



The story of the  
**Episcopal  
Women's  
Caucus**  
1971-1996

with an  
**Update**  
1996 to 2003

This history was originally compiled by Marge Christie, in September, 1996, for the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of the Episcopal Women's Caucus. It was taken from back issues of *Ruach*, the Caucus' newsletter, dated Spring, 1974, through Winter, 1996.

The update for the years 1996 to 2003, has also been compiled from issues of *Ruach* by Marge Christie.

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The year 1970 marked the beginning of tumultuous times in the Episcopal church. Women were seated for the first time as deputies to the General Convention, overcoming more than fifty years of resistance by that all-male body. That was also the convention which declared that deaconesses could be translated into deacons, opening the door to women as members of the clergy. Admitting women into the priesthood, however, was not to be; the motion failed on a vote by orders in the House of Deputies and never made it to the House of Bishops.

One year later, on October 30, 1971, the Episcopal Women's Caucus came into being. An association of lay and clergy women interested in broadening the role of women at all levels of church life, the Caucus grew out of a meeting of Episcopal women interested in professional ministry in the church. Just prior to this gathering at Virginia Seminary, the House of Bishops was meeting in the Pocono Mountains and had voted to refer the question of the ordination of women to yet another study committee. Over the years the bishops had commissioned, received and apparently forgotten a whole series of studies, including a "blue ribbon" one done as recently as 1967.

Shocked and dismayed by this latest evasion of the issue on the part of the House of Bishops, the gathering at the seminary sent a letter to Bishop Hines signed by all 60 women present expressing their disappointment and informing him that none of them would serve on such a committee if asked. They further stated that they would urge other women not to serve, as the time for study was long past. In signing the letter, the group constituted itself as the Episcopal Women's Caucus, pledged itself to organize women in various regions of the country and elected a representative steering committee. They also requested funds from the Board for Theological Education in order to hold regional conferences involving local lay women and men.

Grant money was received from the BTE, and conferences were held in Alexandria, New York City, Chicago, Cambridge and St. Louis. An enlarged steering committee, including women drawn from the conferences, met in Chicago in May of 1972 and agreed upon a statement of purpose for the Caucus.

*"The Episcopal Women's Caucus is a national group - lay women, clergy, seminarians and professional church workers - formed to actualize the full participation of women at all levels of ministry and decision making in the Church."* It was also agreed that although the ordination of women to the priesthood was not the only goal, it was the most immediate one, and the approach of the 1973 General Convention made it a high priority. A newsletter was sent out suggesting ways in which local caucuses could urge their dioceses to memorialize the upcoming Louisville convention in favor of full ordination for women. To promote this goal, regional members of the steering committee held conferences in their areas, and dioceses including Massachusetts, New York, Washington, Newark, Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland went on record as either supporting ordination or mandating study "to promote and prepare for" the ordination of women.

Letters were sent to diocesan chapters urging them to promote this goal, and coalitions were formed with groups such as Priests for the Ministry of the Church (which later became Priests for the Ordination of Women). Eventually EWC and POW joined forces to create the National Coalition for the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood, a coalition of bishops, priests, deacons and lay people working for a vote of approval at the Louisville General Convention. Their efforts were not successful; the vote in the House of Deputies was even more profoundly anti-women in 1973 (in a vote-by-orders of the clergy) than it had been in 1970. The belief that all the bishops and deputies needed to know was the strength of the "call" of those women seminarians and deacons aspiring to the priesthood proved ill-founded, and the failure to pass a change in the canons was devastating to all who had worked for change. Sexism was little understood in those days.

Following the failure at Louisville, two vocational conferences were held for women in professional ministry in November of 1973, one in the east and the other in the west. It was the consensus of both meetings that the Episcopal Women's Caucus should continue its work. A new steering committee was elected at a special meeting held in New York in February 1974; members were Ellen Biggs, California; Patricia Handloss, Mis-

souri; Helen Havens, Texas; Jeannette Piccard, Minnesota; Blanche Powell, Virginia; Barbara Schlachter, New York; Frances Trott, Newark. All were lay women except Piccard and Schlachter, who had been ordained deacons the previous year. This body authorized the creation of regularly scheduled publication, named it Ruach -- a feminine gender Hebrew word meaning wind, spirit, moving energy -- and Fran Trott became its editor and publisher.

On July 10, 1974, four bishops and seven women deacons met to discuss a possible ordination. The date of July 29th was set, and there was agreement to be as quiet about it as possible. Each woman told her diocesan bishop, and Bishop Ogilby of Pennsylvania immediately sent a letter to "his" clergy forbidding their participation. The news was out! Meanwhile, one of the four bishops withdrew, and four additional women agreed to join the original seven.

### HISTORIC ORDINATIONS

At 11 o'clock in the morning of Monday, July 29, 1974, almost 2,000 witnesses joined in a service of ordination and holy Eucharist as retired bishops Edgar Welles, Robert DeWitt and Daniel Corrigan ordained deacons Nancy Wittig, Carter Heyward, Jeannette Piccard, Marie Moorefield, Katrina Swanson, Emily Hewitt, Alla Bozarth-Campbell, Merrill Bittner, Alison Cheek, Suzanne Hiatt and Betty Schiess as priests in the Church of God. Also present was diocesan bishop Antonio Ramos of Costa Rica, prevailed upon by his brother bishops not to take an active part so as not to be prey for censorship or deposition. The preacher was Charles Willie, vice president of the House of Deputies, and Barbara Harris -- who at that moment in time was still a lay woman -- was the crucifer. Dr. Willie's sermon spoke for many when he said, "I participate in this service today not because I want to speak out but because I can not remain silent... as a child of God who has decided to make no peace with oppression."

The church erupted, as everyone -- it seemed -- had something to say about this most controversial event in the life of The Episcopal Church. All of the new priests' diocesan bishops requested that they refrain from performing any priestly functions, and Presiding Bishop John Allin called an emergency meeting of the House of Bishops. As

the bishops gathered in Chicago on August 14 -- many of them having interrupted their vacations -- there was some hope that they would exercise leadership by affirming and recognizing the ordinations, even while admitting their irregularity.

Thirteen resolutions were introduced, ranging from formal charges against the four bishops to outright support of the ordinations. Bishops Charles of Utah, Frensdorff of Nevada and Trelease of Rio Grande led the fight for the middle ground of inhibiting the eleven women from functioning as priests until General Convention assented and calling on the House of Bishops to urge approval of the principle of ordaining women. That middle ground was not to be, however, as the eventual resolution coming out of the meeting declared that Bishops Welles, Corrigan and DeWitt had exceeded their authority and the ordinations were invalid until the General Convention said otherwise. While nine of the eleven women priests were present throughout the House of Bishops meeting, none were officially consulted at any point in the proceedings.

