

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®

Called to act

MAKE DISCIPLES, TRANSFORM THE WORLD

THE 2011 STATE OF THE CHURCH REPORT



Called to act

STATE OF THE CHURCH

Greetings:

It is with great joy we bring you the 2011 State of the Church Report, an annual snapshot of The United Methodist Church. There is much to celebrate in the life of the Church, and we are awed by the remarkable ways God is at work through the lives of the millions of people around the world, the people called United Methodist.

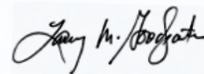
We celebrate news from the General Council on Finance and Administration that, in the United States, congregations reported nearly 280,000 persons enrolled in discipleship groups, more than one million children participated in vacation Bible schools, and more than 15 million persons were served by community ministries of outreach or justice or mercy. In the central conferences of the Philippines, Europe and Africa, the latest figures show professing church members number 4.4 million strong. Praise God!

In the past year, we have experienced unprecedented collaboration at many levels of the Church. Discussions at the Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table about direction, accountability and vitality have provided church leadership with a new road map for reform. As we work toward reordering the life of the Church, we will build on and strengthen our ministry in the Four Areas of Focus, continuing to fulfill our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our current direction is based on research and findings in the Call to Action report. We are grateful for the important work of the Call to Action Steering Team for helping us see our path more clearly. Within these pages, you will learn more about the context of our shared future and the benefits we will all witness as we become focused and centered on creating vital congregations. (See pages 6 and 7.)

Many of you have given significant input to the Call to Action report and we thank you. Ongoing dialogue will be critical to making real change in our Church's life and work. We will keep you apprised of ways you can continue to join the conversation. (See page 8.)

We hope this report will inform you about our life together in The United Methodist Church and offer inspiration for the journey ahead. We know both the opportunities and the challenges before us are great, but, thankfully, so is our God. As Jesus said to his disciples, "It's impossible for human beings. But all things are possible for God."
Matthew 19:26 (CEB).



Bishop Larry Goodpaster
PRESIDENT, COUNCIL OF BISHOPS



Bishop John Hopkins
CHAIR, CONNECTIONAL TABLE



Bishop Lindsey Davis
PRESIDENT, GENERAL COUNCIL ON
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

At the Children's Pow Wow in Houston, Texas, two kids are busy planting seeds.

UMNS photo by Ronny Perry





UMINS photo by Mike DuBose



Dr. Honore Clogya of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, examines Natasha St. Pierre at Methodist Children's Hospital in Port-au-Prince.

The Ministries of The United Methodist Church

Following the 2004 General Conference, leaders across the denomination engaged in discussions around what God is calling us to do and to be today, individually and as a people called United Methodist. Leaders sought answers to the questions:

- What is faithful discipleship in our time?
- How do we as a community of faith fulfill the mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world?

When United Methodist bishops across the connection shared with each other the strong, vital ministries throughout annual conferences, several areas of ministry emerged as common expressions of our Wesleyan heritage. Leaders from the general agencies and the Connectional Table continued to engage in conversation, which moved us to clarify our mission and center our ministries in Four Areas of Focus:

- Develop principled Christian leaders for the Church and the world;
- Create new places for new people and renew existing congregations;
- Engage in ministry with the poor; and
- Combat the diseases of poverty by improving health globally.

The Four Areas of Focus continue to be a source of inspiration and are providing measurable results at all levels of the Church.

DEVELOPING PRINCIPLED CHRISTIAN LEADERS

The Dakotas Conference created a new position to provide leadership development to clergy and laity year-round. In the Pacific Northwest Conference, a new comprehensive leadership model is bringing together children's ministry, youth ministry, college-campus ministries and other ministry areas to build a holistic approach to fulfilling the Church's mission. In the East Angola Annual Conference, where training pastors is a top priority,

35 pastors were trained in 2007. In 2010, the number grew to 121 pastors trained. There are 112 United Methodist-related institutions of higher education approved by the University Senate, including seminaries, colleges and universities, two-year colleges and a professional school. In 2008, they enrolled 337,221 students. On average, 95 percent of the students received tuition grant aid.

NEW AND RENEWED PLACES

From 2008 to the present, 341 new faith communities have been started around the world, an estimated eight new churches per month. Nearly 2,000 people have taken an online spiritual gifts assessment offered by Path 1, a new church start initiative of the Church. Since 2009, 163 new faith congregations and fellowships have been started across Asia, Latin America, Africa and Central Asia/Europe. The Council of Bishops has convened a Transformation Table, including pastors and annual conference church developers, to determine what can be done now to increase the number of vital congregations.

