

A Lewis Center Report
on
Clergy Age Trends
in the

United Methodist Church: 1985-2005

Elders · Deacons · Local Pastors · Other Denominations



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Lewis Center for Church Leadership
Wesley Theological Seminary

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Purpose and Description

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this research project is to identify clergy age trends, particularly among elders, in the United Methodist Church over the last twenty years so that denominational leaders will have the data for planning and a baseline for monitoring future changes. The project originated from a concern that the age of United Methodist clergy is getting disproportionately older than the population the church seeks to reach.

Description of the Project

Clergy ages are not easy to track because few units of the church have up-to-date age information on clergy. The one exception is the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary has worked with the Board to determine age trends for United Methodist clergy.

The project covers elders, deacons, and local pastors in the five jurisdictional conferences of the United Methodist Church. The primary focus of the project is the increasing age of elders, but some comparable information was also gathered on deacons and local pastors. Ordained deacons as we have now in the United Methodist Church are relatively new, making trend comparisons over many years difficult, but we do report current age data.

To have comparable figures across the years for elders, the figures include not only those who have been ordained elder but also those who have been commissioned on the elder track but not yet ordained. While not all clergy are in the denominational pension system, most are and the percentage not in the system tends to stay the same across the years, thus making trend comparisons possible. Available data on clergy age trends in other denominations have been included to facilitate comparisons, as have certain data on age segments in the general population. Since the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits does not keep records of clergy by race, we were not able to make comparisons by racial groups.

Support for the Project

The G. Douglass Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC conducted this research project in cooperation with the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of The United Methodist Church. Funding for the project came from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. through its Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Initiative and from donors to the Lewis Center for Church Leadership.

Study Contributors

Lovett H. Weems, Jr., distinguished professor of church leadership and founding director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, was project director. Ann A. Michel, associate director of the Lewis Center, and Joe Arnold, executive assistant for the Lewis Center, were associate directors of the project. Shenandoah Gale was a research assistant, and April Giannini was the report designer.

Barbara Boigegrain, general secretary of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church, and the staff of the Board, particularly Anne Borish and Peter Doheny, provided essential cooperation and data. Staff from several denominations graciously gave their time and data to the report.

Summary of Findings

Clergy Age Trends in the United Methodist Church: 1985 – 2005

Elders

- The percentage of young elders (under 35) dropped dramatically from 15.05% to 4.69%.
- While the total number of elders has fallen since 1985, the drop in young elders has been much greater, from 3,219 to 850.
- The decline in young elders has been significantly greater than the decline in church membership, number of churches, and number of pastoral charges.
- The ratio of young elders to membership went from 1:2,900 to 1:9,500.
- The ratio of young elders to churches went from 1:12 to 1:41.
- The ratio of young elders to pastoral charges went from 1:8 to 1:31.
- Despite an overall increase in population, the U.S. population aged 25-34 (the age range of young elders) has declined; but the decline in young elders has been much greater. The ratio of young elders to the population aged 25-34 went from 1:13,000 to 1:47,000.
- The proportion of elders aged 55 and above has increased from 27% to 41%.
- The median age of elders (half older, half younger) has increased from 48 to 52.
- The average age of elders has increased from 46.8 to 51.5.
- The mode age among elders (single age most represented) in 2005 was 58, the age of the first Baby Boomers to become elders.
- The Southeastern Jurisdiction has the most young elders – 42% of the total. The ratio of young elders to the population aged 25-34 is 1:24,000 in this jurisdiction, compared to 1:47,000 overall.
- The conference with the highest percentage of young elders is the Holston Conference with 10%. This percentage, however, is still 5% less than the denominational average in 1985.
- There is a higher percentage of women among young elders than in older age categories, although women are significantly represented across the age groups. Women make up 31% of elders under 35, 25% of elders 35-54, and 23% of elders 55 and older.
- No comparisons by racial groups were possible, since the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits does not keep records of clergy by race.
- Comparisons with other mainline denominations show a similar trend of fewer young clergy.

Deacons

- Ordained United Methodist deacons as we have now are relatively new, so identifying age trends over the past twenty years was not possible.
- Seventy percent of young deacons are in the Southeastern and South Central Jurisdictions.
- There is a higher percentage of men among young deacons than in other age categories, although there is also a significant percentage of male deacons age 35 to 54. Men make up 34% of under 35 deacons, 32% of deacons 35-54, and 17% of deacons 55 and older.

Local Pastors

- Local pastors are traditionally older than elders. For example, the *Discipline* calls for local pastors seeking probationary membership and commissioning to have “reached forty years of age.” ¶324.6a (2004)
- Young local pastors increased from 130 to 371 between 1985 and 2005. Because the total number of local pastors also grew during that period, the percentage increase was not so dramatic – from 3.42% to 5.69%.
- The increase in the percentage of young local pastors came between 1985 and 1995. For the past ten years, the percentage has stayed about the same.
- There are more women among the older local pastors than among young local pastors, although women are significantly represented in all age categories. Women make up 25% of under 35 local pastors, 29% of local pastors 35-54, and 31% of those 55 and older.
- The median, average, and mode ages of local pastors are virtually the same as elders.