Excerpts from the statement of the women priests are worthy of note:

*We are shocked and saddened that the House of Bishops has seen fit to escalate the conflict and disunity in our Church by declaring our ordination to the priesthood invalid... We must rather ask by what authority it rules on such a weighty question; the House of Bishops is not The Episcopal Church, but merely one half of its bicameral legislature... We are not persuaded that doctrinal decisions belong in a legislative assembly... We call upon the theologians of our Church to offer guidance on the basic question of doctrine and polity... We cannot accept the decision of the bishops, and each of us will make her own decision as to how and when to affirm the priesthood she knows to be hers.*

On August 18 Dr. Willie resigned his position as Vice President of the House of Deputies in protest of the bishops' statement which he referred to as a "blatant exercise of male arrogance."

On receipt of a grant of \$22,540 from the Board for Theological Education, coordinators were hired to build networks of women and men concerned about the role and status of women in the church: Pat Steiner for the Midwest, Mary Page Rollins for the south, Cyndi Jones for the west

coast and Alice Stebbins for the northeast. Acting on a mandate from the Caucus steering committee, Columba Gilliss, Carter Heyward, Alice Mann, Susan Savell and Anne (Nancy) Scheibner organized a major conference in Dayton in October 1974 to create the basic framework for collaborative action leading up to the Minneapolis General Convention. Women and men, both lay and clergy and representing thirty-seven dioceses from every corner of the church, brought to Dayton a shared excitement about the inclusion of women in the total ministry of the Church. Three goals were identified: affirmation of the prophetic witness of the Philadelphia ordinations, improvement of the environment of the Church related to the full personhood of women and commitment to canonical change at the 1976 General Convention.

At the same time dioceses by the dozens were being petitioned by local EWC chapters to affirm the ministry of women as priests and bishops and to work for the election of deputies to General Convention who would support the efforts of the National Coalition formed in Dayton. A movement by the Standing Committee of Washington calling for a Special Convention to resolve the issue of ordination proved unsuccessful.

A service in celebration of women in ministry sponsored by the Commission on Women in Ministry of the National Council of Churches was held at Riverside Church in New York City on October 27. Planned to honor the Philadelphia ordinands and bishops, it was cosponsored by the Caucus. Celebrants at the Eucharist were Alison Cheek, Carter Heyward and Jeannette Piccard; they were assisted by deacons Pat (Park) Merchant, Barbara Schlachter and Carol Anderson, who preached. The designation of the offering to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief caused considerable controversy when Bishop Allin returned the check because of its "tainted" genesis.

The end of 1974 saw the onset of contentious acts against the Philadelphia women and their supporters, and a defense fund was established to help with legal expenses. Katrina Swanson was "confined" to her diocese when the bishop refused to release her to a more accepting diocese. Struggles over their validity and status were taking place within the dioceses of most of the Philadel-

phia women; concern for collegiality and order prevailed.

### CHARGES BROUGHT

Formal charges were brought against William Wendt for permitting Alison Cheek to celebrate the Eucharist in the church where he was rector. "The well-being of the Church will not be served" stated the Bishop of Washington in trying to prevent such an action. He did not prevail, however, and eventually there was an ecclesiastical trial in that diocese. Peter Beebe of Ohio also had charges brought against him for permitting Carter Heyward and Alison Cheek to celebrate Eucharist in the church where he was rector.

Ruach began to take on a more professional appearance, and discussion around the language of worship with its overwhelming use of masculine pronouns for both God and God's people made its first appearance. Members were urged to communicate with the Standing Liturgical Commission before work was completed on the "new" prayer book. Feminist perspectives, highlighting both art and printed materials, became a regular feature, and the Caucus contracted with Ellen Wondra to prepare an inclusive bibliography of such works. The December issue contained a special liturgy created by Ellen in celebration of the 80th birthday of Jeannette Piccard. In using the liturgy, Jeannette's supporters across the church paid special homage to a real pioneer who was the first woman ordained a priest in the Episcopal Church.

The Caucus comes of age, as a dues structure and a formal election procedure with nominating biographies is included in the first issue for 1975. Commitment to one of the Dayton goals -- improvement of the environment related to the full participation of women -- is evident in the news of EWC chapters, ECW branches and a wide variety of ministry groups.

The creation of the policy board of The National Coalition for the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood and Episcopacy is completed with Patricia (Park) Merchant and George Regas as co-chairs. Its primary task is to organize and coordinate a national effort for a change in the canons to allow ordination to both priesthood and episcopate. "Canonical change would facilitate the regularization of the Philadelphia ordinations,

the ordination of other women to the priesthood and encourage full lay ministry for women in leadership positions." The policy board includes Hunsdon Cary, Oscar Carr, Pamela Chinnis, William Coats, Robert Cooper, Janice Duncan, Marge Gross, George Guernsey, Marion Kellern, John Krumm, Marjorie Nichols, Henry Rightor, Bennett Sims, Richard Trelease, John Walker, and Stewart Wood. Seven were lay people, three were deacons, six were priests and four were bishops -- a truly inclusive group of eight women and twelve men from sixteen different dioceses. In addition there is an extended advisory committee and regional organizers for each of the eight US provinces.

The beginning of 1975 also marked the presentation to the Presiding Bishop of formal charges against the four bishops who participated in Philadelphia. The charges were brought by the bishops of Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Milwaukee and Springfield. Appointed by Bishop Allin to determine whether there were sufficient grounds for a trial were the bishop of Arkansas and the suffragan bishops of Oregon and Washington. The eventual outcome was not to go to trial.

Also of consequence was an historic first for ECUSA when the Washington (DC) Standing Committee voted to recommend Alison Palmer and Lee Wiesner for ordination to the priesthood. Sally Bucklee, then a member of that Standing Committee, noted that "we had a moral obligation to face the issue whether we liked it or not. To hide behind legalisms, traditions and threats of schism was a cop out." Bishop Creighton (DC) subsequently announced that he would perform no further ordinations to the priesthood until he can ordain both women and men.

Historic appointments were made to the faculty of the Episcopal Divinity School when Sue Hiatt was named assistant professor of pastoral theology and Carter Heyward assistant professor of theology. They will share the positions on a half-time basis and take their place in the customary faculty rotation celebrating the Eucharist in the seminary chapel. Screening Committee members, faculty and trustees all participated in discussions surrounding the two appointments. The only negative concern raised was the chapel participation by "irregularly" ordained priests. A telling portion of their final statement was "we

share the conviction of many that God is calling women to the priesthood now and that positive response to this and affirmation of it should not be delayed any longer. We are also convinced that it is the vocation of a seminary not only to enunciate theological and ethical truth but also to witness to such truth."

### **FIRST ANNUAL GATHERING OF EWC**

The first Annual Meeting of the EWC took place at Virginia Theological Seminary in March, 1975 with first president Barbara Schlachter presiding. It elaborated on the Statement of Purpose to declare itself an organization of Episcopalians committed to the elimination of sexism in the Episcopal Church. "Discrimination against anyone on the basis of sex is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual disunity that inhibits the ministry of us all, lay and ordained, male and female."

