

The State of Female and Racial/Ethnic United Methodist Clergy in the US

Executive Summary

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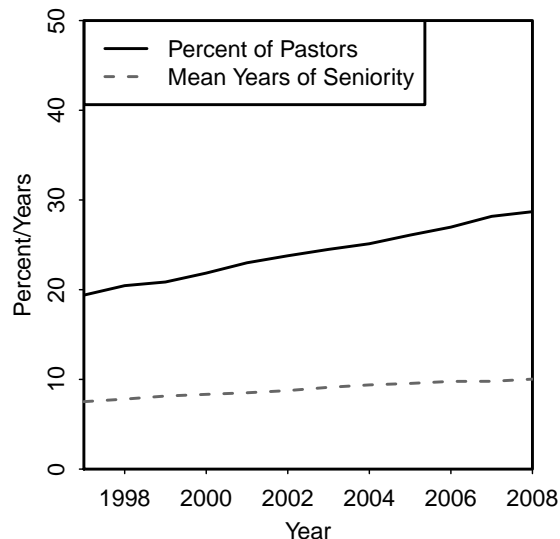
Executive Summary¹

Historically, females and members of racial/ethnic groups have faced a series of formal and, later, informal barriers to participation in the clergy of the United Methodist Church. These barriers have been a focal point for continuing discussions regarding the nature of leadership, the definition of ministry, and the equity of gender and race relations within the UMC. This report, *The State of Clergy Careers for Female and Racial/Ethnic United Methodist Pastors* was undertaken in order to inform these discussions by providing a set of basic, quantitative facts regarding current trends in the participation of females and members of racial/ethnic groups in the clergy.

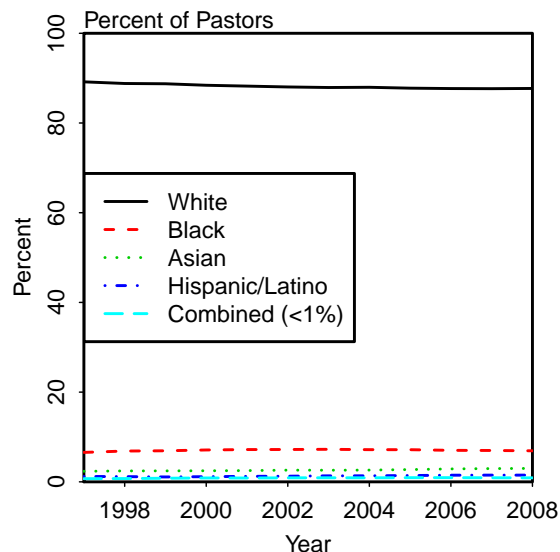
The report examines the records of clergy membership and congregational appointments from 1997-2008 in order to (A) assess the representation of racial/ethnic groups and females in the clergy, (B) understand how this representation is changing, and (C) track how the members of these groups fare under the appointment system.

The numbers of both female and racial/ethnic clergy have increased relative their base levels in 1997. Between 1997 and 2008, the percent of congregations led by females increased by 45% and the number of racial/ethnic pastors increased by 22%. However, the increase in racial/ethnic pastors is not consistent across racial/ethnic groups. There has been no overall change in the number of Black clergy, even as Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Multi-racial clergy have each increased by about 25%.