Why Young Elders are Important

by Lovett H. Weems, Jr.

Are Young Elders Disappearing?

There has been a dramatic drop in the number and percentage of United Methodist elders under the age of 35 in the last twenty years. The number of elders under 35 declined from 3,219 in 1985 to 850 in 2005. Young elders as a percentage of all elders dropped from 15.05% in 1985 to only 4.69% in 2005. For example, the annual conference with the highest percentage of young elders today has 10%, still five percent below where the *whole denomination* was just twenty years ago. This report documents the declining number of United Methodist elders under age thirty-five over the past twenty years.

Younger Clergy Leadership Needed to Reach Emerging Generations

The leadership base of declining organizations gets smaller and smaller, and they fail to attract quality young leaders. So just at the time when the organization needs its best leaders in greatest numbers, the base of new and quality leadership tends to be smallest. The issue of enlisting younger quality clergy must be seen side by side with the quality and vitality of the church itself. The church's overall health is the most important factor determining who comes into ordained ministry. Organizations tend to get the leadership they deserve, not the leadership they need. Any questions or concerns about the quality of leadership must be directed at the church itself – why the church in this particular era allows so many to ignore the call of God.

Leander Keck links the enlistment dilemma directly to the condition of the church itself. "The impression is abroad," he contends, "that the church does not welcome strength since it is more a place to find a support group than a channel for energy and talent, more a place where the bruised find solace than where the strong find companions and challenge." (*The Church Confident*, Abingdon, 93) He goes on to say that he is not looking for "Jesus-jocks and wheeler-dealers," but rather acknowledging "the churches have the opportunity to nurture the kind of persons that society needs to lead its institutions including the churches themselves." (93-94)

Retooled Clergy Leadership Needed to Reach Emerging Generations

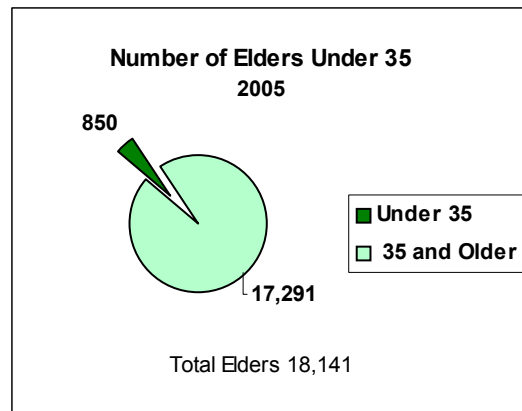
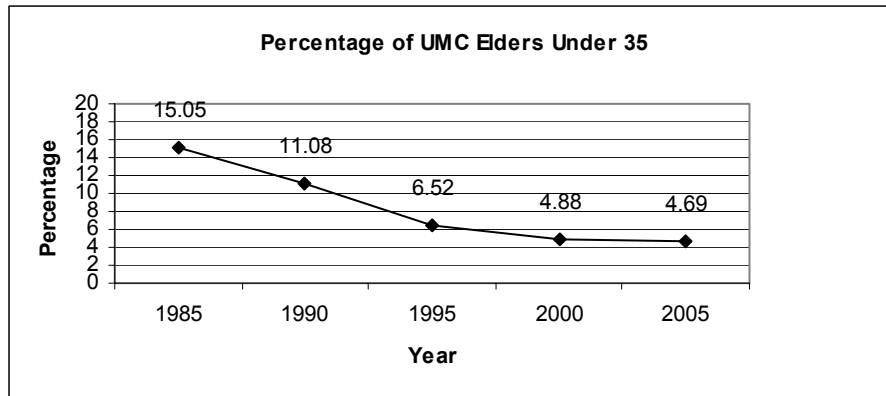
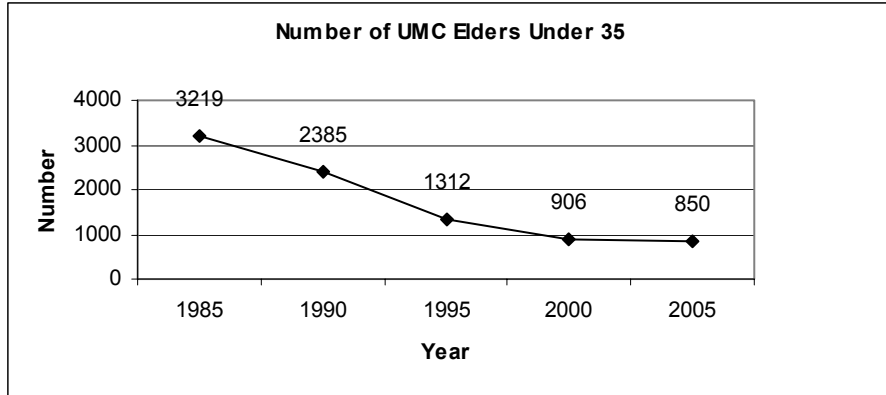
Enlisting younger clergy is only part of what is needed to reach younger generations. All clergy, including older clergy, need enhanced training to meet the needs of emerging generations. As a pastor out of seminary twenty years put it, "In seminary we said we were going to change the world. Now, the world has changed without our help and we are struggling to come to grips with those changes." The pastor went on to say that many of the needs and issues he is called upon to address regularly were not even on the horizon when he was in seminary.