Jane Hwang, priest from the Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong and Macao, traveled throughout the two dioceses in Ohio at the invitation of Bishops Burt and Krumm. As a symbol of a new understanding of priesthood, she "will provide an example of the effectiveness of a woman's priesthood" in the words of Bishop Krumm, who notified the Presiding Bishop of his invitation to her not only to preach but also to celebrate. The PB responded that he agreed that such an invitation was in accord with acceptance among the various Provinces of the Anglican Communion of each other's ordinations.

The trial of Bill Wendt took place in Washington from April 30 to May 2, during which time testimony was given by more than twenty people. Whether Wendt disobeyed the bishop's "godly admonition" or simply believed he lacked the bishop's approval in allowing Cheek to celebrate was at the heart of the court's deliberations. One witness called to testify who chose not to do so was Presiding Bishop John Allin. While acknowledging that canon law requires any member of the church duly cited to attend and give evidence, he determined for himself that he had no pertinent evidence to give. The five members of the Court issued a memorandum of contempt because they found the Presiding Bishop to be "in violation of the canons." The ruling of the Court was three to two in finding Wendt guilty of disobeying his bishop. It recom-

mended that Wendt be forbidden "to permit any person whose ordination is not in conformity with the canons of the Church to exercise his or her ministry in his parish." The two lay lawyers on the panel dissented. The court in the trial of Peter Beebe also rendered a guilty verdict.

At the suggestion of the national Task Force on Women, EWC vice president Anne (Nancy) Scheibner convened representatives of the various bodies concerned with canonical change at the Minneapolis convention. Concern for communication among the groups in order to prevent disunity led to productive conversations among Anne Exley of Women's Ordination Now, Oscar Carr of the National Coalition, Warren Davis of Priests for the Ordination of Women and Scheibner for the EWC. Two eventual results of their discussions were agreement on the wording of the recommended canonical change and that the National Coalition would be the lead body in political floor work during the convention.

Bishop Craine of Indianapolis joined Bishop Creighton in stating he would not ordain anyone to the priesthood until after General Convention 1976. The Standing Committee there voted to support the bishop's decision by resolving not to give approval until that time.

Reports of the election of General Convention deputations in support of canonical change and the methods used to achieve those elections were circulated as teaching tools for groups in dioceses still waiting to elect. With conferences taking place in many quarters, excitement is building around the outcome of the convention and depending on the decision, what actions should follow.

In recognition of the first anniversary of the ordinations in Philadelphia, public and private Eucharists were held in churches in Massachusetts, Newark, Washington, Michigan, Syracuse; in a park in Rochester and Minnesota; in private homes in New York and Missouri. In each case Philadelphia women were the presiders; it was time to come out of the closet.

Prior to the regularly scheduled meeting of the House of Bishops in mid-September, its secretary, Bishop Wolf of Maine, sent a letter to the Philadelphia women blaming them for the death of Bishop Noland of Louisiana who was killed in a plane crash on his way to a special meeting of the

Presiding Bishop's Council of Advice called "to deal with matters related to the Philadelphia event." In turn Bishop Ramos declined attendance at the House of Bishops meeting in protest over "a brother bishop who has such a low estimate of those of us who, obedient to the Gospel's freedom and call, participated in the Philadelphia ordinations."

Also prior to the bishop's meeting -- on September 7, 1975 -- Lee McGee, Alison Palmer, Betty Rosenberg and Diane Tickell were ordained priests by retired Bishop George Barrett. The service was held at St. Stephen and the Incarnation in Washington, DC. "An impressive number of women deacons joined hands and formed a circle of support around the ordaining bishop and the priests who participated with him in the laying-on-of-hands." About 1,200 people were present at the two hour service. The new priests stated that *"Episcopal authority is given to enable bishops to implement the principles of faith within the church. To refrain from ordaining a qualified candidate because she is female or because a church institutional body votes to discriminate against women is to allow a political process to inhibit faithfulness to the Gospel"*

History was made in Minneapolis in September 1976 when The Episcopal Church said yes to women. In the House of Bishops, on a roll call vote, the tally was 95 yes, 61 no and 2 abstentions. In a vote by orders in the House of Deputies the tally was 60 yes, 39 no and 15 divided (which count as no) in the clergy order and 64 yes, 36 no, 13 divided (read no) in the lay order. As of January 1, 1977, the national canons pertaining to ordination to all three orders -- bishop, priest and deacon -- will be "equally applicable to men and women." The organizing, education and political action generated by the Caucus had borne fruit. After the House of Bishops determined that the Philadelphia 11 and Washington 4 must go through a process of rectifying their "conditional" ordinations, movement by the bishops of their several dioceses resulted in the decision to allow each of the 15 women's bishop to determine the appropriate celebration of her priesthood. A corner has been turned with implications for all women; "only when my sister can be ordained can I claim my lay ministry."

## RUACH FORMAT CHANGED

Following the Fall, 1975 issue, *Ruach* changed its focus and became a series of educational pamphlets addressing subjects such as "planning a non-sexist church school curriculum," and it wasn't until summer 1980 that it resumed its original format of a news periodical. Margie Arms of Colorado was the new editor and Pat (Park) Merchant of Virginia the EWC president. In her column Pat speaks to new life emerging and recognition of Caucus responsibility "to be the educational and political leader for the full participation of women." The annual meeting passed resolutions supporting a bill in Congress to allow the same financial compensation for volunteer expenses as for business expenses and communicating with ECUSA's Commission on Music concern for sexist language in worship. Cooperation with the newly formed Episcopal Urban Caucus was also stated, noting that a woman's caucus at its first assembly secured the election of Barbara Harris, Eddie Mae Binion and Anne Scheibner to the EUC governing board. A registration form for the next Assembly was sent to all EWC members. Four years after the Church said yes to ordination to priesthood and ten years after ordination to the diaconate, a Vocational Task Force was created to enable women to find dioceses and bishops willing to accept them in the ordination process. Following its meeting in New York City, a request was made of Bishop John Spong of Newark that he convene a gathering at the upcoming House of Bishops meeting to address the problem. He did so, and the result was a committee of bishops committed to opening doors for women currently shut out of the system in their dioceses. For several years Commissions on Ministry and Standing Committees provided access to ordination to women from dioceses other than their own. The passage of a so-called "conscience clause" at the 1977 Bishop's meeting in Port St. Lucie, Florida, was a major reason that such action was necessary.

Deployment of women begins to surface as a major concern, and job opportunities are advertised in *Ruach*. The Clergy Deployment Office at the Church Center and its process of registering all ordained people is explained and endorsed. Eventually the CDO includes lay profession-

als among its clients and changes its name to the Church Deployment Office. Women leery of being computerized are urged to overcome their fears and join a system committed to their inclusion in every search process.

1980 also signals the beginning of an active alliance with the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, with a member of the EWC Board member joining the RCAR Board to cement that alliance, and with the cause of women seeking ordination to the priesthood in Britain. Throughout these years the issues of *Ruach* detail alliances with the Episcopal Church Women and its Triennial Meeting at the same time as General Convention and with the Episcopal Women's History Project. Together we reach out in solidarity to enable and preserve the roles of women in the life of the Church. Following up on earlier employment concerns, the Caucus joins with the Deployment Office to begin publication of a job letter which will be sent to all women clergy, listing job openings of particular interest to women.

