

A Lewis Center Report
on

Reaching More Diverse People

in the
United Methodist Church
2011 Report

African American • Asian • Hispanic • Native American • Pacific Islander



2011
Lewis Center for Church Leadership
Wesley Theological Seminary

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2009 Figures are used in this report

One of the priorities of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership is to help churches and denominations reach more people, younger people, and more diverse people. The purpose of this research report is to identify how well the United Methodist Church is reaching the increasingly diverse population of the United States so that denominational leaders have the data for planning and a baseline for monitoring future changes. This report presents a snapshot of United Methodism's efforts through 2009 to reach more racially diverse people in the United States.

Data for this research come from two principle sources. Data regarding the membership of the United Methodist Church comes from the Office of Analysis and Research of the General Council on Finance and Administration. This office maintains and makes available for research purposes the statistical reports submitted by all United Methodist congregations each year. John Southwick of the Research Office of the General Board of Global Ministries combined denominational statistics with population figures organized using the geographic boundaries of the U.S. annual conferences.

Since 1989 congregations have provided in their annual statistical reports the breakdown of membership by racial ethnic background. From 1989 to 2004 the categories included were: African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, Pacific Islander, and White. These are the categories used in this report. In 2005 a further category of multi-racial was added.

The project covers the annual conferences within the bounds of the United States. Three conferences have boundaries that overlap with other annual conferences to an extent that calculations used in this report were not possible. They are Oklahoma Indian Missionary, Red Bird Missionary, and Rio Grande. The Oklahoma Indian Missionary and Rio Grande conferences are included in two of the conference membership charts.

Lovett H. Weems, Jr., distinguished professor of church leadership and founding director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, was project director. Joseph E. Arnold, research manager of the Lewis Center, was associate director of the project. John H. Southwick, Director of Research of the Office of Research of the General Board of Global Ministries contributed to this report and provided the figures on the United States population.

Observations

North Georgia Has the Largest Number of United Methodist People of Color

- As North Georgia grew to be the largest conference in total membership, it grew to include the largest number of racial ethnic United Methodists.
- North Georgia replaced South Carolina in recent years as the home to the most African American United Methodists as Atlanta far surpassed other metropolitan areas in its African American population gain during the 2000s and replaced Chicago as home to the second largest African American population.

California-Pacific Has the Highest Percentage of United Methodist People of Color

- The California-Pacific Conference is home to the most diverse population in the United States and to the highest percentage of racial ethnic membership.
- California-Pacific is home to the largest Asian and Pacific Islander memberships. California-Pacific and California-Nevada together are home to 30% of Asian United Methodists and 39% of Pacific Islander United Methodists.

United Methodist People of Color are Concentrated with about Half of Each Group Found within a Few Annual Conferences

- African America - 49% in five conferences: North Georgia, South Carolina, Texas, Baltimore-Washington, and Mississippi
- Asian – 52% in five conferences: California-Pacific, California-Nevada, New York, Greater New Jersey, and Virginia
- Hispanic – 49% in five annual conferences: Rio Grande, Southwest Texas, Florida, Texas, and New York.
- Native American – 52% in two conferences: Oklahoma and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference
- Pacific Islander – 47% in three conferences: California-Pacific, California-Nevada, and South Carolina.

A Diverse Population Normally Results in More Diverse United Methodists

- For the most part the percent of conference membership made up of people of color matches the presence of people of color in their population.
- But there are some exceptions. There are six conferences in which the racial ethnic population is less than 20 percent but where the racial ethnic membership percentage is above the median for U.S. annual conferences. They are Pacific Northwest, Tennessee, Rocky Mountain, Missouri, Kansas West, and New England.
- There are six annual conferences in which the racial ethnic population is more than 20 percent yet the percentage of membership that is racial ethnic falls below the median among U.S. annual conferences. They are Virginia, South Georgia, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Alabama-West Florida, and Northwest Texas.

Conference Effectiveness is Reaching Whites and People of Color Generally Tracks Each Other, Though at Much Lower Levels for People of Color

- All conferences reach people of color less well than they reach whites. The exceptions would be conferences focusing on particular racial ethnic groups such as the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference and the Rio Grande Conference.
- However, how well conferences reach whites as a percentage of population compared to how well other conferences do tends to carry over into how well they do (remember, at much lower levels) in reaching people of color compared to other annual conferences.
- Nine conferences were above the median for people of color membership as percentage of population in 2009 while below the median for whites.
- Six conferences were above the median for white membership as percentage of population in 2009 while below the median for people of color.

