

COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

www.episcopalchurch.org/women.htm

MEMBERSHIP

The Rev. Barbara H. Schlachter, <i>Chair</i>	Iowa, VI, 2006
The Rev. Catherine Munz, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Pittsburgh, III, 2006
The Rt. Rev. Mark Andrus, <i>Secretary</i>	Alabama, IV, 2006
Ms. Bonnie Anderson	Michigan, V, 2006
Mrs. Cynthia S. Bartol	Virginia, III, 2006
The Rev. Robert W. Cowperthwaite	Tennessee, IV, 2006
Ms. Lyn Headley-Deavours	Newark, II, 2006
The Rev. Nicole S. Janelle	Maine, I, 2006
The Rev. Mary Moreno Richardson	San Diego, VIII, 2006
Mrs. Constance Ott	Milwaukee, V, 2006
Ms. Stephanie Rhodes	Missouri, V, 2006
Mrs. Margaret Slingluff	Central Gulf Coast, IV, 2006
The Rev. Margaret R. Rose, <i>Staff Consultant</i>	Atlanta, IV

SUMMARY OF WORK

The Committee on the Status of Women (CSW) worked to fulfill its mission as stated by the General Convention in the formation of the Committee in 1988: to support and advise the Presiding Bishop on matters affecting the participation of women in the Church; serving as an advisory body to the Office of Women in Mission and Ministry (now the Office of Women's Ministries); maintaining advocacy for women's ministries and for the justice issues which particularly affect women, and continuing to monitor and analyze patterns of women's participation in the Church.

The work we did came out of the relationships we formed with one another during our meetings and in our work between meetings. We shared our lives as women and men at a time when in the church and world great division was being experienced. Our work blossomed from both pain and grace. We particularly thank the Women's Ministry Office for their support and partnership.

Our work divided into four areas.¹

I. FOCUS ON YOUNGER WOMEN

We worked to expand the information of the "21st Century Survey: Reaching Toward Wholeness II" completed in the last triennium. An instrument was designed to provide information from people aged 16 to 30 because the data from this survey did not provide adequate participation from young women and men under thirty. Focus groups were held in the dioceses of the committee members to determine the views of young adults regarding women's leadership in the church, inclusive language for people, and expansive language for God. Reflections from this instrument include:

- Young women and men are fully supportive of the role of women in the church in all orders of ministry and in all administrative roles. It is significant to note that they affirm women's leadership in the church even when most of them have not experienced it.
- Inclusive and expanded language issues were generally unfamiliar to the young people interviewed. Those familiar with inclusive and expansive language credit university religion and women's studies classes, seminary coursework or adult education at the parish level for their awareness of these issues.

¹See the Resource section for supporting documents, many are available on the CSW section of the Office of Women's Ministry (<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/women.htm>) website and will also be available at the Episcopal Women's Caucus booth in Columbus.

- There was a low appreciation for the power of language in promoting stereotypes, or, conversely, in liberating men and women because of the general lack of prior engagement with the subject.

Overall, the young people interviewed were interested in learning more about inclusive and expansive language and its importance. Committee members were delighted by the creative range of thought these young people displayed with regards to the subject of expanded language for God in its importance in their relationship with God. The Committee recommends that this work be continued in the future.

2. LIFE CYCLE ISSUES

The Committee listened to women in the pew, mostly in the Midwest and South. Over 300 women shared what is the most important thing the church provides for them. While emphases varied depending upon the ages of the women, there was a consensus that women want to be equipped for ministry and leadership, to have their gifts valued, to be given opportunities for spiritual formation, substantive Christian education, and community.

Inclusive and Expansive Language

We continue to stress the power of language as it is used in liturgy and worship and in educational materials in the church. All people are created in the image of God and are entitled to see themselves in the language and images that the church employs in its worship, education, and other printed materials. To leave out a group is to dis-empower them and to over-entitle others. This is especially true when it comes to language relating to gender inclusion. A resolution calling for Baptismal Parity was passed at the 74th General Convention without funding. We met with staff at the Church Center and reminded them of the intent of this resolution which we now offer again for funding. A paper was prepared for that Convention on the power of language to shape, empower, or limit people.

3. JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

The committee recognizes that attempts to ensure universal human rights should not only include a discussion of women's rights but should understand that lifting up the world's women is a real form of "trickle-down economics." A 'human capital' model argues that by increasing opportunities for the world's women, we also increase the productive capacity of society. Healthy, educated women not only contribute immeasurably in the political economy but also raise safe and healthy children for the future. We uphold the following key issues of the world's women, commanding them to the collective conscience and the legislative agenda of the church.

Trafficking

CSW has searched for an appropriate response to *GC Resolution 2003-A025* regarding the trafficking of women and children. To better understand the culture and environment in which the problems exist we read, viewed video footage, and visited an impoverished area of Tijuana where desperate situations foster the growth of human trade. We spoke with a number of professionals engaged in the work of ending human trafficking. By the 75th General Convention each congregation of the Church will have been provided resource materials on the problems of trafficking and how to respond to this issue.

Reproductive Health

The status of women's reproductive rights is precarious, at best, creating a situation that is unjust and unacceptable. We believe in a culture of faith that safeguards the lives of women. We commend the Episcopal Church for its history of supporting women's reproductive health. We urge the church to continue its advocacy for policies that uphold women's unconditional access to comprehensive and culturally appropriate reproductive health services, in this country, and in the developing world.

HIV/AIDS

Any report on the status of women has to include coverage of HIV and AIDS. The number of women around the world living with HIV and AIDS has increased significantly over the last several years. The impact of the disease on women, children, families and entire communities is momentous. For women, intersecting social, cultural, economic, racial and ethnic factors result in increased vulnerability and decreased power over their own health and lives. The overarching factor for women and HIV infection worldwide is the inequality between men and women, institutionally and in relationships, which often fosters violence toward women.

Violence Against Women

Violence against women is concomitant with unequal status. It continues to be an issue for the church, where we do not want to believe that a good Christian man would ever abuse his wife, partner, or children, physically, emotionally or spiritually. Traditional theology may actually convince men of their entitlement to be abusive. As long as there is a power differential between the sexes, violence is an issue. There is a need for clergy to be better informed about the dynamics of violence against women, and we are submitting a resolution calling for mandatory training. “Now That the Silence is Broken: The Next Step” is a resource published by CSW on this topic.

Fundamentalism and the Status of Women

We are alarmed at the rise of fundamentalism as an easy solution to complex problems, and we deplore the attempts of outside groups of influence to move the Episcopal Church to a more socially conservative position. Here we quote Karen Armstrong in an article published in 2005. “To fundamentalists, tolerance of the “other” is a sin.... Fundamentalism is a revolt against modernity, and one of the characteristics of modernity has been the emancipation of women....They talk in frank ways of feminism’s castrating effect. This goes to the absolute hysteria about the gay syndrome. This goes to abortion, which has become a symbol of everything that is wrong about modernity.”

Listening as a way of Learning and Loving

“The Listening Process” as defined by the Windsor Report continues to be upheld as of extreme importance. As we live together as the people of God, we must talk with one another and listen deeply to perspectives different from our own. The dangers of not doing this are great; the fruit of modeling this for a larger society might yield an abundant harvest for humanity. To this end we re-submit a resolution on Open Dialogue on Difficult Issues for funding to develop a process consistent with Episcopal polity and theology and to provide for distribution of the process and training of facilitators.

Episcopal Women as part of a World Wide Community

The meeting of the United Nations Committee on the Status of Women and the presence of 80 women from 27 provinces of the Anglican Communion who gathered together to share concerns and commonality should convince us that all women have more in common than anything that might seem different on the surface. Every woman is impacted by the experience of every other woman in the world. We quote the Rt. Rev. Njongonkulu Ndungane, Archbishop of the Province of Southern Africa at a Provincial Synod meeting in July of 2005. “We must repent of the historic patriarchy of our faith which so often colludes with discriminatory attitudes in our cultures. We must expose and oppose gender violence and all forms of inequality in our midst. We must build girls’ and women’s self esteem, assertiveness and interpersonal and leadership skills.

4. WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND FULL PARTNERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

The 75th General Convention marks an important anniversary date—the 30th anniversary of the passage of the canon enabling women to be ordained to the Priesthood. This is an action to be celebrated, and to this end the CSW has produced a list of “Thirty Ways to Celebrate Thirty Years.” However, celebration of this important moment should be accompanied by a celebration of the 36 years that have passed since women have been seated as General Convention Deputies and been able to be ordained as Deacons. At the same time we applaud the actions of General Convention, we want to honor women who were ordained deaconesses or deacons before the 63rd Convention and the fifteen women who courageously stepped forward to be ordained to the priesthood before that canon was changed. Women’s advances are never the product of a single convention or even generation but are built upon the efforts and witness of those who have gone before. The General Convention will have 427 women deputies in the House of Deputies, which is 42 percent of the total number and ten women in the House of Bishops. We look forward to the day when the number of women in both Houses will be equal to the gender make-up of the Church.

The Church has approximately 1700 women priests serving in active full-time ministry and hundreds of others in part-time work, many honed and deepened by years of experience as priests in the church. However, women have yet to be regarded as serious candidates for many of the largest parishes in most dioceses, and the numbers of women elected bishop are disproportionately low less than ten percent of the total number of bishops.

There is also awareness among women who have been ordained for many years that serving as a priest in a patriarchal institution can take a substantial emotional and physical toll on women. This becomes increasingly obvious the longer the woman participates in active ministry, and it is particularly acute as retirement issues are faced. In addition, the largest number of women who express unhappiness in ordained ministry are those with young children. The male priesthood appears to be an inadequate model for women (perhaps for men, too) and leads to concerns about the continuing patriarchal nature of the church.

In the fall of 2006 a conference will be held at Kanuga to explore other models of church leadership and to empower women and men to live into these. In addition a coaching or mentoring relationship will be made available to the women and men attending this conference.

Even as we celebrate the inclusion of women in the ordained ministry of the church, we lament the continued incapacitation of the three dioceses that continue to bar women from being ordained to the priesthood. The presence of these three dioceses is a sober reminder that while women priests have been not only accepted but embraced in most places by most people, there is still willingness on the part of the institution to tolerate discrimination.

SUMMARY

The Committee wishes to stand firm and walk forth with all oppressed peoples everywhere, especially refugees, victims of wars of all kinds, and victims of sexual and physical violence, realizing that most of these people are women and children. As this report is being written in the weeks following Hurricane Katrina, we are mindful of the reality that it is women and their children who suffer most in human-made and natural disasters. When we take seriously the elevation of women to the fullness of humanity created in God's image, we believe the world will be a more peaceful and just place, which we trust is what Christ has intended for us all along. To this end we encourage all women to become more involved in the Millennium Development Goals and in gatherings where women are encouraged to speak their truth and claim their power.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE 2007–2009 TRIENNIUM

1. Continue to serve in an advisory capacity to the Presiding Bishop, Executive Council, and Women's Ministries Office on issues affecting women.
2. Continue to work for the full participation of women in all levels of the Church's ministry and continue to examine structures and policies that aid detract from this participation.
3. Continue to work for the development of all women as ministers, with sensitivity to the varying needs and resources available to them at different stages in the life cycle.
4. Expand the work with young adults in relationship to women's leadership in the church and inclusive and expansive language in liturgy and theology including a presence at the 2008 Episcopal Youth Event.
5. Continue to monitor the trafficking of women, boys, and girls and violence of all against women and provide educational resources for the church.
6. Continue to raise the awareness of women as agents of influence in a multicultural country and world, and to support the work of the United Nations Committee on the Status of Women.
7. Continue to support the work of the Office of Government Relations of the Episcopal Church and advocate for participation in the Public Policy Network, which has proved effective in providing ways for all Episcopalians to fulfill their baptismal vow of promoting the dignity of every human being.
8. Work on the psychological and theological issues that affect women's stewardship.

RESOURCES

Available at: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/women.htm> (click on women's organizations, then click on Committee on the Status of Women). Some of these resources will be available at the Episcopal Women's Caucus Booth at the General Convention.

