

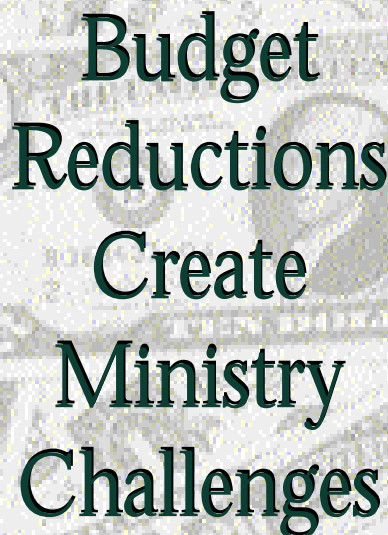
When members of the *Horizons* Editorial Committee chose the theme, "What Price?" for the July/August 2004 issue of the magazine, they did not know how close to home the question would come. In May, as this issue neared completion, budget constraints forced the General Assembly Council Executive Committee to propose deep cuts in program. At press time, the 216th General Assembly, meeting in Richmond, Virginia, is yet to finally approve the proposed budget.

The Women's Ministries Program Area (WMPA) is one of the PC(USA) offices to lose staff as a result of the cuts. The reductions terminated the positions of five synod associates and three supporting staff members. Since 1988, Women's Ministries National Staff in the Synods have provided valuable resources and support for women's groups throughout the PC(USA), including Presbyterian Women at the synod level. The original PC(USA) Structural Design for Mission called for Women's Ministry Unit regional representatives in each synod. Over the years, the number of these positions has been reduced drastically.

The dedicated individuals who served in the synods will be greatly missed. They are Bettie Durrah and J. Rene Johnson in Atlanta (Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, Trinity and Living Waters); Yolanda Hernandez and Carolina Callendar-Mora in New York City (the national Hispanic community); Anne Jones in Effingham, Illinois (Lincoln Trails, Mid-America, Alaska-Northwest and Lakes and Prairies); Frances Unsell in New York City (the Northeast and Covenant); and Judy Wrought and Steven B. Pittman in Loveland, Colorado (Rocky Mountains, Southwest, Southern California and Hawaii, Sun and Pacific).

The General Assembly Council (GAC) says that the downward trend in denominational income over the past decade necessitated budget reductions for 2005 and 2006. Over that period, unrestricted revenue from all sources has decreased from \$41.6 million to \$33.5 million (a 19 percent decrease).

Other reasons include priorities approved by the General Assembly Council in the Mission Work Plan (a



Budget Reductions Create Ministry Challenges

BY SUSAN JACKSON DOWD

strategic plan for future work that the GAC adopted in February 2004), reduced income from investments and a change in the spending formula with the Presbyterian Foundation.*

Presbyterian Women Takes On More

An autonomous organization with its own volunteer leadership, program and budget, Presbyterian Women exists in covenant relationship with the General Assembly Council. With an estimated 300,000 members, PW is the largest organization within the PC(USA) and the largest single contributor to the PC(USA) mission budget. Presbyterian Women underwrites the cost of its Program Team and Communication Team staff in Louisville

through the PW Churchwide Coordinating Team (CCT) budget, using a small percentage of the organization's revenue, interest on investments and resource sales. The communication portion is supplemented by income streams, including sales of *Horizons* magazine and Bible study. Presbyterian Women staff in Louisville support the organization at all levels—national, regional and local. Historically, however, PW has relied on GAC's budget to finance the synod associate program that provides regional assistance for the volunteer-run structure. With the loss of the WMPA synod staff, the CCT has asked Louisville staff to assist PW synod moderators with regional work directly, until a long-term plan for support is developed.

When asked what the loss of WMPA synod associates means for Presbyterian Women, CCT/PW Moderator Kirsten York Gerling said:

The loss of the Women's Ministries regional staff is a blow to the program support of Presbyterian Women and other women in the synods and presbyteries. While downsizing has come at the expense of all women in the PC(USA), Presbyterian Women will be most affected. But this staff support loss is not the worst thing that could happen to PW. I'm not sure what the worst is, but I know this is not it.

PW is resilient, and together we will find God's path forward. The three PW moderators are convinced that now is a prime opportunity to look to the future—and there is a future for PW. How synods and presbyteries will be served remains to be seen; but when the

Churchwide Coordinating Team meets in August, we have set time aside for planning the direction of our beloved organization.

The PW Purpose states that Presbyterian Women exists to support the mission of the church worldwide. We have never wavered from that purpose, and we will continue to bring God's love to as many as we can.

Women's Ministries Asks Tough Questions

The future of PC(USA)Women's Ministries appears uncertain. When asked what the change means for women's ministries in general, WMPA Associate Director Mary Elva Smith offered this response:

The change means diminishment. With fewer staff, we will be less able to serve our constituents throughout the denomination. We will be less able to make face-to-face connections, so the church will be less well connected for ministry and service. But perhaps the more important question is, What does making women less connected mean for the church?

As we approach major anniversary years for women's ordination to church offices, imagine what the church would be like without us! Women have always been participants, but we have not always been recognized as leaders called to ministry. Nearly 100 years ago (1906) women were first ordained as deacons; almost 75 years ago (1930) women were ordained as elders; and nearly 50 years ago (1956) women were ordained to Word and Sacrament. Have we come a long way in a short time? Or have we come only a short way in a long time?

The cutback also raises the question, What is our call to and from the church? Several of us have already begun to reflect on this. We still see advocacy and education remaining central to our mission. So the next question is, With limited resources, how do we continue to offer leadership for women as they confront a world of violence from a faith perspective that calls for peace and justice? We advocate for systemic change, naming our own guilt in the process, even as we respond to immediate needs. The church must not lose women's particular insight on the plight of women and children globally and the inequities and abuses they experience locally.


