

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®

Envisioning *tomorrow*

FROM THE RICH HERITAGE OF OUR PAST
AND THE REALITIES OF THE PRESENT

2010 STATE OF THE CHURCH REPORT



Envisioning *tomorrow*

STATE OF THE CHURCH

Greetings:

We are pleased to bring you the 2010 State of the Church Report.

This annual snapshot of The United Methodist Church is a resource to help evaluate our current realities, to celebrate the momentum of our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, and to identify opportunities and challenges as we move forward in ministry.

The findings in this report are helping to shape conversations around the future of the church and to inform strategic planning and measurement of success across the life of the denomination. We acknowledge challenges, but we also see signs of hope.

United Methodists continue to share God's love in their communities every day. We see renewed energy and fervent commitment to carry out the church's mission through faithful service, prayer and action. We of Wesleyan heritage are fanning the flames of a movement!

For the people of The United Methodist Church, for their prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness, we give God thanks! God is calling us to a faithful, fruitful future!

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." Jeremiah 29:11 (NRSV)



Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer
ILLINOIS EPISCOPAL AREA
PAST PRESIDENT, COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster
CHARLOTTE EPISCOPAL AREA
PRESIDENT, COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

Bishop John L. Hopkins
OHIO EAST EPISCOPAL AREA
CHAIRPERSON, CONNECTIONAL TABLE

Bishop G. Lindsey Davis
LOUISVILLE EPISCOPAL AREA
PRESIDENT, GENERAL COUNCIL ON
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Vanessa Smiley of Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C., helps Jules, 4, bag cookies for delivery with meals to two neighboring social service agencies to serve to their clients.

UMNS Photo by John Coleman

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The Rev. James Bentley celebrates Holy Communion each Monday evening when canvascommunity, a new United Methodist congregation in Little Rock, Ark., gathers for worship.

Photo by Patrick Shownes



STATE OF THE CHURCH ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The information in this report has engaged leaders across The United Methodist Church in much-needed conversation, leading to significant change taking place across the denomination. We recommend that you monitor the resources listed below over the coming months to see what changes will be proposed to General Conference 2012.

THE FOUR AREAS OF FOCUS

Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world

Creating new places for new people and revitalizing existing congregations

Engaging in ministry with the poor

Combating the diseases of poverty by improving health globally

► **Call to Action Steering Team** is a new task force examining how the church needs to be structured in the future to respond to ministry needs in the 21st century. For more information, go to www.umc.org/calltoaction.

► **Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church Study Committee** is taking a two-year look into the future of the denomination. Their basic question is: What will the church look like in 2016, 2024 and 2050 and beyond? Visit www.worldwideumc.org to see results and to engage in conversation.

► A snapshot of the work the general boards and agencies have contributed related to the **Four Areas of Focus** is available online at www.umc.org/focusareas. The report, compiled by the Table of General Secretaries and Agency Presidents, shows denomination-wide collaboration and new partnerships.

STATE OF THE CHURCH

Membership Statistics

As of Dec. 31, 2008, The United Methodist Church had approximately 11 million professing members and an additional 2.5 million baptized members in Africa, Europe, the U.S. and the Philippines. Compared to 10 years earlier, professing membership globally has increased more than 14% or by more than 1.38 million; baptized membership has risen nearly 27%, by more than 500,000.

CENTRAL CONFERENCE/REGION	1998 MEMBERS	2008 MEMBERS	CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP
AFRICA CENTRAL	128,016	374,090	246,074
CONGO	630,697	1,090,863	460,166
WEST AFRICA	316,825	1,636,815	1,319,990
CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN EUROPE	22,218	16,162	-6,056
GERMANY	39,800	33,364	-6,436
NORTHERN EUROPE AND EURASIA	19,110	15,560	-3,550
PHILIPPINES	66,901	201,344	134,443
UNITED STATES	8,363,584	7,774,420	-589,164
TOTAL	9,587,151	11,142,618	1,555,467

The United Methodist Church counts two types of members: baptized and professing. Baptized members are all persons who have received Christian baptism in a United Methodist church or have transferred their baptized membership from another church. Professing members are baptized persons who have come into membership in The United Methodist Church by profession of faith. Professing membership is an expression of our baptismal covenant in which we profess our faith in God and declare our desire to live our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ.