Reinhold Niebuhr reminds us of the difficulty of the task. "It is no easy task to build up the faith of one generation," he wrote as a young Detroit pastor in 1921, "and not destroy the supports of the religion of the other." Today's clergy live in such a tension.

In *The Multigenerational Congregation* (Alban, 2002), Gil Rendle captures the dilemma faced by countless clergy seeking to reach younger generations who see the world in fundamentally different ways than the older generation already in the church. Effective church leaders have to contend with the worldviews of multiple generations together. How many pastors have worked diligently to reach more young people, only to receive criticism from congregational leaders? Church leadership in the multigenerational congregation requires finding new ways to address the real generational differences that are present.

Lovett H. Weems, Jr., is distinguished professor of church leadership and director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC.

Elders



Data on Age Trends for Elders 1985-2005

Year	No. of Elders	No. of Elders under 35	No. of Elders 35-54	No. of Elders 55-70
1985	21,378	3,219 (15.06%)	12,305 (57.56%)	5,854 (27.38%)
1990	21,507	2,385 (11.09%)	12,678 (58.95%)	6,444 (29.96%)
1995	20,117	1,312 (6.52%)	12,843 (63.84%)	5,962 (29.64%)
2000	18,576	906 (4.88%)	12,005 (64.63%)	5,665 (30.50%)
2005	18,141	850 (4.69%)	9,872 (54.42%)	7,419 (40.90%)

Elders

Presence of Elders under 35 by Annual Conference

CONFERENCE	2005 Elders Total	Age 29 and younger	Age 30 - 34	Total younger than 35	% younger than 35
Alabama-West Florida	288	5	16	21	7.29%
Alaska Missionary	1	0	0	0	0.00%
Arkansas	268	5	16	21	7.84%
Baltimore-Washington	472	4	11	15	3.18%
California-Nevada	326	2	8	10	3.07%
California-Pacific	407	2	14	16	3.93%
Central Pennsylvania	339	6	12	18	5.31%
Central Texas	253	6	7	13	5.14%
Dakotas	151	4	6	10	6.62%
Desert Southwest	138	3	5	8	5.80%
Detroit	318	2	16	18	5.66%
East Ohio	442	6	9	15	3.39%
Eastern Pennsylvania	331	5	11	16	4.83%
Florida	533	6	22	28	5.25%
Greater New Jersey	405	4	7	11	2.72%
Holston	335	9	26	35	10.45%
Illinois Great Rivers	407	5	12	17	4.18%
Iowa	405	3	10	13	3.21%
Kansas East	167	0	4	4	2.40%
Kansas West	170	1	4	5	2.94%
Kentucky	281	0	12	12	4.27%
Louisiana	232	8	7	15	6.47%
Memphis	201	1	5	6	2.99%
Minnesota	261	5	3	8	3.07%
Mississippi	355	8	17	25	7.04%
Missouri	342	1	11	12	3.51%
Nebraska	171	0	4	4	2.34%
New England	322	0	7	7	2.17%
New Mexico	107	1	1	2	1.87%
New York	329	0	6	6	1.82%
North Alabama	364	6	18	24	6.59%

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Elders

Presence of Elders under 35 by Annual Conference, continued

CONFERENCE	2005 Elders Total	Age 29 and younger	Age 30 - 34	Total younger than 35	% younger than 35
North Carolina	445	10	16	26	5.84%
North Central New York	154	1	1	2	1.30%
North Georgia	613	8	35	43	7.01%
North Indiana	319	6	8	14	4.39%
North Texas	257	1	16	17	6.61%
Northwest Texas	117	4	4	8	6.84%
Northern Illinois	341	4	10	14	4.11%
Oklahoma	322	4	14	18	5.59%
OK Indian Missionary	13	0	0	0	0.00%
Oregon-Idaho	152	2	5	7	4.61%
Pacific Northwest	216	0	5	5	2.31%
Peninsula-Delaware	182	0	2	2	1.10%
Rio Grande	34	0	0	0	0.00%
Rocky Mountain	235	3	7	10	4.26%
South Carolina	483	7	18	25	5.18%
South Georgia	290	0	15	15	5.17%
South Indiana	303	2	7	9	2.97%
Southwest Texas	250	1	6	7	2.80%
Tennessee	209	3	12	15	7.18%
Texas	441	2	24	26	5.90%
Troy	110	0	1	1	0.91%
Virginia	669	9	23	32	4.78%
West Michigan	235	2	5	7	2.98%
West Ohio	659	2	27	29	4.40%
West Virginia	232	0	6	6	2.59%
W. New York	136	3	4	7	5.15%
W. North Carolina	711	21	32	53	7.45%
W. Pennsylvania	425	3	15	18	4.24%
Wisconsin	284	2	12	14	4.93%
Wyoming	126	2	2	4	3.17%
Yellowstone	57	1	0	1	1.75%
TOTAL	18,141	211	639	850	4.69%