The Gap between Effectiveness in Reaching People of Color and Whites Varies Considerably

- Conferences where there are the greatest gaps between the presence of people of color in the population and their presence in United Methodist membership compared to comparable figures for whites include:
 - South Georgia (8.7% of whites are UM, 0.6% of people of color are UM)
 - Oklahoma (8.3% compared to 1.0%, though the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference has a strong presence in Oklahoma;
 - Memphis (7.7% compared to 0.5%)
 - North Carolina (7.7% compared to 0.5%)
 - Alabama-West Florida (7.4% compared to 0.6%)
 - Western North Carolina (7.8% compared to 1.2%)
 - Northwest Texas (6.5% compared to 0.6%)
- The conferences that come closest to reaching whites and people of color at the same rates tend to be conferences with large white and people of color populations and low United Methodist percentages among both groups based on the size of the population include:
 - New York (0.8% of whites are UM compared to 0.5% of people of color are UM)
 - California-Nevada (0.6% compared to 0.3)
 - California-Pacific Conference (0.32% compared to 0.25%).

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Reaching More Diverse People
 United Methodism's 2009 Record in the U.S.

Top Conferences in Reaching All People within Their Boundaries

Highest Percentage of Reaching All People - 2009		
	Conference	Percentage
1	Kansas West	6.8%
2	Oklahoma	6.5%
3	Peninsula - Delaware	6.4%
4	Mississippi	6.2%
5	Western North Carolina	6.2%
6	Holston	6.1%
7	Iowa	6.1%
8	West Virginia	6.1%
9	Central Pennsylvania	5.8%
10	South Georgia	5.4%

Top Conferences in Reaching Non-Hispanic Whites within Their Boundaries

Top Conferences in Reaching People of Color within Their Boundaries

Highest Percentage of Reaching Non-Hispanic Whites - 2009			Highest Percentage of Reaching People of Color - 2009		
	Conference	Percentage		Conference	Percentage
1	South Georgia	8.7%	1	Peninsula - Delaware	3.5%
2	Mississippi	8.4%	2	South Carolina	3.4%
3	Oklahoma	8.3%	3	Mississippi	3.0%
4	Western North Carolina	7.8%	4	Kansas West	2.6%
5	Memphis	7.7%	5	North Georgia	2.1%
6	North Carolina	7.7%	6	Baltimore - Washington	1.8%
7	Kansas West	7.6%	7	Texas	1.7%
8	Peninsula - Delaware	7.4%	8	Holston	1.5%
9	Alabama - West Florida	7.4%	9	Tennessee	1.4%
10	North Alabama	6.7%	10	Western North Carolina	1.2%

How Does the Racial Ethnic Population of the United States and United Methodist Membership Compare by Annual Conferences?

Total People of Color Population and Membership

Conferences with Largest Total People of Color Populations - 2009			Conferences with Largest Total People of Color United Methodist Membership - 2009		
	Conference	Number		Conference	Number
1	California - Pacific	11,105,391	1	North Georgia	57,045
2	California - Nevada	6,581,209	2	South Carolina	50,362
3	New York	6,510,058	3	Texas	50,315
4	Florida	3,778,464	4	Baltimore - Washington	44,952
5	Northern Illinois	3,085,054	5	Mississippi	35,488
6	Texas	2,988,576	6	New York	33,823
7	North Georgia	2,768,632	7	California - Pacific	28,258
8	Greater New Jersey	2,700,138	8	Florida	23,913
9	Baltimore - Washington	2,548,803	9	California - Nevada	22,176
10	Desert Southwest	2,522,958	10	Greater New Jersey	17,338
Conferences with Highest Percentage of Total People of Color Population - 2009			Conferences with Highest Percentage of Total People of Color United Methodist Membership - 2009		
	Conference	Percentage		Conference	Percentage
1	California - Pacific	47.3%	1	California - Pacific	34.9%
2	Baltimore - Washington	42.8%	2	New York	29.2%
3	California - Nevada	40.9%	3	California - Nevada	27.7%
4	South Georgia	40.6%	4	Baltimore - Washington	24.2%
5	Mississippi	40.4%	5	South Carolina	21.2%
6	Memphis	40.0%	6	Mississippi	19.5%
7	New York	39.5%	7	Greater New Jersey	18.4%
8	North Georgia	37.6%	8	Texas	17.5%
9	Texas	37.2%	9	North Georgia	16.0%
10	Louisiana	36.9%	10	Peninsula - Delaware	14.2%