Increase in Female Pastors and Seniority over Time

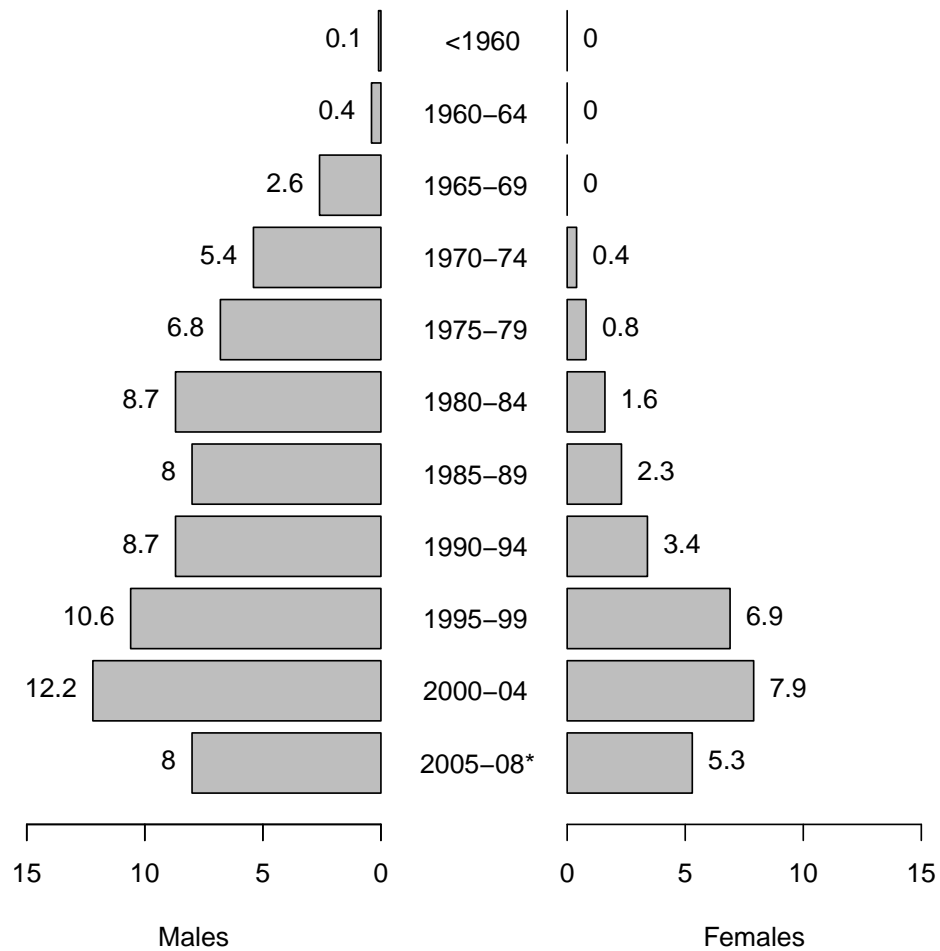


Change in Percentage of Racial/Ethnic Pastors



¹The full report is scheduled for release on 4/2/2012.