MINISTRY WITH THE POOR

A network of 45 church and community workers in 23 annual conferences has been trained as advocates for the poor. Six pilot projects have been implemented to respond to poverty in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the United States. The projects include community development and training in sustainable agriculture, hygiene and clean water projects. A new Ministry with the Poor website will be launched in May 2011 to expand training and provide news, successful models and educational and worship resources.

GLOBAL HEALTH

Through The United Methodist Church's work in Africa, nearly 500,000 insecticide-treated bed nets have been distributed to protect vulnerable populations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe. More than \$15 million has been raised through the Imagine No Malaria effort.

Make disciples. transform the world.

Annual Conferences

133

annual conferences worldwide

29 in Africa
21 in Europe
24 in the Philippines
59 in the United States

Laura Draughon Kirby (second from left) joins other United Methodist deaconess candidates during a commissioning service at the Interchurch Center chapel in New York. Ten deaconesses and one home missionary became part of a covenant community of laypersons within the church who combine lives of professional service with a devotion to Christ.



UMMS photo by Cassandra Zampini

Membership Statistics

CENTRAL CONFERENCE/REGION	1999 MEMBERS	2009 MEMBERS	CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP	%CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP
AFRICA	192,316	450,686	258,370	134%
CONGO	630,697	2,231,726	1,601,029	254%
WEST AFRICA	379,425	1,508,696	1,129,271	298%
CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN EUROPE	21,725	16,162	-5,563	-26%
GERMANY	38,536	32,305	-6,231	-16%
NORTHERN EUROPE AND EURASIA	19,110	15,293	-3,817	-20%
PHILIPPINES	55,810	145,642	89,832	161%
UNITED STATES	8,327,389	7,679,850	-647,539	-8%
TOTAL	9,665,008	12,080,360	2,415,352	25%

The United Methodist Church counts two types of members: baptized and professing.

Baptized members are all who have received Christian baptism in a United Methodist congregation 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. A profession of faith is an affirmation of the baptismal covenant and a declaration of one's desire to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

UNITED METHODIST CLERGY/EPISCOPAL LEADERSHIP

	TOTAL CLERGY	ORGANIZED CHURCHES	REGULAR PREACHING PLACES	ANNUAL CONFERENCES	BISHOPS
AFRICA	9,209	4,637	4,462	29	12
EUROPE	1,058	1,108	217	21	4
SOUTHEAST ASIA	1,712	1,371	282	24	3
UNITED STATES	45,186	33,614	N/A	59	49

The Rev. Igor Volovodov, pastor of Peter and Paul United Methodist Church in Voronezh, Russia, baptizes a parishioner.

68

active bishops

- 12 in Africa
- 4 in Europe
- 3 in the Philippines
- 49 in the United States

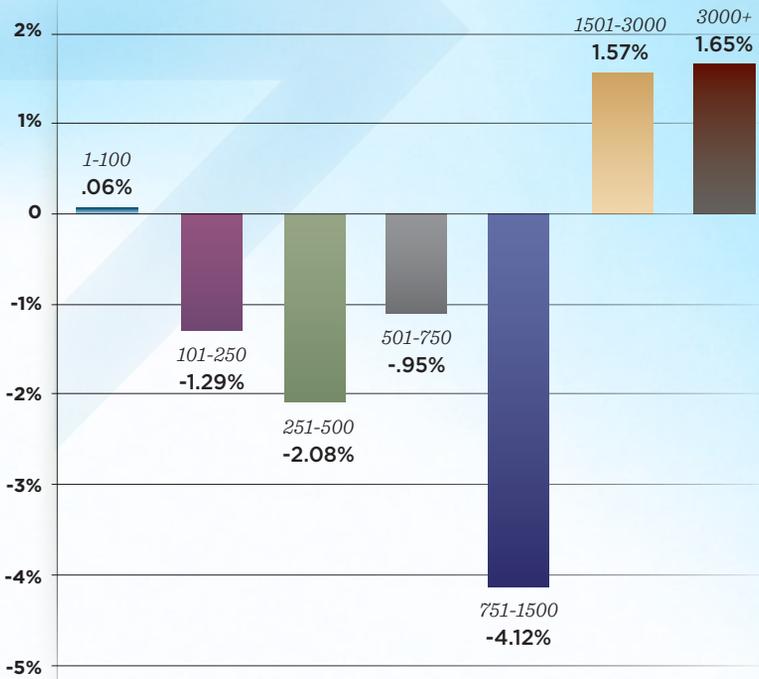
UMMS photo provided by Rev. Igor Volovodov



Church Membership Trends in the U.S.