Elders

Presence of Elders under 35 by Percentages

CONFERENCE	2005 Elders Total	Age 29 and Younger	Age 30 – 34	Total younger than 35	% younger than 35
Holston	335	9	26	35	10.45%
Arkansas	268	5	16	21	7.84%
W. North Carolina	711	21	32	53	7.45%
Alabama-West Florida	288	5	16	21	7.29%
Tennessee	209	3	12	15	7.18%
Mississippi	355	8	17	25	7.04%
North Georgia	613	8	35	43	7.01%
Northwest Texas	117	4	4	8	6.84%
Dakotas	151	4	6	10	6.62%
North Texas	257	1	16	17	6.61%
North Alabama	364	6	18	24	6.59%
Louisiana	232	8	7	15	6.47%
Texas	441	2	24	26	5.90%
North Carolina	445	10	16	26	5.84%
Desert Southwest	138	3	5	8	5.80%
Detroit	318	2	16	18	5.66%
Oklahoma	322	4	14	18	5.59%
Central Pennsylvania	339	6	12	18	5.31%
Florida	533	6	22	28	5.25%
South Carolina	483	7	18	25	5.18%
South Georgia	290	0	15	15	5.17%
W. New York	136	3	4	7	5.15%
Central Texas	253	6	7	13	5.14%
Wisconsin	284	2	12	14	4.93%
Eastern Pennsylvania	331	5	11	16	4.83%
Virginia	669	9	23	32	4.78%
Oregon-Idaho	152	2	5	7	4.61%
West Ohio	659	2	27	29	4.40%
North Indiana	319	6	8	14	4.39%
Kentucky	281	0	12	12	4.27%
Rocky Mountain	235	3	7	10	4.26%
Western Pennsylvania	425	3	15	18	4.24%
Illinois Great Rivers	407	5	12	17	4.18%
Northern Illinois	341	4	10	14	4.11%

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Elders

Presence of Elders under 35 by Percentages, continued

CONFERENCE	2005 Elders Total	Age 29 and Younger	Age 30 – 34	Total younger than 35	% younger than 35
California-Pacific	407	2	14	16	3.93%
Missouri	342	1	11	12	3.51%
East Ohio	442	6	9	15	3.39%
Iowa	405	3	10	13	3.21%
Baltimore-Washington	472	4	11	15	3.18%
Wyoming	126	2	2	4	3.17%
California-Nevada	326	2	8	10	3.07%
Minnesota	261	5	3	8	3.07%
Memphis	201	1	5	6	2.99%
West Michigan	235	2	5	7	2.98%
South Indiana	303	2	7	9	2.97%
Kansas West	170	1	4	5	2.94%
Southwest Texas	250	1	6	7	2.80%
Greater New Jersey	405	4	7	11	2.72%
West Virginia	232	0	6	6	2.59%
Kansas East	167	0	4	4	2.40%
Nebraska	171	0	4	4	2.34%
Pacific Northwest	216	0	5	5	2.31%
New England	322	0	7	7	2.17%
New Mexico	107	1	1	2	1.87%
New York	329	0	6	6	1.82%
Yellowstone	57	1	0	1	1.75%
No. Central New York	154	1	1	2	1.30%
Peninsula-Delaware	182	0	2	2	1.10%
Troy	110	0	1	1	0.91%
Rio Grande	34	0	0	0	0.00%
Alaska Missionary	1	0	0	0	0.00%
OK Indian Missionary	13	0	0	0	0.00%
TOTAL	18,141	211	639	850	4.69%

Elders

Gender Breakdown within Age Cohorts - Elders

	Under 35	35-54	55-70
Men	69%	75%	77%
Women	31%	25%	23%

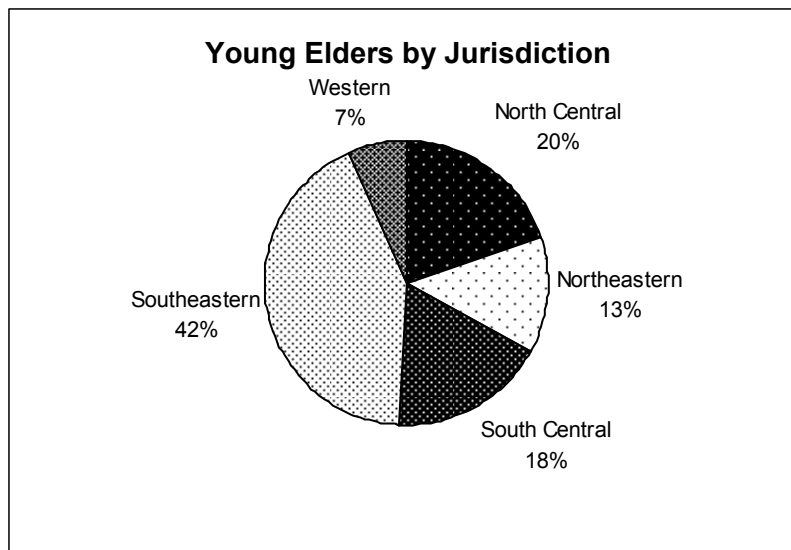
Women	Under 35	1.54%
Women	35 - 54	13.67%
Women	55 - 70	9.37%
Men	Under 35	3.46%
Men	35 - 54	40.12%
Men	55 - 70	31.83%