Total African American Population and Membership

Conferences with Largest African American Populations - 2009			Conferences with Largest African American United Methodist Membership - 2009		
	Conference	Number		Conference	Number
1	New York	2,910,312	1	North Georgia	50,980
2	Florida	2,281,930	2	South Carolina	47,658
3	North Georgia	2,041,461	3	Texas	43,483
4	Baltimore - Washington	1,901,234	4	Baltimore - Washington	41,322
5	Northern Illinois	1,522,869	5	Mississippi	34,905
6	Virginia	1,516,514	6	New York	22,894
7	California - Pacific	1,493,328	7	Florida	15,694
8	Louisiana	1,444,782	8	Louisiana	14,353
9	Texas	1,368,750	9	Western North Carolina	11,792
10	South Carolina	1,280,402	10	North Texas	11,417
Conferences with Highest Percentage of African American Population - 2009			Conferences with Highest Percentage of African American United Methodist		
	Conference	Percentage		Conference	Percentage
1	Mississippi	37.3%	1	Baltimore - Washington	22.3%
2	Memphis	35.6%	2	South Carolina	20.0%
3	South Georgia	35.5%	3	New York	19.8%
4	Louisiana	32.4%	4	Mississippi	19.2%
5	Baltimore - Washington	31.9%	5	Texas	15.1%
6	South Carolina	28.4%	6	North Georgia	14.3%
7	North Georgia	27.7%	7	Peninsula - Delaware	12.9%
8	Alabama - West Florida	27.1%	8	Louisiana	11.9%
9	North Carolina	26.4%	9	Northern Illinois	8.6%
10	North Alabama	21.6%	10	California - Pacific	8.6%

Total Asian Population and Membership

Conferences with Largest Asian Populations - 2009			Conferences with Largest Asian United Methodist Membership - 2009		
	Conference	Number		Conference	Number
1	California - Pacific	2,951,071	1	California - Pacific	15,491
2	California - Nevada	2,187,044	2	California - Nevada	10,624
3	New York	1,288,728	3	New York	7,666
4	Greater New Jersey	655,698	4	Greater New Jersey	7,601
5	Northern Illinois	471,220	5	Virginia	4,124
6	Pacific Northwest	441,138	6	North Georgia	3,764
7	New England	395,756	7	Northern Illinois	3,536
8	Virginia	378,519	8	North Texas	2,881
9	Florida	362,767	9	Baltimore - Washington	2,536
10	Texas	350,758	10	Pacific Northwest	2,174
Conferences with Highest Percentage of Asian Population - 2009			Conferences with Highest Percentage of Asian United Methodist Membership -		
	Conference	Percentage		Conference	Percentage
1	California - Nevada	13.6%	1	California - Pacific	19.1%
2	California - Pacific	12.6%	2	California - Nevada	13.3%
3	New York	7.8%	3	Greater New Jersey	8.1%
4	Greater New Jersey	7.5%	4	New York	6.6%
5	Pacific Northwest	6.4%	5	Pacific Northwest	4.2%
6	Northern Illinois	5.5%	6	Northern Illinois	3.5%
7	Virginia	5.2%	7	Alaska Missionary	2.6%
8	Baltimore - Washington	5.0%	8	Oregon - Idaho	2.2%
9	North Texas	4.9%	9	Desert Southwest	2.0%
10	Alaska Missionary	4.6%	10	New England	1.9%

Total Hispanic Population and Membership

Conferences with Largest Hispanic Populations - 2009			Conferences with Largest Hispanic United Methodist Membership - 2009		
	Conference	Number		Conference	Number
1	California - Pacific	9,525,779	1	Rio Grande	13,494
2	California - Nevada	4,514,207	2	Southwest Texas	6,041
3	Southwest Texas	3,496,625	3	Florida	5,973
4	New York	3,384,944	4	Texas	4,750
5	Desert Southwest	2,543,763	5	New York	2,862
6	Florida	2,413,912	6	California - Pacific	2,659
7	Texas	2,290,880	7	North Georgia	2,035
8	Northern Illinois	1,762,152	8	North Texas	2,007
9	New Mexico	1,628,239	9	California - Nevada	1,979
10	Greater New Jersey	1,417,992	10	Central Texas	1,945

Conferences with Highest Percentage of Hispanic Population - 2009			Conferences with Highest Percentage of Hispanic United Methodist Membership - 2009		
	Conference	Percentage		Conference	Percentage
1	Southwest Texas	57.0%	1	Southwest Texas	5.1%
2	New Mexico	54.9%	2	New Mexico	4.1%
3	California - Pacific	40.6%	3	California - Pacific	3.3%
4	Northwest Texas	31.6%	4	Desert Southwest	2.6%
5	Desert Southwest	29.9%	5	California - Nevada	2.5%
6	Texas	28.5%	6	New York	2.5%
7	California - Nevada	28.0%	7	Florida	2.1%
8	North Texas	27.4%	8	Northwest Texas	1.8%
9	Central Texas	22.5%	9	Texas	1.7%
10	Northern Illinois	20.6%	10	Greater New Jersey	1.6%

The Rio Grande Conference is included in the list of conference by membership though not in the other charts.