The Caucus makes its presence known during the General Convention in a variety of ways. In 1979 luncheon forums were held addressing justice issues affecting women; in 1982 an arts festival highlighted "an end to violence/a call for compassion." For 1985 it joined with a dozen other groups to form The Consultation; writing a common platform and joining together in the exhibition hall has proven to be both politically wise and financially effective. In addition the EWC has had a team tracking legislation affecting women -- in the secular world as well as within the church -- and a representative on the editorial board of *Issues*, a daily news sheet handed out during the convention.

Growing respect for the Caucus and its members was demonstrated when it received an official letter from the Nominating Committee for Presiding Bishop asking for its point of view as to the necessary qualifications and characteristics of the persons to be nominated. A paper was submitted to the Committee which focused on sensitivity to the roles of women in the life of the Church. Carol Cole Flanagan is elected president and Marilyn McLane becomes editor of *Ruach*, both are from the Diocese of Northwest Pennsylvania (formerly Erie). The slogan on mugs and T-shirts saying "A Woman's Place is in

the House ... of Bishops" makes its appearance, winning instant endorsement and generating much-needed income.

Resources for avoiding sexism when using the hymnal are prepared by Kathryn Piccard in the name of the Caucus, which takes on the responsibility for distribution. These materials accompany similar information related to the prayer book. Also advertised for use by persons concerned with the language of worship is *Hearing the Word*, prepared by Laura Mol and distributed through St. Stephen and the Incarnation in Washington.

Ann Smith, staff officer for women at the Church Center, calls together the leaders of various women's group to explore ways to increase the effectiveness of women's ministries, to accept and value differing gifts and to advance the roles of women in the mission of the church. EWC president and vice president join with representatives of a dozen different groups to found the Council for Women's Ministries. *Ruach* continues to advertise job openings, recommend books advancing a feminist theology and justice for women. Also of note are the dioceses which have changed their position and are now ordaining women as priests.

### 10th ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATIONS

Within the context of the Annual Meeting in May of 1984, a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the ordination of women was held at the National Cathedral. The six concelebrants represented many facets of that ten year history as did the preachers, Carter Heyward, Barbara Harris and Betsy Rodenmayer. They paid homage to the many women who had paved the way for their ministry. A Call for the Election and Ordination of Women Bishops was circulated; signed petitions to be presented during the Philadelphia celebration on July 29. Looking forward to the 1988 Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, a resolution was passed creating a task force to plan for an EWC presence.

In its report to the '85 Annual Meeting, the General Convention task force outlined plans for packets to be sent to all bishops and deputies containing EWC position papers on abortion, liturgical language, maternity leave, the civil rights



canon, surrogate motherhood, violence and economic justice. Chaired by Anne Scheibner, the members included Carol Flanagan, Marge Christie, Linda Grenz, Beth Sherman and Liz Maxwell.

The Caucus celebrates the election of Edmond Browning as Presiding Bishop and Pamela Chinnis as Vice President of the House of Deputies, another first for women. Chinnis is a Caucus member and one-time member of the Board. EWC president asks the Presiding Bishop to include the Vice President in the process for appointing members to the interim bodies and in the meetings of the Executive Council. Within the month he responds that both requests have been accepted. In a personal meeting Flanagan raises the issues of barriers to women's participation, suggests names for the new committee on Full Participation, urges preparation for the eventual election of women bishops and planning for Lambeth 88. An Advisory Board is appointed to serve as a "sounding board" on the multitude of issues facing women in the church.

Four women -- Pat Merchant, Marge Christie, Fran Toy and Noreen Mooney -- are appointed to represent the Caucus as part of the United States delegation to a Celebration of Women's Ministries at Canterbury sponsored by the Movement for Ordination of Women (MOW) in England. Katherine Ragsdale is appointed to represent the EWC on the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, cementing Caucus endorsement of the "right to choose." Ragsdale eventually takes on the responsibilities of President of RCAR (later changed to the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice).

The 15th Anniversary Annual Meeting in June 1986 records its ongoing concern for inclusive language and election of women to the episcopate. It also celebrates the publication of OPEN a deployment newsletter for ordained and professional women. Nan Peete is appointed to convene a task force "to work in dialogue with Bishop Jones of Indianapolis, chair of the House of Bishops Committee to Study the Ecumenical and Ecclesiological Considerations of Women in the Episcopate." The bishops had previously passed a resolution reaffirming the action of the 1985 General Convention to "not withhold consent to the consecration of any person as a bishop on the grounds of gender alone..."

In the belief that it is essential to share social, specialized and justice ministries, nine national Episcopal organizations, including EWC, joined together to hold their 1987 annual meetings in conjunction with the Under One Roof conference. In addition the Caucus sponsored and staffed workshops on Inclusive Language, Sexism in the Church and Women in Prison. Reports were heard from Board member Jan Pierce, chair of the Lambeth Conference presence; she, along with Pat Merchant, Pam Chinnis and Martha Blacklock, was present at Lambeth '78, providing insights into the need to call attention to the living, breathing women who are the subjects of the all-male Lambeth discussions about women and the issues affecting their lives. The first male member, Patrick Waddell of El Camino Real, is appointed to the Board, and a resolution is passed calling on bishops attending Lambeth to carry with them affirmation of the experience of women in the priesthood. Subsequently many bishops vowed not to celebrate the Eucharist while in England as a show of solidarity with women priests from their dioceses.

Former president Pat Merchant represented the EWC at the General Synod in England to observe its vote, a first stage, in support of the "concept" of ordaining women as priests. The next stage, when final approval may be given, won't happen until 1991, with ordinations taking place one year later, at the earliest. A letter of protest was sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury by Bishop John Spong in response to the Synod's vote not to recognize women priests from other branches of the Anglican Communion.

Sally Bucklee and Fran Toy agree to co-chair the Lambeth presence. Locations are found for housing and for program, and plans move forward to ensure the participation of women from all branches of the Anglican Communion. Programs will highlight the global ministries of women, emphasizing women's development, equality and empowerment. Prayer vigils will be held daily at Canterbury Cathedral.

The Caucus -- indeed the whole church -- grieves the death of Jan Pierce. Board member and recently appointed managing editor of The Episcopalian, Jan was a champion of justice issues, especially as they pertained to women. She initiated the plan for Lambeth 88 and was re-

membered and honored by every EWC member who journeyed to England to express solidarity with women of the global community. In the words of a traveler from Australia, "I thank God for you and all who helped make it meaningful and challenging. What a variety of pilgrims, what experiences each one had to share. "

The summer of 88 was "a watershed year for women" when the General Convention established the policy of "Episcopal Visitors" for dioceses and congregations unable to accept women bishops. Passed in the House of Bishops by a vote of 140 to 28 and in the House of Deputies by a slim majority (lay - yes 60, no 40, divided 16; clergy yes 62, no 38, divided 16), and designed to support those who accept women in the episcopate, this highly controversial legislation was rarely used and died at the end of six years at the 1994 convention. As the focus of the 1988 Annual Meeting, EWC members had the opportunity to tell the Presiding Bishop of their pain at being exploited once again and of their resentment at the emphasis on collegiality at the expense of women.