In 2008-2009, 34.3% of the United Methodist churches in the United States reported membership growth, with an average increase of 3.1% over 2007-2008.

AVERAGE % CHANGE IN 2008-2009 IN PROFESSING MEMBERSHIP BY CONGREGATIONAL SIZE

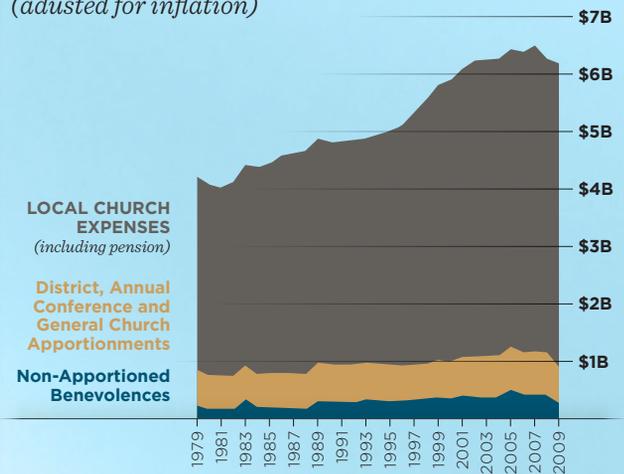


Professing membership in the United States has decreased 7.8%, or nearly 647,539 members over the last 10 years, and has declined every year since The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968. In recent years, the rate of decline has become more rapid. The rate of decline for the Church in the United States was 0.4% for 1998-1999. The decline in membership increased to 1.22% in 2008-2009.

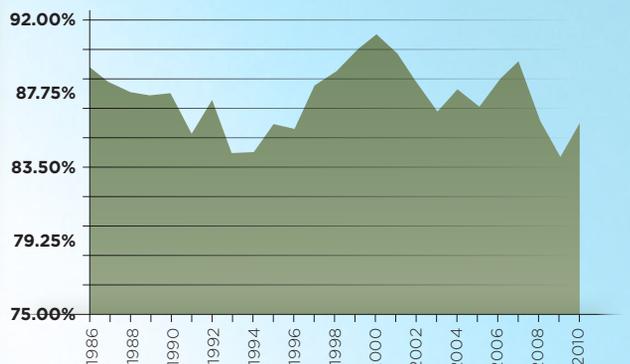
Giving

Local churches in the U.S. reported more than \$6.15 billion in contributions in 2009 and more than \$6.2 billion in expenses.

CATEGORIES OF EXPENDITURE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH, 1979-2009
(adjusted for inflation)



PERCENTAGE PAID ON APPORTIONMENTS TO ALL GENERAL FUNDS, 1986-2010



A CALL TO ACT: *Reorder the life of the church*

IN THE FALL OF 2009 the Call to Action (CTA) Steering Team was commissioned by the Council of Bishops with support from the Connectional Table to conduct an assessment of the denomination's practices and processes. The charge was to find ways to become more effective at fulfilling the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world and to be vital in ministries addressing the Four Areas of Focus.

The youth drama team shares a witness during opening worship for the MARCHA meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico. From left are: Saul Montiel, Jonathan Ramos and Aarendy Gomez.

UMNS photo by Mike DuBose



The Way Forward

After extensive research (available online at www.umc.org/CalltoAction), the CTA Steering Team made key recommendations to focus the Church's leadership for the next 10 years, recommendations centered on what the Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table agree is the Adaptive Challenge for The United Methodist Church. That challenge is to redirect the flow of attention, energy and resources to an intense concentration on fostering and sustaining an increase in the number of vital congregations effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The CTA research identifies four "key drivers" of vital congregations:

- Effective pastoral leadership including aspects of management, vision and inspiration;
- Multiple small groups and programs for children and youth;
- Mix of traditional and contemporary worship services; and
- High percentages of spiritually engaged laity who assume leadership roles.

To begin the process of redirecting attention, energy and resources of the denomination toward creating vital congregations, leadership will engage in five mutually dependent initiatives, which are:

1. For a minimum of 10 years, starting in January 2011, use the drivers of vital congregations as initial areas of attention for sustained and intense concentration to build effective practices in local churches.