UNITED METHODIST CLERGY/EPISCOPAL LEADERSHIP

	ORDAINED CLERGY	LOCAL PASTORS	ORGANIZED CHURCHES	REGULAR PREACHING POINTS	ANNUAL CONFERENCES	ACTIVE BISHOPS
AFRICA	4,253	3,985	4,938	4,875	30	12
EUROPE	985	68	1,048	283	20	4
SOUTHEAST ASIA	792	881	1,372	286	24	3
UNITED STATES	38,245	6,971	33,953	N/A	59	50

A mother in Lekki, Nigeria, protects her child behind an insecticide-treated sleeping net provided through *Nothing But Nets*. The people of The United Methodist Church are among the founding partners of the malaria-fighting effort.

UMNS Photo by Mike DuBose



Conferences

133
annual conferences worldwide

30 in Africa
20 in Europe
24 in the Philippines
59 in the United States

69
active bishops

12 in Africa
4 in Europe
3 in the Philippines
50 in the United States

Addressing decline in membership trends

The 2008 General Conference took bold steps to address declining membership in the U.S. and Europe when it adopted the Four Areas of Focus:

- ▶ *Developing principled Christian leaders for the church and the world;*
- ▶ *Creating new places for new people and revitalizing existing congregations;*
- ▶ *Engaging in ministry with the poor; and*
- ▶ *Combating the diseases of poverty by improving health globally.*

These focus areas are the centerpiece of a movement across the denomination that is bringing vision and inspiration to United

Methodists globally as well as producing measurable results.

We are seeing creative and innovative **leadership** growing across the church. For example, leaders in one Florida church have more than tripled the size of the congregation thanks to outreach ministries, such as a recovery program and a new community center. Other examples include:

- ▶ 177 new congregations have begun worldwide. A series of United Methodist Mission Initiatives sponsored by the General Board of Global Ministries started 106 new congregations outside of the U.S. in 2009; another 71 congregations began in the U.S. In the last five years, 360 new congregations have been planted in the U.S.

▶ A free pharmacy opened in central Ohio to engage in ministry with the poor. The pharmacy resulted from a partnership led by the West Ohio Annual Conference. It will work with area hospitals, medical associations, health organizations and foundations.

- ▶ 30,000 bed nets were distributed to more than 8,000 homes in the Democratic Republic of Congo in April 2010. The United Methodist Church contributed \$150,000 to a faith-based initiative there to fight malaria. In addition, the people of The United Methodist Church are a founding partner in the *Nothing But Nets* program, which has raised \$30 million and distributed 3 million nets in just three years.

In the brief time since the 2008 General Conference, innovative dialogue around church structure and practices has begun and continues to take place to improve how we work and communicate across the denomination. New partnerships are emerging to strengthen our efforts to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.



number of bed nets distributed to fight malaria

3,000,000

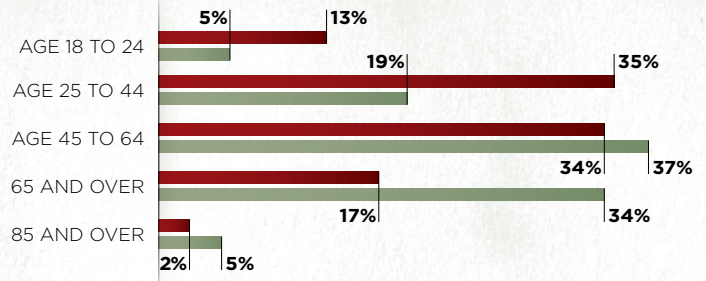
Key Findings from United States Congregational Life Survey

The General Council on Finance and Administration's office of Analysis & Research recruited congregations to participate in the United States Congregational Life Survey on either April 26, 2009, or May 3, 2009. Churches were asked to distribute a survey questionnaire to each worshipper in the pews on the chosen Sunday. Participating churches were randomly selected from a list of congregational leaders who indicated an interest in the project on their 2008 Congregational Leadership Survey. Additional racial/ethnic churches were recruited with the help of leaders of United Methodist caucuses. Nearly 200 churches registered

to participate in the survey, and more than 70% returned the completed materials. The final data represents 141 churches with 8,622 individual worshippers.