### **FIRST FEMALE BISHOP**

Marge Christie becomes the first "career" lay woman to serve as president, Martha Blacklock is the new editor of Ruach, and a new position of business manager is assumed by Brian Bucklee whose experience of managing the finances of the Lambeth presence made him willing to take on such a formidable task. A fund was established to support networking among Anglican women with the monies remaining from EWC Lambeth. Early recipients were Australian women needing assistance to attend the consecration of Barbara Harris as bishop and St. Hilda's Community outside of London wanting to hire a full time woman priest for evangelism. The Caucus Board responded to a request from the Massachusetts chapter to help in securing acceptances to the election of Barbara Harris as suffragan bishop. An "alert" was sent to all members asking them to contact standing committee members and confront the sexism disguised as theological belief. To be in Boston, among the thousands of jubilant witnesses, on the 11th of February at the consecration of the first woman bishop in the Anglican Communion was pure joy.

At the suggestion of the Presiding Bishop for a kinder, gentler church, efforts were undertaken

to initiate conversations between EWC members and representatives of the Evangelical and Catholic Mission; Anne Robbins, Gay Jennings, Nan Peete, Chilton Knudsen and Carol Cole Flanagan -- all priests -- agreed to serve. Despite ECM's declared willingness to talk, and several efforts to begin, no meeting ever took place. During this time, with the permission of the Presiding Bishop, the Board began its practice of meeting at the same time and place as the House of Bishops and continued its efforts to get the dialogue underway. However, when the Bishop of Fort Worth described "the dangerous and unstoppable influence of radical feminist theology" he unwittingly provided the program theme for the next Annual Meeting.

Six years later Muffie Moroney and Helen Havens manage to have a one-day conversation with two representatives of the Episcopal Synod of America, but no resolution of the differing points of view is possible, and no further talks are planned.

At the invitation of the Council for the Development of Ministry, Elizabeth Maxwell was appointed to represent the EWC. She was asked to report on activities and concerns of the Caucus as well as the Committee on the Status of Women and to raise women's concerns in all CDM's discussions, particularly around the ordination process and deployment.

The story of the Women's Witnessing Community at Lambeth 1988 is published under the title *Her Daughter's Shall Rise Up*, and a second woman is consecrated bishop, Penny Jamieson of New Zealand, as the first diocesan. Fund raising begins to enable vice president Sally Bucklee to accept the invitation of MOW/Australia to meet with their chapters and with women deacons to bring encouragement in the struggle toward acceptance of women as priests. Caucus members were generous enabling Sally to make a whirlwind tour of six mainland cities as well as the island of Tasmania, speaking to groups, meeting with bishops and giving radio interviews. Through it all she brought "the love and support of thousands of North Americans, from Canada and the United States."

Since 1982 General Convention preparations have included sponsoring a breakfast for women

deputies and friends as an opportunity to raise convention issues affecting women and to provide training on parliamentary procedure and Robert's Rules. Inclusive language, sexuality, violence, civil rights, health care, poverty remain as high priorities convention after convention, as does the election of women to Executive Council and the Church Pension Board. The Episcopal Church Women invite the EWC to appoint a representative with seat and voice in the Triennial Meeting. Sally Bucklee begins her tenure as president in 1991, and as a member of the Executive Council, she will make an interesting and historic connection. The fall/1991-Winter/1992 issue of Ruach sees Jo-Ann Murphy as its new editor and contains an article by Board member Ted Jones, Bishop of Indianapolis, on "Why we still need the Caucus." He cites deployment, solidarity and education as major reasons. Ted's is also an historic connection: assurance of attention to our issues in the House of Bishops. An expression of solidarity continues to be financial assistance for women to travel to Anglican events, and the Encounter in Brazil is sent \$7,000 from EWC Lambeth funds. As a champion of inclusive language, the new phrase "God is not a boy's name" makes its appearance on T-shirts and mugs.

Pamela Chinnis is elected President of the House of Deputies, making her the highest ranking woman in the Episcopal Church. The Caucus marks this historic achievement with the gift of an icon of Mary Magdalene for Pam's new office at the Church Center. One of the highlights of the Anglican Encounter was an open conversation with Pam, Sally Bucklee and Marge Christie talking with Bishop Browning about the Church's solidarity with women and conjecturing that perhaps it's the other way round -- women are in solidarity with the Church. The workshops at the Encounter raise the critical need for the church to confront the issues of racism, violence, poverty and injustice.

Jane Dixon is elected Bishop Suffragan of Washington, and the Annual Meeting rejoices to have the opportunity to meet and greet her. Resolutions passed include one to the Executive Council asking it to both adopt a policy on Sexual Harassment and Abuse and recommend it to every committee and commission of the Church; also one to the Church Pension Fund asking it to extend

the list of beneficiaries to include the life partners of lesbians and gay men. Funds are raised to help Bishop Penny Jamieson with travel funds to attend Jane Dixon's consecration.

### **CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOTES**

November 1993 is another historic month: on the 11th the Church of England votes by a slim margin to go forward with the ordination of women; on the 19th Jane Dixon is consecrated bishop with Barbara Harris and Penny Jamieson at her side; on the 21st, Australia, also by a slim margin, votes in favor of women's ordination. Floating on the euphoria of the moment, the EWC begins plans for its annual meeting in San Joaquin; one way to be in solidarity is to stand with the oppressed on their turf.

Led by the Fort Worth chapter, EWC members across the church assemble in protest vigils at the time of the consecration of the new bishop of Fort Worth. His negative statements concerning the ordination of women are a precursor to his actions once installed, leading to Caucus efforts to assure women's access to ordination in every diocese in the Church.

The viability of the "conscience clause" adopted by the House of Bishops at Port St. Lucie in 1977 begins to surface, along with the possibility of asking the General Convention to rescind it. The president asks Pamela Darling to prepare a background paper for the bishops and deputies as they prepare for the 1994 General Convention. An extensive report under the title "Equally Applicable" - Conscience and Women's Ordination in the Episcopal Church, USA is sent to every bishop and deputy. Not only is it a valuable resource to convention discussion and debate, but it will serve as an historical document usable far beyond the 1994 convention.

Another first is achieved when Mary Adelia McLeod is elected Bishop of Vermont. A longtime member of the Caucus, her sister and brother members rejoice with her, and many of them journey to Burlington for her consecration bearing the EWC gift of her rochet and a contribution to her discretionary fund. Barbara Harris was the preacher, and she opened her sermon with "This is the day the Lord has made!" to resounding applause.