Highlights of the 21st Century Survey
 Conversation Circles for Youth and Young Adults
 Conversation Circles for Women in the Pews
 The Power of Language
 Trafficking of Humans

Reproductive Health Issues
 Women and HIV/AIDS: A Global Position Paper
 Fundamentalism challenges ECUSA
 Thirty Ways to Celebrate Thirty Years
 Conference with Jean Houston at Kanuga Oct. 1-6, 2006

Other related resources include "Trafficking of Humans" at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/> and "Now That the Silence is Broken: The Next Step" at www.forwardmovement.org.

Resolution A136 *Enriching Our Worship* Support

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention strongly encourage regular use of
- 2 the liturgical resources in *Enriching Our Worship I* for Sunday worship.

EXPLANATION

The words and images we use in our worship need to help us appreciate the vast love of God for all of creation. *Enriching Our Worship* uses expansive language and images of God that broaden our experience of the Holy. More expansive language and images of God's people allow more people to feel welcome and included in the worship life of the Church.

Resolution A137 Baptismal Equality Task Force

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention commit itself to baptismal equality for members of all ages; and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That the 75th General Convention direct the Executive Council to appoint a Task Force for interpreting our biblical and theological language and heritage about God and people in ways that include all those created in God's image; and be it further
- 6 *Resolved*, That the Task Force will offer guidelines to assure linguistic visibility in the everyday worship, music, education, preaching, written materials, and clip art used at the congregational, diocesan and national levels of the Episcopal Church such as many Protestant denominations already have; and be it further
- 9 *Resolved*, That the Task Force include theologians, members of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, the Committee on the Status of Women, the House of Bishops' Theology Committee, the Executive Council Anti-Racism Committee, and the Office of Communications; and be further
- 12 *Resolved*, That the Task Force publish by 2009 those principles and guidelines with recommendations for introducing them to congregations, the Episcopal Church Center, church-related organizations, staff and media; and be it further Resolved, That Baptismal equality is understood as the welcoming of all baptized persons into the Body of Christ, where all are included equally, and the grace and gifts bestowed by God in this sacrament are recognized and fully utilized; and be it further
- 17 *Resolved*, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$38,000 for two meetings of the Task Force and \$2,000 for publication of the principles and guidelines.

EXPLANATION

Inclusivity and equality are the common denominators in all of Jesus' parables about the household (kingdom) of God. Today the Church is challenged to look at what it means to receive someone through baptism into the household of God and to include them fully into its life and ministry.

Resolution A138 Domestic Abuse Training

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention provide for the development of a standardized curriculum in the area of domestic and intimate partner violence for clergy and lay professionals; and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That all clergy and lay professionals be required to take a minimum of six hours of such training by the year 2012; and be it further
- 6 *Resolved*, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$5,000 to the Committee on the Status of Women for the purpose of development of materials and a training program, to then be implemented by each Diocese.

EXPLANATION

Domestic violence continues to affect one out of four women in her lifetime. (Data exists to show that this is clearly an important issue affecting women, and at this time no such data is available regarding men.) All segments of society regardless of income, educational level, ethnicity and race are impacted. The Episcopal Church has recognized in recent changes to the marriage canon that the first responsibility of the clergy is not reconciliation but safety for the abused partner. However, many clergy are unaware of this change in the canon, and clergy may out of ignorance and denial overlook factors that might prevent a woman from receiving the safety measures she needs. Such training would include teaching about the power differential between men and women that continues in society and in our theology, how to address this in pre-marital counseling and couple counseling, how to recognize signs that women may be experiencing abuse but unable to initiate conversation about it, how to teach, preach, and provide resources about domestic violence in the course of pastoral and liturgical ministry, how to become aware of special problems that clergy often bring to this arena, and other concerns deemed important for this training.

Resolution A139 Celebration of Women's Ministries

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church offer thanksgiving for the gift of all women in ministry, and especially those enabled by previous General Convention action including the seating of lay women deputies in 1970, and the canons enabling the ordination of women to the diaconate in 1970 and the priesthood in 1976; and be it further
- 5 *Resolved*, That all dioceses be encouraged to celebrate these ministries in ways that are appropriate to their locale; and be it further
- 7 *Resolved*, That pioneers in the ordination of women in all orders be part of this celebration and that their witness and courage be recognized; and be it further
- 9 *Resolved*, That dioceses that still do not ordain women to the priesthood continue to be encouraged to provide for the ordination and exercise of priestly ministry by women in their dioceses.