2. Dramatically reform the clergy leadership, development, deployment, evaluation and accountability systems.

3. Collect, report, review and act on statistical information that measures progress in key performance areas to learn and adjust our approaches to leadership, policies and the use of human and financial resources. (This will include indicators such as how congregations and annual conferences are increasing their effectiveness in implementing the three factors of vitality from the Towers Watson report: attendance, growth and engagement.)



The Rev. Christian Coon participates in worship at Urban Village Church in Chicago.



CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

The worldwide economic crisis was a spark igniting the review. Additionally, the Church in the United States has experienced a four-decade decline in membership; an aging and predominantly Anglo constituency; declines in worship attendance, professions of faith and baptisms; and difficulty in attracting younger generations. Other trends, including declines in clergy health and job satisfaction, were indicators that change is needed.

The study found that the church is confronting a “creeping crisis” of relevancy that accompanies the acute crisis of an underperforming economic model.



Maya Donelson (center) uses the rooftop garden at Glide Memorial United Methodist Church in San Francisco to teach neighborhood children about sustainable urban gardening practices and healthy eating.

4. Reform the Council of Bishops with the active bishops (1) assuming responsibility and public accountability for improving attendance; increasing professions of faith, baptisms, participation in servant/mission ministries and benevolent giving; and lowering the average age of participants in local church life; and (2) establishing a new culture of accountability throughout the Church.

5. Consolidate program and administrative agencies, align their work and resources with the priorities of the Church and the decade-long commitment to build vital congregations, and reconstitute them with much smaller competency-based boards of directors in order to overcome current lack of alignment, diffused and redundant activity, and higher than necessary expense due to independent structures.

The Interim Operations Team

A small, diverse team, accountable to the Council of Bishops and the Connectional Table, has been assembled to begin evaluating the Church’s systems and structures for deep change. The team brings skills in change management, proven ability to develop accountability processes and experience in mission alignment and large culture shifts. The Interim Operations Team is:

- Neil Alexander, president and publisher, United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, Tenn.
- Carolyn Byrd, chair and CEO, GlobalTech Financial, LLC; former president of the Coca-Cola Financial Corporation, Atlanta, Ga.
- Bishop Larry Goodpaster (ex-officio), president of the Council of Bishops and presiding bishop of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference, Charlotte, N.C.
- Adam Hamilton, senior pastor, Church of the Resurrection, Leawood, Kan.
- Bishop John Hopkins (ex-officio), chair of the Connectional Table and presiding bishop of the East Ohio Annual Conference, North Canton, Ohio
- Laura Nichol, executive coach, former senior vice president of human resources, Chase Bank of Texas
- Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer (chair of the Interim Operations Team), former president of the Council of Bishops and presiding bishop of the Illinois Great Rivers Annual Conference, Springfield, Ill.
- Gary Shorb, president and CEO, Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare, Memphis, Tenn.
- Carol Tutill, global diversity and organizational capability, retired from Procter and Gamble, New York

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This report was a collaborative effort with statistical data provided by the General Council on Finance and Administration and production support from United Methodist Communications. Additional program data was provided by United Methodist general agencies and the Council of Bishops.

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COVER PHOTO

Tia Tucker, left, and Robin Pearce are two of many young people who are active members of First Grace United Methodist Church in New Orleans.

UMNS photo by Kathy L. Gilbert

Conclusion

As this report goes to press, the Interim Operations Team is organizing its work for the coming year. The team will look at how to develop processes, which will include:

- Reforming clergy leadership development, deployment, evaluation, and accountability systems;
- Reforming the Council of Bishops; and
- Aligning the work of program agencies with the Church's priority of building vital congregations with continued missional emphasis on the Four Areas of Focus.

These key areas are informed by the input many of you gave during the year-long research published in the Call to Action Report. The opportunities for input will continue throughout the coming months. For example, on April 6, 2011, United Methodist leaders in annual conferences around the world participated in the UMC Leadership Summit. This unprecedented global webcast engaged leaders in important conversation, which offered valuable feedback about the Call to Action recommendations. View the webcast archives at www.umcleadershipsommit.org. We will continue to offer opportunities for you to share your perspectives.

The Connectional Table and Council of Bishops want you to know that we have been listening and we value the diversity of perspectives across our denomination. Please continue to share your thoughts and prayers with us as we seek to discern God's will for the ways in which the people of The United Methodist Church are called to live out our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.



Nestar Akoblo leads the choir during worship at Temple Emmanuel United Methodist Church in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

UMNS photo by Mike DuBose