As a demonstration of solidarity with the outcasts of "traditionalist" dioceses, the EWC holds its Annual Meeting in Stockton, in the Diocese of San Joaquin. Solidarity to stand with, to suffer for, to show support happened as the local people declared themselves "ready to go back and continue the struggle."

Transcripts of the ecclesiastical trials of William Wendt, for allowing one of the women ordained in Philadelphia to celebrate Eucharist in the church where he served as rector, are presented to the library at Douglass College by a member of the New Jersey chapter of EWC.

Mary Lou Suhor, retired editor of *The Witness*, agrees to serve as publishing consultant for Ruach. A longtime member of the Caucus, Mary Lou will assist the editor in layout as well as in publishing. The publication continues its mission of education about women in leadership through book reviews, items about women of bygone years, stories of current efforts and legislative actions aimed at diocesan and national conventions.

### ENGLAND'S FIRST ORDINATIONS

In March 1994, president Sally Bucklee journeys to the Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity in Bristol to witness the historic ordinations of the first 32 women priests in England. Seated in the north transept with leaders of the movement (MOW) from Australia as well as England, Sally recounts that the unseen presence of Jan Pierce (a foremother who died six years ago) was "palpable." In the name of EWC/USA she presented each of the ordinands with an icon of Mary Magdalene. And in June Scotland joins the roster of those Churches willing to admit women to priesthood, making it the 16th out of 30 Anglican Provinces to do so.

The Cathedral Church of Our Savior in Philadelphia was the site a celebration of the ordinations which took place there twenty years earlier. Sponsored by an interdenominational task force -- Women of Faith Celebrate -- it was moved from the Church of the Advocate because of structural conditions. Nancy Wittig was the chief celebrant assisted by most of the other eleven, as well as several of the Washington four. Preacher Barbara Harris noted the "audacity of women willing to respond to the call of God." Lay women Pamela Chinnis, Sally Bucklee and Marge

Christie were honored for their efforts on behalf of all women.

In preparation for the '94 General Convention, and with the endorsement of the EWC, Marsue Harris prepares historic background materials on Amelia Bloomer, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth and Elizabeth Cady Stanton for inclusion in the church's Commemorative Calendar. The Caucus goes to the convention with the slogan "Faith, Hope and Parity" which fits well with its major legislative concern, the inclusivity of the ordination canon and the conscience clause. Other issues pursued by the legislative team of Marge Christie, Carol Cole Flanagan, Liz Maxwell and Judy Conley include revision of the prayer book, violence against women, sexism, racism and elections, especially for the members of the Nominating Committee for Presiding Bishop.

On site, Carol, Liz and Judy are joined by Katherine Ragsdale, Cindy Hearne and Katie Sherrod (Sally and Marge are deputies and otherwise occupied!) for 7:00 a.m. meetings, monitoring the three houses of convention, participating in the daily bible sharing, testifying at morning and evening committee meetings -- in general being everywhere the action was taking place to work for a convention responsive to women. The team's influence was evident in the "verbal violence" inflicted on the Caucus from the floor of the House of Bishops during its debate on whether or not resistance to the ordination of women was a "recognized theological position."

Passage by a mostly quiescent House of Bishops and concurrence by a diminished House of Deputies (many of its members believed they were in adjournment due to the lateness of the hour on the final day) of a resolution calling for a committee to look at the validity and theological base for both pro and anti points of view on women's ordination was a devastating blow to EWC members and friends.

Past President Pat Merchant submitted a resolution to the 1991 General Convention calling for an all-convention worship service in '94 celebrating the ministries of women, including the eleven ordained twenty years earlier in Philadelphia. The service was held, without the special emphasis, but with "a glimpse of wholeness in a stunning celebration." Barbara Harris, first

female bishop of the Anglican Communion and Martha Horne, first female dean of an Episcopal Seminary were concelebrants with the Presiding Bishop; the preacher was Pamela Chinnis, first female president of the House of Deputies, a special litany was prepared by Ruth Meyers, a clerical deputy and consultant to the Standing Liturgical Commission and many lay and ordained women shared in the liturgical leadership.

Cynthia Black becomes the new EWC president, and Katie Sherrod takes on the editorship of *Ruach*. The major issue facing the Caucus is to make sure the body known as the C004sa Committee (on the viability of the ordination canon) gets underway. When it holds a hearing in Washington, dozens of EWC members and friends show up to testify, and their witness proves invaluable. The Committee recommends to the House of Bishops and the Executive Council that a resolution be presented to the 97 General Convention making the "equally applicable" ordination canon mandatory throughout the Church. Both Bishops and Council vote a resounding yes, and the next step is Philadelphia in July, 1997 -- a prophetic time and place!

Once again the Caucus solicits funds for a special event -- this time the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women and its accompanying non-Governmental organization (NGO) forum. The fund to help send a sister to Beijing enables Cynthia to attend and a contribution to be made to a fund for second and third world women. Continuing the commitment to solidarity, the 1995 annual meeting is held in Fort Worth with Power Tools for Women as the theme. Historian Pamela Darling cautioned the gathering against using the power tools of patriarchy -- force, intimidation, harassment, violence and coercion, but rather the tools of "the word" spoken in truth and love. A highlight of the gathering was the Holy Eucharist celebrated by president Cynthia Black in Temple Beth El, a site offered by its Rabbi; Katie Sherrod was the preacher and "outcast priest" Terry Cairo read the Gospel. Members of the community were present, many of them with tears in their eyes at the experience of celebrating Eucharist with a woman as presider.

Solidarity is visible once again as the Caucus joins with Trinity Church in Wilmington, Dela-

ware, to sponsor a celebration of the Eucharist on the night prior to the opening session of the heresy trial of Bishop Righter for his ordination of a gay man to the priesthood and to sit as silent witnesses for the duration of the trial. Cynthia was concelebrant with Trinity's rector, Ann Lippencott. Three months later Caucus members are present to rejoice when all charges are dismissed.

In 1996 Catherine Roskam is consecrated Suffragan Bishop in New York, Geralyn Wolf, Diocesan Bishop in Rhode Island and Carolyn Irish, Diocesan Bishop in Utah. It feels like a critical mass has been reached.

October 1971 to September 1996 -- twenty-five years of prayer and action -- the Anglican Communion has women priests in a majority of its Provinces, there are women bishops in three of the Provinces, and lay women have moved into leadership roles as theologians, teachers, deputies, delegates and THE EPISCOPAL WOMEN'S CAUCUS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE!

Thanks Be to God.

### Go Stand in the Temple and Tell

**T**his theme of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Episcopal Women's Caucus is an appropriate place to pick up the threads of EWC history. The threads I weave come from the pages of *Ruach*, just as they did in the first volume of EWC history covering the twenty-five years from 1971 to 1996. Go stand in the temple and tell; that is precisely what 150 women and men did, they told stories.