Based upon survey data, United Methodists in the United States are, more often than not, U.S.-born, educated, married and middle class. Over 96% of United Methodists said they were born in the U.S.; among the general U.S. population, 88% are U.S.-born. Over 92% of U.S. United Methodists have earned at least a high school diploma; 87% of the general U.S. population has earned at least a high school diploma. Just over half of

US POPULATION & UM ATTENDEES

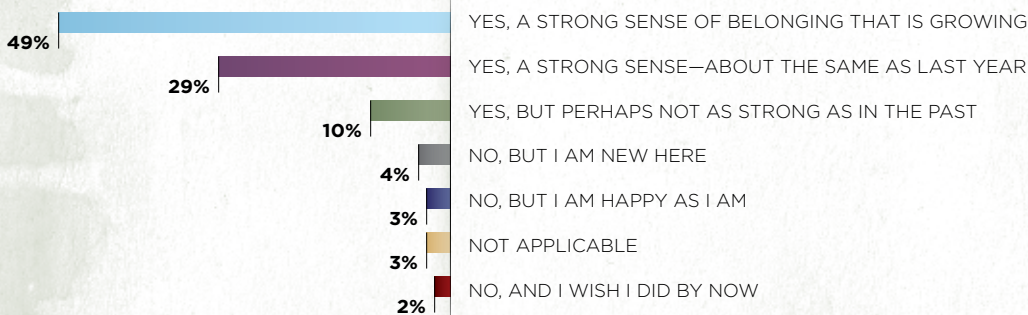


United Methodists are in their first marriage. A bare majority (51%) reports household income of \$50,000 or more.

The median age of the population in the U.S. is 35; the median age of attendees in The United Methodist Church is 57. The chart above divides

the U.S. population 18 and over into age groups. The red bars represent the percentage of the total U.S. population in the age groups; the green bars represent the percentage of United Methodist attendees in the age groups, according to the survey results.

DO YOU HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING TO THIS CONGREGATION?



Respondents to the survey said the aspects of congregational life they personally value the most are sharing in Holy Communion and listening to sermons. Nearly half of participants said they have a strong sense of belonging to their current congregation.

When asked if their congregation had a clear vision, goal or direction for ministry, 35% agreed that it did and stated they were strongly committed to those goals.

In terms of financial giving to their congregation, 32% said they give 5-9% of their net income regularly, while 23% of respondents give 10% or more of their net income regularly.

HOW MUCH DO YOU GIVE FINANCIALLY TO THIS CONGREGATION?



Communion elements are brought forward during a worship service at Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community in Pittsburgh. The congregation uses drama in place of a traditional sermon and attracts a diverse group of worshippers that include grandparents, young tattooed and pierced adults, homeless people and families from the city's wealthier suburbs. The church was started in 2004 by the Rev. Jim Walker, a United Methodist minister, and his friend Rev. Jeff Eddings, a Presbyterian pastor.

UMNS Photo by Michael Henninger



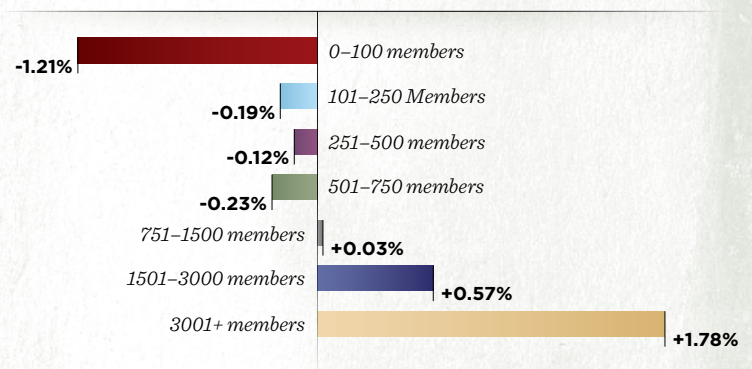
Areas of Change

In 2007-2008, 34.7% of the United Methodist churches in the U.S. reported membership growth, with an average increase of 3.3% over 2006-2007.

Churches with larger memberships tended to grow, while smaller-membership churches tended to shrink. The average growing church reported 325 members in 2008; the average shrinking church reported 182 members.