With limited budgets for the offices that remain, we wrestle with what we can still do. The budget reductions impact all of the offices of women. The National Network of Presbyterian College Women (NNPCW) and Racial Ethnic Young Women Together (REYWT) are growing in outreach and need to expand, not contract. The Advocacy Office for Women is at a turning point also. With our nation's dramatic swing to reduce services and programs for women, an increasing number of women are at risk. How will we continue to speak and educate about our concerns for women and the faith understandings that undergird them.

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The church also needs to view evangelism through the eyes of the newest generation of young women. What is the good news for them and how will they hear it for themselves and for others? How will we pass on our tradition while opening the way for core values to be carried forward in a new way that befits a new era? Ultimately, both men and women must rethink the way we do ministry at the General Assembly level. How will we continue to be a denomination that does justice, loves mercy and walks humbly with our God? Can men and women work together to recognize needs, confirm plans to address them, and give generously in order to carry them out? Contributions of time, talent and money are at the root of the changes we address today. This is a far larger question than what the present cutbacks mean for women. I pray that we are in it together—in it for the cause of Christ, open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in this difficult season of common ministry.

The Challenge of Change Without Choice

Most of us find it easier to accept change when it comes in our own time, when we are the initiators. In general, accepting change is much more difficult when the timing is determined by others, or by circumstances beyond our control. We often find ourselves searching for the meaning of change that feels unjustified, or imposed arbitrarily.

Whatever the source, we can trust the God who is always making all things new to guide us through organizational change and bring us to new opportunities in life and ministry. With these words, the PW staff in Louisville offers a celebration of coworkers, the Women's Ministries synod associates and the work they have accomplished. What follows are the voices of women of the church blessed by the synod staff's lives and ministries. We received many more responses to the request for tributes than could be printed in *Horizons*. Additional messages for Bettie, Yolanda, Anne, Frances and Judy are posted on the *Horizons* Web site, www.pcusa.org/horizons. 

Betty, Yolanda, Ann, Frances and Judy

To all of you—thanks for all the years of energy and creativity you have given to Presbyterian Women! You were great and I'm so sorry the system has made it impossible for you to continue. However, you still have a special place in the hearts of the Presbyterian Women you served. Your deeds will live on.

*Wilma Bennett,
PWP co-moderator, Mid-Kentucky Presbytery*

I have had the opportunity and privilege to work with each one of the synod associates over the years. Each time, the experience has been on-the-job leadership training in the best sense of the words. These women have led by example, using their individual gifts to uphold the PW Purpose and to enhance the work of Presbyterian Women volunteers. These staff persons became our inspiration, our mentors and our friends. Thank you, all.

*Kathryn Baker,
vice-moderator for mission relationships, CCT/PW*



WMPA staff in the synods, clockwise from bottom left: Yolanda Hernandez, Bettie Durrah, Judy Wrought, Frances Unsell, Anne Jones

Susan Jackson Dowd

Bettie

I have known Bettie J. Durrah since she came to work for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 1995 as a WMPA synod associate. My association with her has been while she was serving as a staff person in a number of capacities—for my synod, to the CCT (1997–2000), to the committee I served for the 2003 PW Churchwide Gathering, and also as a fellow member of the *Horizons* Editorial Committee. In all of these endeavors, she has gone the second mile to provide resources and leadership. Bettie is passionate about the Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Women. She has sometimes been our conscience and always our supporter. We are a better organization for her having been here, and I thank her for that.

Ellen Newbold, former CCT synod representative, Mid-Atlantic; member of the Horizons Editorial Committee.

Yolanda

We were just reconciling to the idea that Yolanda would be retiring soon, asking who would take her place, when the decision to terminate the New York office was made. Maybe God is telling us that no one can take her place! Yolanda

taught us to always have more than a Plan A, to work hard and for the glory of God. So we will!

*Elizabeth Torres,
PW synod moderator, Synod of Puerto Rico*

Anne

I can say unequivocally that the commitment of Anne M. Jones to PW in the Synod was 100 percent as pastor, teacher, adviser, friend and sister in service to Christ and Christ's church. She provided us with valuable counsel during coordinating team meetings and synod gatherings, many times helping us through the unfamiliar milieu of theological issues and parliamentary procedures. Anne's physical presence in our synod was tangible evidence of the connective nature of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Without this personal link, valuable information for and guidance of elected leadership will be diminished.

Nancy B. Davison, former PW moderator, Synod of Alaska-Northwest

Frances

Frances is unique—her depth of knowledge about the church, her many, many contacts in diverse fields and her resourcefulness have been invaluable to us here in the Northeast. She has been

very supportive of our desire to be a vital, growing organization, "springs of living water bringing new life to women." Frances is willing to do anything needed—but not what we can do for ourselves. Working with Frances, women are aware of larger issues in the church and world, and are uplifted and inspired. We wish her Godspeed!

*Jane MacDonald, PW synod moderator,
Synod of the Northeast*

Judy

I will miss our synod associate, Judith Wrought. Judy is a dedicated servant of Christ who loves Presbyterian Women. She greets you with an enthusiastic hello and a hug. Judy brought uniqueness to the way she conducted worship services. Each person present knew the message was meant just for her. She entertained us with her clown ministry. She had a novel way of introducing the *Horizons* Bible studies. I'll always remember her words "This is a Bible study. Close the study guide and open your Bible!"

Sherry Flyr, synod representative to CCT/PW, Synod of the Rocky Mountains

*Information compiled from John Detterick's internal PC(USA) communications, January–April 2004.