People like Pam Chinnis, Sally Bucklee, Nancy Wittig, Barbara Schlachter, Pat Merchant, Carol Cole Flanagan, Anne Scheibner, Byron Rushing, Pam Darling, Marge Christie -- and so many others -- reminisced about the pains and the joys of the long path toward wholeness for the Episcopal Church. It was truly a celebration! With Pam Chinnis and Carmen Guerrero as keynoters, with Mary Adelia McLeod and Jane Holmes Dixon as celebrant and preacher, the picture of the church during that EWC annual meeting was a portrait of wholeness. (A video produced by EWC vice president Katie Sherrod, with a poetry reading by Judy Conley in the background, is available through the Caucus office.)

News in late 1996 was the announcement by the Anglican Church in Wales that they would join their sister churches in the British Isles by ordaining women to the priesthood, marking more than half the Provinces in the Anglican Communion having made that decision. "As each member of the Anglican Communion moves toward a more whole priesthood, I dare to believe that we are creating the realm of God on earth" said EWC President Cynthia Black.

Also of note that year was the ordination of an Ecuadorian deacon as an Anglican priest. A missionary to the Latin American community in Rome, her ordination took place in the Anglican Church of St. Paul's-Within-the-Walls, putting an ordained woman in sight of the Vatican. 1997 also saw the election of Catherine Waynick as Bishop Coadjutor of Indianapolis, making seven ECUSA women bishops.

Out of the long-time commitment of the EWC to the full inclusion of gay men and lesbians in the life of the church and in society at large, the Caucus continued its support of ECUSA and secular legislation calling for human and civil rights. Among the resolutions passed at the annual meeting was the commitment "to fight any attempt to exclude lesbians and gay men from full inclusion in all orders of ministry."

The all-consuming issue for the Caucus for the years immediately following 1976 had been the struggle to ensure acceptance of women as priests and bishops in every diocese of ECUSA. The canonical change mandated acceptance, and most dioceses understood that the use of the word "shall" rather than "may" in the 1976 canonical change meant precisely that – ordination of women to priesthood and episcopate was the law of the Church.

The dioceses of Fort Worth, Quincy and San Joaquin, however, continued to resist – despite heroic efforts by members of their dioceses and the General Convention itself. The Indianapolis convention (1994) called for a Committee on Dialogue. With Bishop Robert Rowley as chair, the committee held a series of hearings and brought to the Philadelphia convention the call for compliance by every diocese with the canon (III.8.1) which had been passed in 1976.

The EWC in its annual meeting that year commended the Dialogue Committee for the manner in which it had made clear that as of January 1, 1977, the ordination canons were meant to be "equally applicable" to women and men. Additionally the Board asked Dr. Pamela Darling to prepare a chronology of the many studies and legislative activities which had led to the passage of the ordination canon in 1976. Entitled appropriately *Equally Applicable*, it was sent to every bishop and deputy as "homework" for the Philadelphia convention.

Prior to the 1997 General Convention, the House of Bishops supported the Rowley Report in a "mind of the House" vote, and in Philadelphia both the deputies and the bishops agreed legislatively in a vote which was close to unanimous. The canons are the "law of the Church" and part of its doctrine, which all clergy swear to uphold at the time of their ordinations.

Even as significant advances took place during this time period – the first woman ordained priest in the Philippine Independent Church, the election and ordination of Ann Tottenham as Bishop Suffragan in Toronto, the translation by election of Bishop Suffragan Victoria Matthews to Diocesan in Edmonton, the report from the Church of England that women number 10% of its clergy, Chilton Knudsen elected as Bishop of Maine (the 8<sup>th</sup> woman) – the question still remained: what next to move toward full acceptance of women in holy orders in every ECUSA diocese?

As the EWC laid plans to monitor progress among the three non-complying dioceses, it also noted its intention to work to assure that compliance with the canon meant that women were fully included in diocesan life and worship throughout the Church. In addition it created a prayer cycle which included the names of the leaders of the American Anglican Council as well as all persons in pain over the issue of women's ordination.

During the General Convention the EWC legislative team monitored the many and varied issues affecting women's mission and ministry: acceptance of liturgical revision and the enrichment of worship reflecting the church's multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-generational membership; the addition of Julia Emery, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, Sojourner

Truth, Harriet Tubman and Hildegard to the liturgical calendar; parity of compensation and benefits for clergy and lay employees serving in equivalent positions, inclusion of domestic partners in church health insurance policies and, of course, passage of the Rowley resolution.

The presence of eleven women bishops – among more than 800 – at the 1998 Lambeth Conference was Anglican history in the making; they were not yet exactly a critical mass, but definitely an historic presence, made evident by the level of resistance among some of the male bishops that their “club” was about to be invaded. Another reason this Lambeth was historic, unfortunately, was the negative stance it took towards women’s ordination and the full inclusion of gay men and lesbians in the life and ministry of the church.

Assuming that these “eleven” might need a place of comfort in the midst of a potentially difficult time and space, the Caucus decided to be a presence at Lambeth once again. Cynthia Black, Lyn Headley-Moore and Ginger Paul provided hospitality and valet services and oversaw the production of an historic photo-portrait of the Lambeth Eleven in full ecclesiastical garb. *Ruach* editor Katie Sherrod was present also, serving as a member of the official Lambeth news team and was captured by a photographer – hatted and gloved for attendance at the traditional Queen’s Tea!

The 1998 Annual Meeting in Santa Fe, NM, posed the question “How can women’s organizations, especially the EWC, model a ‘new day’ – a day free of racism, sexism, clericalism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism – for the rest of the church?” Keynoter Katie Cannon explored the issue of power and prejudice, helping members to see the connections among all the “isms” – especially in light of the negativity toward women and lesbian sisters and brothers evident during the Lambeth Conference a few months earlier. The 1999 gathering in Silver Spring, MD, continued the exploration of the linkages between sexism, racism and homophobia with Kelly Brown Douglas, author of *The Black Christ* as keynoter.

Resolutions passed during the annual meeting highlighted the justice agenda of the gathered members: elimination of the international debt which so deeply affects global women and children; understanding the connections between

global environmental destruction, health issues, health care and the AIDS pandemic; confrontation of the root causes of oppression and prejudice; support for reproductive choice and freedom for all women and girls.

The year 1999 saw the anniversary celebrations of two historic events: the 10<sup>th</sup> for the consecration of Barbara C. Harris as the first woman bishop in the Anglican Communion and the 25<sup>th</sup> for the ordinations of eleven women in Philadelphia and four women in Washington. They were jubilant events for the gathered faithful supporters of women in ministry and joyful reunions for those who had been present twenty-five and ten years earlier.

Canon John Peterson, secretary general of the Anglican Communion proclaimed the significance of the Philadelphia ordinations when during the anniversary luncheon he said, “the 1974 ordinations helped all of us as Anglican Christians to become more aware of the gift of priesthood.” He provided a chart showing the acceptance of the priesting of women in a majority of the 30+ Provinces and noted that Japan had recently ordained its first women priests and that the Old Catholic Church (in communion with Anglicans) had voted in favor of women’s ordination to priesthood and episcopate.