EXPLANATION

We have the opportunity at this General Convention to recognize that thirty years ago an historic moment occurred in the passage of a canon that enabled women's call to the presbyterate and episcopacy to be heard and affirmed. Since then over two thousand women have been ordained to the priesthood and twelve of these to the episcopacy. This should make us mindful also of the gifts of women deacons and the positive influence and contribution of lay and ordained women in the House of Deputies.

Resolution A140 Women Clergy Retirement Needs

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church request the Church Pension Group to consult with women clergy to consider ways to respond to the particular needs of ordained women as they approach retirement.

EXPLANATION

Women have served in the priesthood long enough to reach retirement age after twenty or thirty years of ordained ministry. Many of the issues these women face are unique to being women because of their roles in the family and unique to being forerunners in a new status of ministry. The Church Pension Group would serve clergy well by listening to the concerns and issues that affect these women and consider how best to help them and the church prepare for their retirement.

Resolution A141 Open Dialogue on Difficult Issues

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church commit itself to foster moral deliberation on social and theological questions, seeking to be a community where open, passionate, and respectful deliberation of challenging, contemporary issues is expected and encouraged; engage those of diverse classes, genders, ages, races, cultures and perspectives in the deliberation process so that our limited horizons might be expanded and our witness in the world enhanced; address the issues faced by the people of God, in order to equip them for their discipleship and citizenship in the world; and be it further
- 7 *Resolved*, That the 75th General Convention direct the Peace and Justice Ministries Office, Ethnic Congregation Development Office, and Women's Ministries Office to collaborate in developing models and trainers, lay and ordained, across the Church to guide conversations on difficult issues facing our country and church today; and be it further
- 11 *Resolved*, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$28,000 be allocated for this work, including \$6,000 for planning the process and printing materials, \$20,000 to bring trainers from dioceses and provinces together to learn the process and \$2,000 to sustain the process.

EXPLANATION

Since the last General Convention events in the Anglican Communion and within the Episcopal Church have underscored the need for ways to talk about potentially divisive and difficult issues of tremendous consequence for all members of the church. The Windsor Report has further underscored the importance of genuine conversation. Good materials exist that could be adapted and adopted for occasions of dialogue; people trained to use them and a church committed to their use are necessary now. Using Church Center staff and trainers already in dioceses or provinces will keep costs low.

Resolution A142 Endorse Millennium Development Goals

- 1 Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church do the following related to the Millennium Development Goals: 1) establish the Millennium Development Goals as a Mission Priority for the triennium 2007–2009, particularly noting the pivotal role women play in the achievement of these goals; 2) direct the General Convention Treasurer and the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to identify and highlight program (mission) budget line items in the Budget for the Episcopal Church that work toward achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; 3) insure at least a 0.7% commitment of the budget for the Episcopal Church to fund international development programs beginning with the 2007–2009 triennium; 4) designate September 11 as a special day of prayer, fasting and giving in the Episcopal Church toward global reconciliation and the Millennium Development Goals; 5) request that all dioceses establish a diocesan global reconciliation commission to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; 6) encourage all parishes to adopt the Millennium Development Goals and 0.7% giving; 7) engender a movement toward personal commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and 0.7% giving; and 8) utilize the help of organizations such as Episcopal Relief and Development, Episcopal Global Reconciliation and the Micah Challenge to forward the Movement toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals at all levels of the Church by 2015.

EXPLANATION

The General Convention in 2003 encouraged endorsement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and reaffirmed earlier resolutions challenging all dioceses and congregations to contribute 0.7% of their annual

budgets to fund international development programs. Every day more than 60,000 people die needlessly because food and basic health care is not available to them. Of those, 30,000 are children. That is one child dying needlessly every three seconds. Four children have died preventable deaths in the time it took you to read this paragraph.

BUDGET FOR THE 2007–2009 TRIENNIUM

The Executive Council Committee on the Status of Women will meet approximately six times during the next triennium. This will require two meetings per year during the triennium for a total of \$50,000.