination was revoked. Anna Howard Shaw began directing her energies full-time to work for women's rights.

Jennie Fowler Willing had been granted a preacher's license in the Methodist Episcopal Church. She shared an unusual relationship of equal partnership with her lawyer-turned-minister husband, William. William became a presiding elder (now the office of district superintendent), and Jennie was appointed to a church in his district. Although she was the pastor of the congregation, her husband's name was listed in the conference journal as the minister of the church because women could not be given official appointments.

In 1924, women in the Methodist Episcopal Church were given limited clergy rights. In *Conduct Becoming To Women*, Elaine Magalis writes,

The Methodist Episcopal church men placed careful restrictions on their women clergy, presumably with a view to protecting women's obligations to home and family... Women ministers were not allowed membership or voting power in annual conferences and were not assured of appointment to a church; they also were not eligible for a clergy man's pension.

The 1939 union of the three churches—Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and Methodist Protestant Church—gave birth to the Methodist Church. At the time of the union, the various women's home and foreign missionary societies, and ladies' aid societies of the three churches were joined and became the Women's Society of Christian Service and the Wesleyan Service Guild which were placed under the single Board of Missions. The Woman's Division of Christian Service was given authority "to regulate its own proceedings;... to secure and administer funds for the support of all the work under its charge." The first General Conference of the Methodist Church held in 1940 was composed of equal representation of male ministers and lay persons both males and females.

Thelma Stevens writes, "The target of the Methodist women (to gain ordination rights) over the years 1940, 1944, 1948, 1952, and 1956 was the deletion of eleven little words from the *Discipline*, 'except in so far as they apply to candidates for the traveling ministry,' and inserting the explicit provision that women could be included in the travelling ministry." (Thelma Stevens, *Legacy For The Future*, Women's Division, Board of Global Ministries, 1978, p. 74)

It was not until the General Conference of 1956 that the licensing and ordination of women as travelling elders was recognized in the Methodist Church. Stevens rightfully indicates, "This action was a climax of the efforts of Methodist women at every General Conference since union in 1939." Thousand of petitions by lay women in the Women's Society of Christian Service made a telling difference leading to the delegates' positive decision.

In 1968, the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church joined, breaking down the walls of the segregated Central Jurisdiction and giving birth to the United Methodist Church. For the first time, women were eligible to be elders-in-full connection, paving the way for today's inclusive ministry: "Both men and women are included in all provisions of the *Discipline* which refer to the ministry." (*Book of Discipline* 1980 par. 412.2) The women's missionary programs of the uniting churches were combined. Theresa Hoover was named director of the Women's Division, and thus became the first black woman to head a national organization of church women in a major denomination. (Stevens, pp. 111)

The Women's Division proposed a new organization and adopted a new name: United Methodist Women. The General Conference of 1972 approved the new organization. New questions about the participation of women in all levels of the church led to the formation in the same year of the Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

"The struggle for lay women and clergy-women's participation and empowerment in the life of the church has been a long intertwined journey. But that struggle has helped both lay and clergywomen to develop supportive relationships and commitments in ministry."

The struggle for lay women and clergywomen's participation and empowerment in the life of the church has been a long intertwined journey. But that struggle has helped both lay and clergywomen to develop supportive relationships and commitments in ministry. Empowerment has been, and will continue to be, a key issue as 223 lay women and 42 clergywomen join other General Conference delegates in directing the future of our church.

References

- Keller, Rosemary S. "Creating a Sphere For Women in The Church: How Consequential an Accommodation?" *Methodist History*, vol. 18 no. 2, 1980.
- Magalis, Elaine. "Conduct Becoming to a Woman." Women's Division, Board of Global Ministries, 1973.
- Norwood, Frederick A. *The Story of American Methodism*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976.
- O'Donnell, Saranne P. "The Question of Eligibility of Women to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church—1888," *Women's Rightful Place*, edited by Donald K. Gorrell, Dayton, Ohio: United Theological Seminary, 1980.

Dempster Scholar

A Dempster Graduate Fellowship has been awarded to The Reverend Jeanne Gayle Knepper for the 1984-85 academic year. The emphasis of her graduate studies at the University of Denver is American religion and culture. Jeanne was awarded the Georgia Harkness Scholarship while completing her M.Div. at Iliff School of Theology and is a probationary member of the Oregon-Idaho Conference.

The \$8,000 Dempster Graduate Fellowship is awarded to five students yearly studying at the Ph.D. level who plan to teach religion and related subjects in universities and colleges.

REGIONAL MEETINGS

Northeastern Jurisdiction Clergywomen's Consultation Spring 1985

For more information, contact:
The Reverend Penny Penrose
Woodside United Methodist Church
8900 Georgia Avenue
Silver Springs, MD 20910

Western Jurisdiction Clergywomen's Consultation February 4-7, 1985

For more information, contact:
The Reverend Kim A. Smith
P.O. Box 69
Potter Valley, CA 95469

North Central Jurisdiction Lay-Clergy Women's Network Spring 1985

For more information, contact:
Ms. Phyllis Tholan The Reverend Lynnette Stallworth
824 Ridge Terrace Temple United Methodist Church
Evanston, IL 60201 2500 Jefferson
Muskegon Heights, MI 49444

South Central Jurisdiction Clergywomen's Consultation 1985

For more information, contact:
The Reverend Diana Loomis
P.O. Box 302
Bloomfield, MO 63825

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Methodist Theological School in Ohio:
Vice President for Finance and Business Administration
Contact: Dr. Buford Dickinson, METHESCO
Delaware, OH 43015

St. Paul School of Theology: faculty position in Pastoral Care,
and Director of Field Education
Contact: Dr. Dale Dunlap, 5123 Truman Road,
Kansas City, MO 64127

Boston University School of Theology:
Director of Field Education
Contact: Dr. Richard Nesmith,
745 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215

Board of Discipleship, Section on Stewardship

General Summary: Provides direction and resources for, and management of, the Board of Discipleship's programs in field stewardship which are related to women, children, youth and singles through conferences, districts, and congregations. Gives special attention to developing resources and training models related to time and abilities, stewardship education, and life styles, and has a working knowledge of other areas of stewardship.

Contact: Bill Miller, Assistant General Secretary, Board of Discipleship, Box 840, Nashville, TN 37202

Women M. Div. Seminary Enrollment Increases

	Women enrolled M.Div.—UM Seminaries	Women % of total M.Div.	UM M.Div. Women enrolled in UM Seminaries
1977	636	24%	N.A.
1982	923	33.4%	693
1983	1012	35.2%	722

CORRECTION: The map showing the location of women serving as district superintendents in vol. 3, no. 2 of *New Witnesses* should be corrected to indicate a woman district superintendent in Pacific Northwest, not Oregon-Idaho.

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"To provide such services as will create a climate of acceptance and empowerment for women and racial and ethnic minority persons in higher education and the professional ministries, and to be alert to the necessity of advocacy in behalf of professional ministries in questions of equity and justice."

—(Par. 1605.22, 1980 *Book of Discipline*)

NEW WITNESSES

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Division of Ordained Ministry
Board of Higher Education and Ministry
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