The offering from the anniversary celebration was given to the Caucus, which in turn gave half to the Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia (the location for the service in 1974 as well as the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration) and the other half to create a Caucus endowment for its future mission and ministry – later named the Rt. Rev. Barbara C. Harris Leadership Fund to honor her position as the first female bishop in the worldwide Anglican Communion.

President Cynthia Black in her farewell *Ruach* article described a recent bumper sticker which said “well-behaved women rarely make history” and then went on to “hope we are never accused of being well-behaved, because if we (EWC) don’t do everything we can to advocate on behalf of women and girls in the Episcopal Church, no one will.” And then she turned over the leadership of the Caucus to the newly elected President, Lyn Headley-Moore.

The Caucus breakfast during the 2000 General Convention featured Bishop Harris, speaking at her



last convention prior to retirement. Her topic "Reflections and Prophecies" was presented in the form of her morning prayers and elicited tumultuous applause, laughter and frequent murmurs of "Amen!" Pamela Chinnis – completing her third term as President of the House of Deputies – was presented with a framed and autographed copy of the "Lambeth 11" photo in thanksgiving for her leadership ministry.

President Lyn Headley-Moore, in commenting on the loss of executive and support staff in the Women in Mission & Ministry Office at the Church Center, asked the question: "Does the loss of WIMM put the work of the last 30 years at risk?" And then she answered her question by stating: "For the hope of the future of women's ministries we must hold on to the memory of our history even as we try to respond with trust, faith, vigilance and understanding."

The year 2000 was busy on many fronts: news reports from Africa noted that the Diocese of Mombasa in the Anglican Church in Kenya had voted overwhelmingly to join the growing number of dioceses and provinces in the Anglican Communion which ordain women as priests. Assaults on the "right to choose" reproductive freedom were intensifying, leading the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, which had both ECUSA and EWC among its supporters, to file an amicus curiae brief in the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of pro-choice people of faith. Several diocesan bishops also signed the brief.

Of all the resolutions and issues addressed in Denver, A045 – which was submitted by the Executive Council – was the one of most interest to the EWC. It's original wording praised the 3 recalcitrant dioceses for their efforts on behalf of admitting women to the process towards ordination. The Caucus – dismayed at praise for the minimal effort the three dioceses had expended – submitted a substitute which called for teams to visit each of the dioceses to listen, teach and assist them into compliance with Canon III.8.1. The substitute was passed, but it returned the responsibility for implementation back to the Executive Council, which would eventually prove to be a mistake.

At one time or other five EWC presidents have been elected as members of the Executive

Council, serving terms not necessarily contemporaneous with their presidencies – Barbara Schlachter, Marylyle Sweet Page, Marge Christie, Sally Bucklee, Ginger Paul and now in the year 2000, Cynthia Black. Each one has held the EWC mission statement in the back of her mind as she tended to her council responsibilities.

The year 2000 also saw the election of Katharine Jefferts Schori as bishop of Nevada and in 2001, Carol Gallagher as bishop suffragan of Southern Virginia, thus bringing to 10 the number of female ECUSA bishops.

The Committee on the Status of Women urged dioceses to celebrate during the weekend of the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, 2001, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of Canon III.8.1, a suggestion the EWC heartily endorsed. And then came September 11. A few dioceses held their events in the midst of the nation's tragedy, others postponed to a later date, but the recording of history by many dioceses on the "pages" of the internet was truly astounding. Diocese after diocese took pride in announcing the number of women priests, the name of their "first ordinand" and the leadership roles held by ordained and lay women in their dioceses.

In the midst of the 9/11 trauma, the EWC Board, after much prayer and discussion, decided to go ahead with its plans for the Annual Meeting – this time in Pittsburgh, a diocese which although it has ordained several women is nevertheless seen as less than supportive of women in ministry. The pre-planned theme – Making Real the Church of Tomorrow – became extremely poignant in light of the tragedy of September 11 and was also reflective of the lack of freedom, equality, justice and peace in the church and in the world.

2002 was a year for contrasts. A045 teams from the Executive Council reported on their visits to the dioceses of Fort Worth, Northern California and Quincy (that visit actually took place in Springfield), describing levels of suspicion and evasive and occasionally hostile receptions. But in Massachusetts Gayle Harris was elected bishop suffragan to succeed retiring Barbara Harris, bringing to 11 the number of women bishops in ECUSA and 14 in the Anglican Communion. In Scotland the General Synod voted on first reading to open to women election to the episcopate.



It was also a sad year with the death from cancer of the Rev. Suzanne Radley Hiatt. The guiding spirit and driving force of the 1974 Philadelphia ordinations, Sue was a "shepherd and unofficial bishop to hundreds of women theological students, aspirants, postulants, candidates, deacons and priests...as well as a role model for many ordained men" – a Barbara Harris quote in *Ruach*.

President Ginger Paul and past president Sally Bucklee were among a group of Episcopal women who attended the Women of the ELCA annual gathering, joining their Lutheran sisters in the theme to "Listen, God is Calling." Also in 2002, seven Roman Catholic women – one of them a US citizen – were ordained priests by bishops from Argentina and Austria aboard a boat on the River Danube.

Bishop Jane Holmes Dixon's contention that as the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese of Washington she should have full access to the diocesan property at Accokeek was upheld by the Federal Court.

During Lyn Headley-Moore's presidency, the Caucus launched the Angel Project as a way to send an ordained woman as an incarnate presence to one of the dioceses still refusing to ordain or license women priests. It became a reality in the fall of 2002 during Ginger Paul's presidency when the Caucus accepted the invitation of the Fort Worth EWC chapter. After developing host requirements and criteria for Angels, the Board chose the Rev. Barbara Schlachter – first EWC president – and she headed for Fort Worth for the canonically allowable 59 days.

The annual meeting was held in Boston with Jubilee Officer the Rev. Carmen Guerrero addressing the theme of Economic Justice. An interesting role play to dramatize the disparities between rich and poor helped to bring the subject into focus. The Caucus hosted a dinner honoring retiring Bishop Barbara Harris and Bishop-elect Gayle Harris at the Episcopal Divinity School, and the Sunday Eucharist at the cathedral provided the opportunity to hear "one last" Barbara Harris sermon.

Angel Barbara Schlachter provided an overview of the first half of her visit in Fort Worth, describing the support of clergy who risked censure, the invitations to speak, meet, preach and

on one occasion concelebrate the Eucharist in an Episcopal Church. The winter issue of *Ruach* has a full and moving account of her experiences and comments by people who treasured her presence among them.

In stark contrast was the A045 Task Force report and its accompanying resolution to the 2003 General Convention. Calling for "a day of dialogue and reflection" at the 2006 General Convention – 30 years after the historic 1976 convention opened ordination to women – so that the "reluctant dragons" might catch up with the rest of the Church was offensive. That resolution is on the agenda of the GC legislative team.

As I write this just five weeks before the opening of General Convention 2003 in Minneapolis, my prayer is for historic decisions once again in that historic place. May we live the Great Commandments to love God and love our neighbor, that we do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

*Marge Christie*