Total Native American Population and Membership

Conferences with Largest Native American Populations - 2009			Conferences with Largest Native American United Methodist Membership - 2009		
	Conference	Number		Conference	Number
1	Desert Southwest	320,383	1	Oklahoma	5,823
2	Oklahoma	289,887	2	Oklahoma Indian Miss. Conf.	5,671
3	California - Pacific	211,453	3	North Carolina	2,465
4	California - Nevada	199,971	4	New Mexico	607
5	New Mexico	192,593	5	East Ohio	505
6	Pacific Northwest	111,598	6	Western North Carolina	467
7	Alaska Missionary	103,429	7	California - Nevada	376
8	Dakotas	103,309	8	Wisconsin	369
9	Rocky Mountain	97,392	9	Detroit	312
10	North Carolina	85,554	10	Alabama - West Florida	260
Conferences with Highest Percentage of Native American Population - 2009			Conferences with Highest Percentage of Native American United Methodist Membership - 2009		
	Conference	Percentage		Conference	Percentage
1	Alaska Missionary	15.0%	1	Alaska Missionary	3.9%
2	Oklahoma	7.9%	2	Oklahoma	2.4%
3	Dakotas	7.1%	3	New Mexico	1.7%
4	New Mexico	6.5%	4	North Carolina	1.0%
5	Yellowstone	6.3%	5	California - Nevada	0.5%
6	Desert Southwest	3.8%	6	Wisconsin	0.5%
7	North Carolina	1.9%	7	Yellowstone	0.4%
8	Pacific Northwest	1.6%	8	Pacific Northwest	0.4%
9	Oregon - Idaho	1.3%	9	Desert Southwest	0.4%
10	California - Nevada	1.2%	10	Detroit	0.3%

The Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference is included in the list of conference by membership though not in the other charts.

Total Pacific Islander Population and Membership

Conferences with Largest Pacific Islander Populations - 2009			Conferences with Largest Pacific Islander United Methodist Membership - 2009		
	Conference	Number		Conference	Number
1	California - Pacific	181,927	1	California - Pacific	3,054
2	California - Nevada	69,821	2	California - Nevada	2,880
3	Pacific Northwest	29,249	3	South Carolina	1,289
4	Rocky Mountain	25,408	4	Pacific Northwest	589
5	Desert Southwest	20,404	5	Central Texas	439
6	Oregon - Idaho	12,038	6	East Ohio	434
7	New York	11,115	7	Central Pennsylvania	416
8	Florida	10,833	8	Desert Southwest	358
9	Central Texas	6,051	9	Florida	353
10	Virginia	5,579	10	Dakotas	317
Conferences with Highest Percentage of Pacific Islander Population - 2009			Conferences with Highest Percentage of Pacific Islander United Methodist Membership - 2009		
	Conference	Percentage		Conference	Percentage
1	California - Pacific	0.8%	1	Alaska Missionary	5.8%
2	Alaska Missionary	0.6%	2	California - Pacific	3.8%
3	California - Nevada	0.4%	3	California - Nevada	3.6%
4	Pacific Northwest	0.4%	4	Pacific Northwest	1.1%
5	Rocky Mountain	0.3%	5	Desert Southwest	0.9%
6	Desert Southwest	0.2%	6	Dakotas	0.8%
7	Oregon - Idaho	0.2%	7	South Carolina	0.5%
8	Central Texas	0.2%	8	Oregon - Idaho	0.5%
9	New Mexico	0.1%	9	Rocky Mountain	0.5%
10	Arkansas	0.1%	10	Central Pennsylvania	0.3%

About the Lewis Center for Church Leadership

Established by Wesley Theological Seminary in 2003, the Lewis Center for Church Leadership has worked to help the United Methodist Church address its current challenges. The Center is building a 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.

Committed to the broad goal of helping the church reach more people, younger people, and more diverse people, the Center focuses on improving leadership effectiveness and providing actionable insights and best practices to promote effective ministry. The Center seeks to be a trusted resource for church leadership, helping congregations and denominations serve, thrive, and grow. The Center staff of six, along with other researchers and consultants who assist with special projects, also draws on the expertise of the entire Wesley faculty and a wide array of gifted practitioners.

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Building a New Vision for Church Leadership

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