Elders Median, Average, and Mode Ages by Year

Year	Median* Age	Average Age	Mode* Age
1985	48	46.8	54
1990	47	47.5	43
1995	48	48.4	48
2000	50	49.5	53
2005	52	51.5	58

*Median - half older, half younger

*Mode - single age most represented



Elders

Comparisons of Elders under 35 with Membership, Churches, and Charges

Change in Ratio of Elders under 35 to Membership			
Year	Membership	Elders under 35	Ratio
1985	9,301,863	3,219	1:2,900
1990	8,872,370	2,385	1:3,700
1995	8,611,021	1,312	1:6,600
2000	8,356,816	906	1:9,200
2005	8,074,697	850	1:9,500

Change in Ratio of Elders under 35 to Number of Churches			
Year	Churches	Elders under 35	Ratio
1985	37,988	3,219	1:12
1990	37,407	2,385	1:16
1995	36,559	1,312	1:28
2000	35,609	906	1:39
2005	34,892	850	1:41

Change in Ratio of Elders under 35 to Number of Pastoral Charges			
Year	Charges	Elders under 35	Ratio
1985	25,727	3,219	1:8
1990	25,880	2,385	1:11
1995	25,934	1,312	1:20
2000	26,201	906	1:29
2005	26,307	850	1:31

Elders

Comparisons of Elders under 35 with U.S. Population Ages 25-34

Change in Ratio of Elders under 35 to Population 25-34			
Year	Population 25-34	Elders under 35	Ratio
1985	42,027,000	3,219	1:13,000
1990	43,161,000	2,385	1:18,000
1995	40,730,000	1,312	1:31,000
2000	39,891,000	906	1:44,000
2005	40,033,000	850	1:47,000

Ratio of Elders under 35 to Population 25-34 by Jurisdictions (2005)			
Jurisdiction	Population 25-34	Elders under 35	Ratio
North Central	7,311,000	168	1:44,000
Northeastern	8,148,000	113	1:72,000
South Central	6,339,000	152	1:42,000
Southeastern	8,721,000	360	1:24,000
Western	9,514,000	57	1:167,000
Total	40,033,000	850	1:47,000

Percentage of Elders under 35 Compared to Population 25-34 by Jurisdictions (2005)		
Jurisdiction	% Population 25-34	% Elders under 35
North Central	18%	20%
Northeastern	20%	13%
South Central	16%	18%
Southeastern	22%	42%
Western	24%	7%

Deacons

Presence of Deacons under 35 by Annual Conference

CONFERENCE	2005 Deacons Total	Age 29 and younger	Age 30 - 34	Total younger than 35	% younger than 35
Alabama-West Florida	20	0	0	0	0.00%
Arkansas	16	0	0	0	0.00%
Baltimore-Washington	23	0	0	0	0.00%
California-Nevada	12	0	1	1	8.33%
California-Pacific	21	0	2	2	9.52%
Central Pennsylvania	4	0	0	0	0.00%
Central Texas	21	0	1	1	4.76%
Dakotas	4	0	1	1	25.00%
Desert Southwest	12	0	0	0	0.00%
Detroit	10	1	0	1	10.00%
East Ohio	16	0	0	0	0.00%
Eastern Pennsylvania	8	0	2	2	25.00%
Florida	43	0	1	1	2.33%
Greater New Jersey	15	0	0	0	0.00%
Holston	14	0	0	0	0.00%
Illinois Great Rivers	11	0	0	0	0.00%
Iowa	9	0	0	0	0.00%
Kansas East	6	0	0	0	0.00%
Kansas West	7	0	0	0	0.00%
Kentucky	18	0	0	0	0.00%
Louisiana	23	0	0	0	0.00%
Memphis	10	0	1	1	10.00%
Minnesota	13	1	0	1	7.69%
Mississippi	20	1	1	2	10.00%
Missouri	15	0	1	1	6.67%
Nebraska	4	0	0	0	0.00%
New England	3	0	0	0	0.00%
New Mexico	8	0	1	1	12.50%
New York	3	0	0	0	0.00%

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Deacons

Presence of Deacons under 35 by Annual Conference, continued

CONFERENCE	2005 Deacons Total	Age 29 and younger	Age 30 - 34	Total younger than 35	% younger than 35
North Central New York	3	0	0	0	0.00%
North Alabama	8	1	0	1	12.50%
North Carolina	21	0	0	0	0.00%
North Georgia	45	2	2	4	8.89%
North Indiana	9	1	0	1	11.11%
North Texas	35	0	3	3	8.57%
Northwest Texas	7	0	1	1	14.29%
Northern Illinois	19	0	0	0	0.00%
Oklahoma	36	3	3	6	16.67%
Oregon-Idaho	10	0	0	0	0.00%
Pacific-Northwest	14	0	1	1	7.14%
Peninsula-Delaware	2	0	0	0	0.00%
Rocky Mountain	23	0	0	0	0.00%
South Carolina	13	0	0	0	0.00%
South Georgia	15	0	0	0	0.00%
South Indiana	8	0	1	1	12.50%
Southwest Texas	12	0	0	0	0.00%
Tennessee	29	1	0	1	3.45%
Texas	30	2	0	2	6.67%
Virginia	25	0	1	1	4.00%
West Michigan	5	0	0	0	0.00%
West Ohio	32	2	1	3	9.38%
West Virginia	7	0	0	0	0.00%
W. New York	6	0	0	0	0.00%
W. Pennsylvania	8	0	0	0	0.00%
W. North Carolina	33	2	4	6	18.18%
Wisconsin	4	0	0	0	0.00%
Wyoming	1	0	0	0	0.00%
Yellowstone	1	0	0	0	0.00%
TOTAL	850	17	29	46	5.41%

