

Make the  Most of Your  
January/February 2008  
Magazine

# How to Use *Horizons* Magazine

by Joyce MacKichan Walker

## FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **“This Far by Faith: The Story of National Black Presbyterian Women”** by Bettie J. Durrah
  - Mildred M. Brown would not “sit idly by and let injustice go unchallenged.” When you sit alone in your living room, what can you imagine happening right outside your door that should not go unchallenged? When you imagine sitting in the sanctuary of your church, what can you imagine happening right outside the church door that should not go unchallenged?
  - NBPW has a luncheon and honors high school young women who write “on one of a short list of African American Presbyterian women who have made stellar contributions in their witness and service” (p. 16). In your mind’s eye, look around your community. Who might be on this list in your community? How might your circle or PW group bring these women’s accomplishments to the attention of young women whose lives might be changed by knowing these stories? By meeting one of these people?
  - The *Smithsonian* magazine has an article in its February 2008 issue called “Portraits of Resistance.” It showcases individuals featured in the inaugural exhibition of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC through March 2 that will begin touring to several cities in June 2008. Although an eclectic collection of figures, it contains many whose resistance stemmed from their religious beliefs, and all actively battled injustice. Visit <http://microsite.smithsonianmag.com/content/heritage-months/black-history/> to learn more about the exhibit and about other celebrations of Black History Month.
  
- **“Just a Page a Day: Continue the Story with the *Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study*”** by Billie Healy
  - The author highlights a story from the *Mission Yearbook* in which a church takes meals to a couple who is struggling through an illness and who does not attend their church. Many congregations care for their own with food and visits and handmade quilts, but I wonder how many churches do this. Does yours? Think about what your PW group or church could do.
  - The article reminds us that the *Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study* is based on the strong belief that “. . . we can and do impact the course of events through prayer” (*Horizons*, p. 19) How strongly do you believe this? Many people change the frequency of their praying for others after they have gone through a crisis and experienced being the recipient of a multitude of people saying, “I’m praying for you.” They can now testify to what that means, and often speak of their experience as being carried by prayer. When have the prayers of others mattered to and for you? Are you aware of your prayers making a difference for others? Wonder what stories of being carried by prayer are present in a gathering of your women friends. What a wonderful collection of stories that might be for the young people of your church!
  
- **“Catching the Wind: Reminiscing about the Beginning of *Horizons*”** by Barbara A. Roche
  - Think of a time you were part of the start-up of something new. Recall the event and why it was important. Remember the people who were involved. Rehearse the steps you were a part of. Savor the significance of the event at the time, and what it continues to mean to those who were a part of it, or influenced by it.

## FOR CONVERSATION IN YOUR CIRCLE OR PW GROUP

### “Two Streams Unite: Merging UPW and WOC” by Deborah Kapp

- Although not a step-by-step model per se, this article provides many insights into the difficult work of merging organizations. Sometimes, as was true for Presbyterian women’s groups in the north and south, the union is forced by larger circumstances. Other times, organizations may choose to combine forces for practical, theological or philosophical reasons. When congregations in the same community choose to merge, when organizations join to finally overcome the racial divide they embody, when PW circles join because individually they have become too small to survive on their own, careful attention to vision, purpose, tradition and process are required. The goal is to ensure a thriving, vital, united organization that embodies the strengths and joys of the original groups. As the author points out, the temptation for the joining parties is to attempt to keep as much as possible of what each knows and loves, without regard for the other’s equally strong intention to do the same! If you face the need for a merger, glean from this article the wisdom offered. If not, remember the gems recorded here for a future need: identify and keep the best from both pasts; create a new thing described with new language and identified by a new name; examine important commitments and affirm the intentions and significant directions of the new group; and build in the training needed for all involved to embrace the new and thrive within its parameters. The author’s description of “a new entity that was familiar enough to keep current work afloat, yet challenging enough so that adventurous future leaders would navigate it effectively” (p. 6) is a worthy goal.