Professing membership in the U.S. has decreased 7%, or nearly 590,000 over the last 10 years. Professing membership in the U.S. has declined every year since The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968. In recent years, the rate of decline has grown steeper: the year-to-year rate of decline for the church in the U.S. was -0.48% in 1997-1998. It increased to -1.01% in 2007-2008.

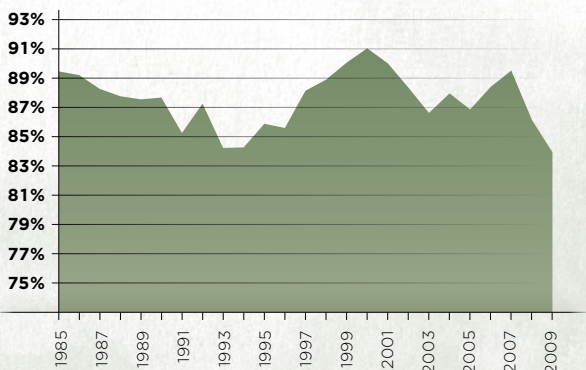
AVERAGE % CHANGE IN CONGREGATIONAL PROFESSING MEMBERSHIP (2007-2008), BY SIZE CATEGORY



Giving

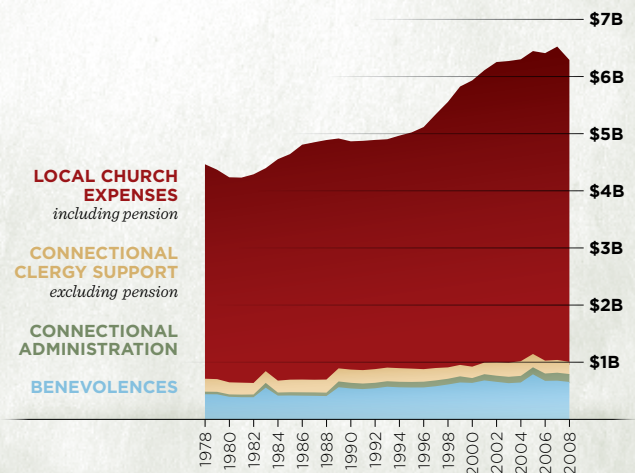
Local churches in the U.S. reported more than \$6.5 billion in contributions in 2008 and nearly \$6.3 billion in expenses.

PERCENTAGE PAID ON APPORTIONMENTS TO ALL GENERAL FUNDS, 1985-2008



CATEGORIES OF EXPENDITURE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH, 1978-2008

(adjusted for inflation)



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Conclusion

Thank you for your interest in the 2010 State of The Church Report. As we move toward the 2012 General Conference, The Connectional Table and the Council of Bishops are working in consultation with several task forces across the denomination to foster alignment toward a shared vision and direction for the future of The United Methodist Church. Groups include the Call to Action Steering Team, the Committee to Study the Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church, the Committee to Study the Ministry, the Commission on Faith and Order, the Sustainability Advisory Group, the Council of Bishops' Task Force on Theological Education and Leadership Formation, the Church Systems Task Force, the Connectional Funding Task Force, the Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters, and the Table of General Secretaries and Agency Presidents.

To learn more about the information presented in this document, visit www.umc.org/stateofthechurch.

Bishop Benjamin Boni joins hands with the Rev. Cynthia Harvey, now executive director of the United Methodist Committee of Relief, during worship following a week-long distribution of insecticide-treated, malaria-fighting mosquito nets in Côte d'Ivoire. United Methodists from the Côte d'Ivoire and Texas conferences partnered with the United Nations Foundation, the Ivoirian Ministry of Health and other organizations to distribute some 855,000 bed nets to the families of children ages 9 months to 59 months.

UMNS Photo by Mike DuBose.



This report is a collaborative effort with data provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration and production support from United Methodist Communications.

Additional information in the report was taken from the Four Areas of Focus Report from the General Secretaries and Agency Presidents' Table.

COVER PHOTO

Sharlene Jean offers a sample of treated drinking water to a child living in a makeshift camp in Gresier, Haiti. The United Methodist Committee on Relief and partner agencies provided water treatment supplies to the camp.

UMNS Photo by Mike DuBose