Deacons

Presence of Deacons under 35 by Percentage

CONFERENCE	2005 Deacons Total	Age 29 and Younger	Age 30 – 34	Total younger than 35	% younger than 35
Eastern Pennsylvania	8	0	2	2	25.00%
Dakotas	4	0	1	1	25.00%
Western North Carolina	33	2	4	6	18.18%
Oklahoma	36	3	3	6	16.67%
Northwest Texas	7	0	1	1	14.29%
South Indiana	8	0	1	1	12.50%
North Alabama	8	1	0	1	12.50%
New Mexico	8	0	1	1	12.50%
North Indiana	9	1	0	1	11.11%
Detroit	10	1	0	1	10.00%
Mississippi	20	1	1	2	10.00%
Memphis	10	0	1	1	10.00%
California-Pacific	21	0	2	2	9.52%
West Ohio	32	2	1	3	9.38%
North Georgia	45	2	2	4	8.89%
North Texas	35	0	3	3	8.57%
California-Nevada	12	0	1	1	8.33%
Minnesota	13	1	0	1	7.69%
Pacific Northwest	14	0	1	1	7.14%
Texas	30	2	0	2	6.67%
Missouri	15	0	1	1	6.67%
Central Texas	21	0	1	1	4.76%
Virginia	25	0	1	1	4.00%
Tennessee	29	1	0	1	3.45%
Florida	43	0	1	1	2.33%
New England	3	0	0	0	0.00%
Kansas East	6	0	0	0	0.00%
New York	3	0	0	0	0.00%
North Central New York	3	0	0	0	0.00%
Iowa	9	0	0	0	0.00%

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Deacons

Presence of Deacons under 35 by Percentage, continued

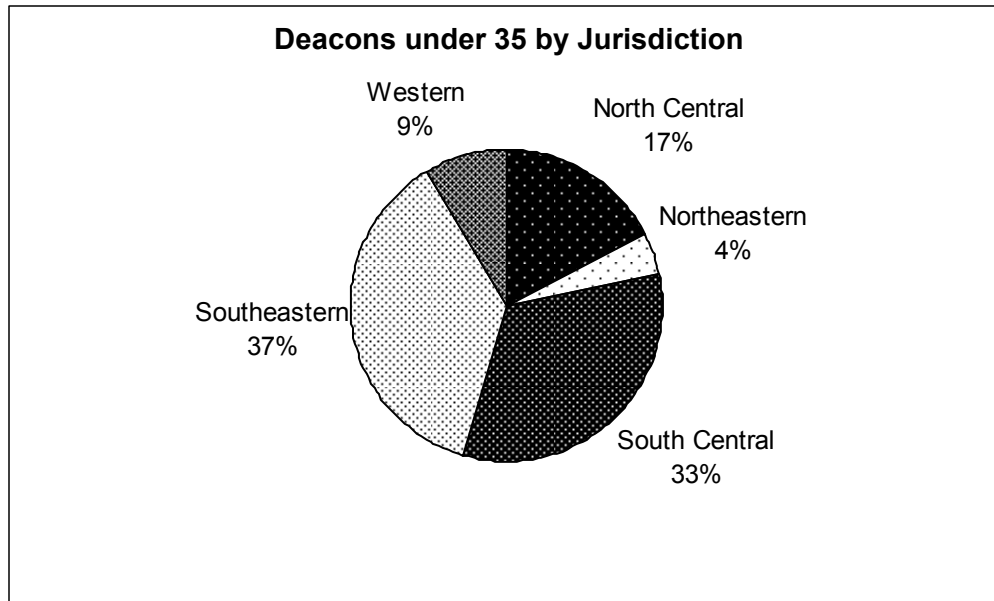
CONFERENCE	2005 Deacons Total	Age 29 and Younger	Age 30 – 34	Total younger than 35	% younger than 35
North Carolina	21	0	0	0	0.00%
Illinois Great Rivers	11	0	0	0	0.00%
Holston	14	0	0	0	0.00%
Greater New Jersey	15	0	0	0	0.00%
Nebraska	4	0	0	0	0.00%
Northern Illinois	19	0	0	0	0.00%
East Ohio	16	0	0	0	0.00%
Oregon-Idaho	10	0	0	0	0.00%
Desert Southwest	12	0	0	0	0.00%
Peninsula-Delaware	2	0	0	0	0.00%
Rocky Mountain	23	0	0	0	0.00%
South Carolina	13	0	0	0	0.00%
South Georgia	15	0	0	0	0.00%
Kentucky	18	0	0	0	0.00%
Southwest Texas	12	0	0	0	0.00%
Kansas West	7	0	0	0	0.00%
Central Pennsylvania	4	0	0	0	0.00%
Louisiana	23	0	0	0	0.00%
West Michigan	5	0	0	0	0.00%
Baltimore-Washington	23	0	0	0	0.00%
West Virginia	7	0	0	0	0.00%
Western New York	6	0	0	0	0.00%
Western Pennsylvania	8	0	0	0	0.00%
Arkansas	16	0	0	0	0.00%
Wisconsin	4	0	0	0	0.00%
Wyoming	1	0	0	0	0.00%
Yellowstone	1	0	0	0	0.00%
Alabama-West Florida	20	0	0	0	0.00%
TOTAL	850	17	29	46	5.41%