### “National Korean Presbyterian Women: Stitching a Cloth of Many Colors” by Jyungin Lee

- This article highlights the importance of pairing mission and education for leadership. This is often referred to as an action/reflection model of mission—we do and we learn from doing. It helps us do better the next time. Does this crucial pairing happen in your church? If yes, how does it work? If not, why not, and how might PW facilitate it happening at least around your own mission projects?
- Lee claims Korean churches do not have enough women clergy and elders because “... we let our culture play a stronger role than the core Presbyterian value of representation” (p. 14) Find out what about Korean culture influences women’s participation in leadership in the church. What group or groups are under-represented in leadership in your congregation? In your presbytery? What about our culture influences the under-representation you identified? What could be done to address the situation?
- Is there a Korean presence in your congregation? In your presbytery? How might PW partner with them for leadership training and empowerment?
- Imagine this cloth of many colors—of many races, languages, nationalities, skills, gifts and abilities “emerging within and around” and enriching the whole body of Jesus Christ. Pray for God’s church and its ability to recognize the power of diversity in its midst and to extend open arms to all.

## FOR YOUR LOCAL OR PRESBYTERY PW GROUP

### A Process for Reflecting on your Fulfillment of the PW Purpose

#### “Witnessing to the Promise: Presbyterian Women Today” by Catrelia Hunter

This article offers an inspiring description of ways in which PW is living out its purpose 20 years after the creation of the one Presbyterian Women family. How long has it been since your PW has reflected on the ways that it carries out the PW Purpose in your particular congregation? This article provides a wonderful opportunity for local and presbytery PWs to consider anew what God is calling you to do in this time and in your particular place. You might pair this article’s presentation of ways the denomination’s PW is accomplishing its purpose with a process that examines your own progress toward it. Here’s a simple process for doing just that.

#### **Step One**

Write the PW Purpose on a piece of poster board large enough for all to see and read aloud. You will find it on the top of column one, page 1 of this and other issues of Horizons magazine. Does your group have an additional purpose statement? If so, do the same with it—it is helpful for your group to be aware of both. For the rest of the steps, select the purpose statement you will use as the focus of this exercise. The step-by-step instructions refer to the PW Purpose, but you can adapt them to match your own statement. Or look at the two together and see if you are being called to a broader vision.

#### **Step Two**

Write each of the four bullet point commitments on the top of different pieces of newsprint. Post them where they can be seen by all. Begin by praying for the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit as you review your purpose and renew your commitment to be disciples of Jesus Christ and witnesses to the good news. Invite participants to read the Purpose aloud in unison.

#### **Step Three**

Ask participants to list all the ways your PW is presently accomplishing each of the four commitments and write them on the appropriate newsprint. Do this in whichever of these ways best fits your group size and time available:

- Moving from newsprint to newsprint, brainstorm a list for each commitment and write them down.
- Divide the group into four smaller groups, each with a recorder. Start each group in front of one newsprint sheet and have it create a list for that commitment. Rotate the groups past the other three lists, adding anything they can think of they do not see written already.
- Divide the group into four smaller groups, each with a recorder. Have them complete one sheet, then post it. Hear reports from each of the small groups and invite the large group to suggest any additions.

#### **Step Four**

Now that you have identified ways your group is accomplishing your purpose, invite them to do two things:

1. Notice which of the four commitments seems least fulfilled. Mark it for additional attention.
2. Give every person a marker and ask them to go to each sheet of newsprint and put a star by the one item on each that means the most to them. After everyone has “voted,” circle on each sheet the item that has the most stars. Name them and celebrate these significant ministries by singing a hymn of praise. Take a break, then proceed to step five, or save the following steps for another gathering.

**Step Five**

Create four new sheets with the four commitments written on them. Give each participant a pad of post-it notes and a black sharpie (the best for readability by the group). Tell them they have ten minutes, working alone, to write down their new ideas of ways to accomplish each of the four commitments, then stick them on the corresponding newsprint.

**Step Six**

Send one-quarter of the participants to each newsprint to read the ideas posted, organize them by clustering similar ideas together, then draw a circle around each cluster and each unique idea. At the end of this process each sheet should contain a circle for each new idea.

**Step Seven**

Tell participants they have eight votes to allocate to new ideas. They may give their votes to any ideas on any of the sheets by putting their vote inside any of the circles. The most fun way to vote is with little stickers—give each person a block of eight, which guarantees they only vote eight times—but they could also vote using a marker. When all are finished, enlist some help counting all the votes, writing the number of votes received inside each circle, then highlighting the top four or five ideas, or more if your group feels energized.

**Step Eight**

Now you get to decide what to do with these great new ideas for fulfilling the Purpose of Presbyterian Women!