



gcsrW marks 30th year!

With the unique and urgent goal in 1976 of challenging The United Methodist Church to work for full and equal participation of women in the total life of the denomination, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, also known as GCSRW or COSROW, has become the church's pre-eminent advocate for the rights of all women.

Among the commission's successes:

- ❖ An astronomical increase in the number of clergywomen who are serving local congregations and of laywomen in policy-making positions throughout the church.
- ❖ Fuller participation of women and heightened awareness and attention to women's issues at general agencies of the church.
- ❖ Raising awareness about the intersection of racism and sexism, that places double the pressure on women of color in the denomination.
- ❖ Helping the church move out of its common past of excluding women from denominational executive arenas.
- ❖ Organizing conferences, consultations and training events for women across the denomination.
- ❖ Training collaborations and orientation for women attending General Conference and Jurisdictional Conferences.
- ❖ Assisting general agencies in adding policies for dealing with sexual harassment to their personnel policies and procedures.
- ❖ Implementing recommendations and affirmative action goals in United Methodist agencies and seminaries.

United Methodists worldwide benefit from GCSRW's work. Other denominations view the Commission as a standard-bearer in advocacy and education for equality, church health, and more Christ-like way of doing and being church in the world.

THEN and NOW

- ❖ In 1972, women made up less than one percent of clergy.
Today women make up about 21 percent of clergy.
- ❖ At the 1972 General Conference, 13 percent of the delegates were women.
At the 2004 General Conference, laywomen from the United States made up 51.1 percent of delegates.

For more information on GCSRW's history, order *The Journey Is Our Home: A History of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women* by Carolyn Henninger Oehler or visit www.gcsr.org.

“There shall be a General Commission on the Status and Role of Women in the United Methodist Church. The primary purpose of the General Commission shall be to challenge the United Methodist Church, . . . to be a continuing commitment to the full and equal responsibility and participation of women in the total life and mission of the Church, sharing fully in the power and in the policy making at all levels of the Church's life.”

—¶2201,2202 (selections), 1976 *Book of Discipline*

“Our goal is to see women's contributions not as interruptions in our community life, but as valued reflections of more complete participation of God's children. . . A woman standing affirmed as God's valued daughter can face myriad struggles with strength and courage.”

—Stephanie Anna Hixon, *GCSRW general secretariat, 1991-2002*

Since Jesus recognizes us as sisters and partners in Christian worship and action, the church can and should do no less. Laywomen and clergywomen have been called, and we dare not let human frailty and prejudices get in our way.”

—M. Garlinda Burton, *GCSRW general secretary*



Produced by The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (GCSRW), established by The United Methodist Church in 1976 to advocate the full inclusion of women in the life of the denomination and to monitor the Church at all levels for gender bias. The Commission offers training at district, annual conference and churchwide events on organizing and empowering women to find their voices and ministries in the Church; works with bishops, superintendents and other church leaders to understand and eradicate institutional sexism; and educates church laity and clergy on dealing with professional sexual misconduct. For more information and resources, visit www.gcsr.org, or call (312) 346-4900.