Deacons

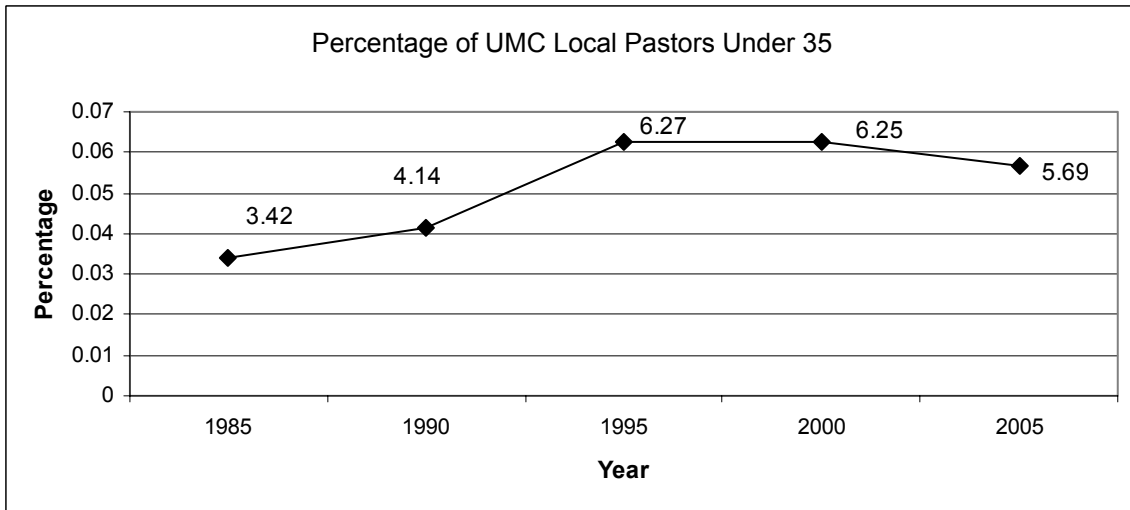
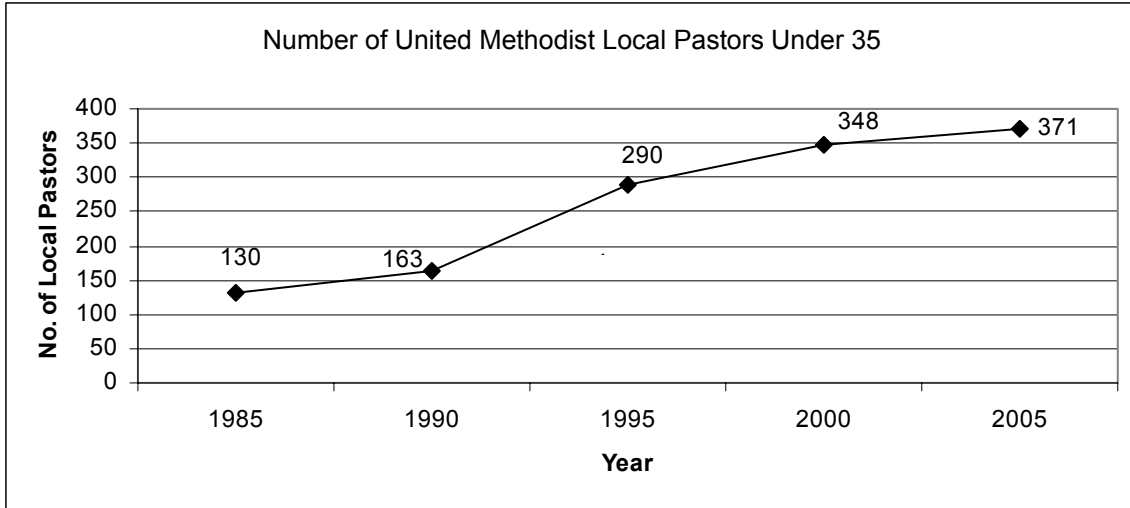
Gender Breakdown within Age Cohorts - Deacons

	Under 35	35-54	55-70
Men	34%	32%	17%
Women	66%	68%	83%

Women	Under 35	3.88%
Women	35 - 54	35.49%
Women	55 - 70	34.67%
Men	Under 35	2.00%
Men	35 - 54	16.80%
Men	55 - 70	7.17%



Local Pastors



**Data on Age Trends for Local Pastors
1985-2005**

Year	No. of Local Pastors	No. of Local Pastors Under 35	No. of Local Pastors 35-54	No. of Local Pastors 55-70
1985	3,804	130 (3%)	2,212 (58%)	1,462 (38%)
1990	3,936	163 (4%)	2,244 (57%)	1,529 (39%)
1995	4,622	290 (6%)	2,641 (57%)	1,691 (37%)
2000	5,571	348 (6%)	3,109 (56%)	2,114 (38%)
2005	6,517	371 (6%)	3,213 (49%)	2,933 (45%)

Local Pastors

Local Pastors Median, Average, and Mode Ages by Year

Year	Median* Age	Average Age	Mode* Age
1985	51	49.6	59
1990	51	50.4	60
1995	51	50.3	48
2000	52	50.8	53
2005	53	52.2	58

*Median - half older, half younger

*Mode - single age most represented

Gender Breakdown within Age Cohorts - Local Pastors

	Under 35	35-54	55-70
Men	75%	71%	69%
Women	25%	29%	31%

Women	Under 35	1.42%
Women	35 - 54	13.81%
Women	55 - 70	14.32%
Men	Under 35	4.21%
Men	35 - 54	34.10%
Men	55 - 70	32.14%

Other Denominations

Clergy Age Comparison Across Denominations

By Percentages

Denomination	ABC	DOC	Episcopal	ELCA	Nazarene	PC (USA)	UMC
Year*	2006	2006	2006	2005	2006	2002	2005
Under 35	5.50%	5.53%	4.10%	4.86%	12.72%	7.10%	4.69%
35 - 54	53.41%	50.79%	46.60%	49.28%	56.56%	59.20%	54.41%
55 and older	41.09%	43.68%	49.30%	45.96%	30.72%	33.70%	40.90%

By Numbers

Denomination	ABC	DOC	Episcopal	ELCA	Nazarene	PC (USA)	UMC
Year*	2006	2006	2006	2005	2006	2002	2005
Under 35	322	223	286	502	736	699	850
35 - 54	3128	2142	3,216	5,090	3,273	5,818	9,872
55 and older	2406	1842	3,403	4,736	1,778	3,312	7,419

Some Other Related Data

Roman Catholic Priests 2001*	
Under 35	3.10%
35 - 54	31.70%
55 and older	65.20%
Median age	60

United Church of Christ 2005*		
	%	#
25 - 44	17.00%	409
45 - 64	81.00%	1,929
65+	2.00%	36

* The latest year for which we have figures

Source of United Methodist Clergy Age Data

The United Methodist clergy age statistics in this report are prepared by the Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary from data provided by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church of "active participants." Active participant means that the person is active in clergy service, therefore excluding statuses such as retired, sabbatical, leave of absence, maternity leave, disability, or administrative location. Those who have been commissioned on the elder track but not yet ordained are included.

Sources for Other Denominations

- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) - Pension Fund. No denominational mandatory retirement age.
- American Baptist Churches USA (ABC) - Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board. Represents approximately 70% of ABC clergy enrolled in the pension plan. No denominational mandatory retirement age.
- Episcopal Church - Church Pension Group. Denominational mandatory retirement age of 72.
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) - Department of Research & Evaluation. No denominational mandatory retirement age.
- Church of the Nazarene - Pensions and Benefits USA. No denominational mandatory retirement age.
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) - Board of Pensions. No denominational mandatory retirement age.
- United Methodist Church (UMC) - General Board of Pension & Health Benefits. Elders. Denominational mandatory retirement age of 70.
- Roman Catholic - No central office keeps information on Catholic priests' ages. Researchers at Catholic University did a survey of American priests in 2001 from which these figures come. The survey had a high response rate of 71%. Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood*, Liturgical Press, 2003, p. 200. There is no mandatory retirement age.
- United Church of Christ—The Pension Boards. No denominational mandatory retirement age.

About the Lewis Center for Church Leadership

The G. Douglass Lewis Center for Church Leadership of Wesley Theological Seminary seeks to advance the understanding of Christian leadership and promote the effective and faithful practice of Christian leadership in the church and in society. The center is building a new vision for church leadership grounded in faith, informed by knowledge, and exercised in effective action. It seeks a holistic understanding of Christian leadership that brings together theology and management, scholarship and practice, research and application.

Supporting Wesley's mission as a church-based seminary, the Lewis Center serves as a resource for clergy and lay leaders, congregations, and denominational leaders. Through teaching, research, publications, and training, the Lewis Center supports visionary spiritual leaders and addresses those key leadership issues so crucial to the church's faithful witness.

The Center seeks to be a trusted resource for church leadership so that congregations and denominations thrive and grow.

Those wishing to view or subscribe to the Center's free bi-weekly online newsletter, go to:
www.churchleadership.com

For more information about the project, contact Lovett H. Weems, Jr., Director of the Lewis Center, lovettw@wesleysem.edu. Future updates and additions to this report will be posted to the Center's website. A downloadable PDF version of this report is available free on the Center's website. For information about purchasing additional copies of the printed report, contact Joe Arnold, Executive Assistant, at jearnold@wesleysem.edu.



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