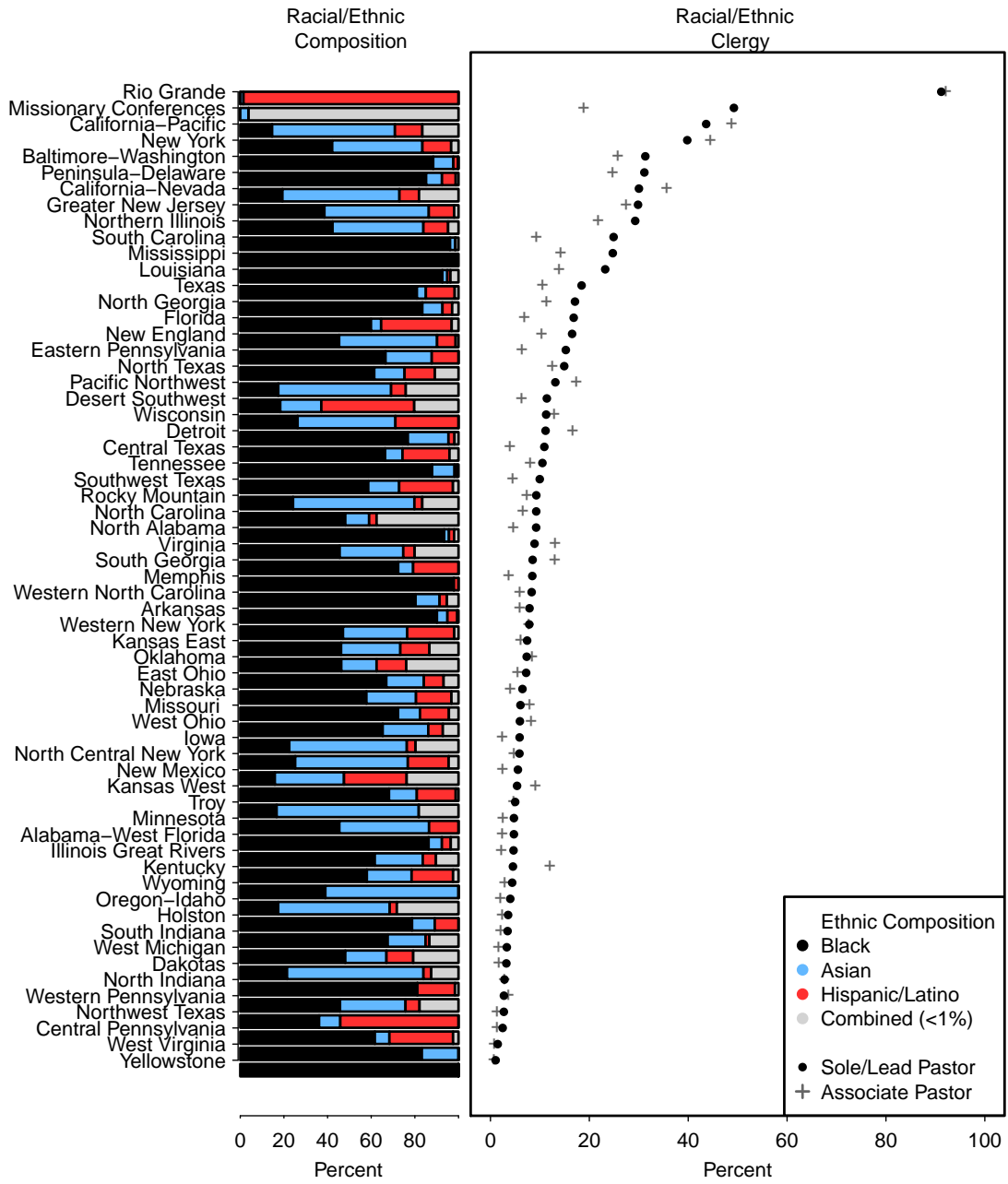
Cohort Structure in 2008



The percent of pastors assigned to UMC congregations in 2008, by cohort of entry. Entry cohorts are determined by the first recorded appointment to a charge, and have been split into five year intervals.

*The 2005-2008 cohort contains one year fewer than other cohorts, so care should be taken interpreting the percentage of pastors in this cohort.

Percentage of Racial/Ethnic Pastors by Conference

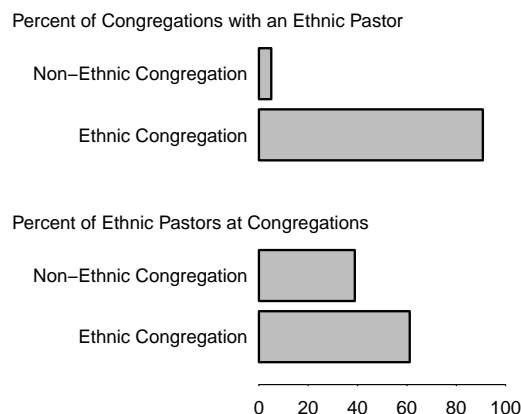


Female and racial/ethnic clergy held differing baseline levels of representation, which affected the impact of these growth rates on the composition of UMC clergy over the study period. The 45% growth in female clergy represents a shift from 20% in 1997 to 29% in 2008. The 22% growth in racial/ethnic clergy represents a change from 10% to 12% of clergy serving congregations.

Female and racial/ethnic clergy (with the exception of Black clergy) have been making up larger and larger percentages entering cohorts. This trend carries some important demographic consequences. Notably, most female and non-black racial/ethnic clergy have entered the clergy recently. As a result, these groups have lower average seniority than White/male clergy. Gender and/or race gaps for factors, such as salary, average congregational size, and rates of exit, are founded in part on these differences in average seniority, greatly complicating their interpretation. One further implication of this demographic wave is that the percentage of female, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Multi-racial clergy will continue to increase in the near future as older (and less diverse) clergy retire.

The percentage of congregational positions served by racial/ethnic and female clergy varies dramatically between annual conferences. For female clergy, regional differences are an important component of this variation. There are dramatic differences in the percent of females serving congregations between UMC Jurisdictions. In 2008, 36% of congregational positions in the *Northeastern* Jurisdiction were filled by females, compared to only 20% in the *Southeastern* Jurisdiction.

Percentages of Racial/Ethnic Pastors Serving Ethnic Congregations

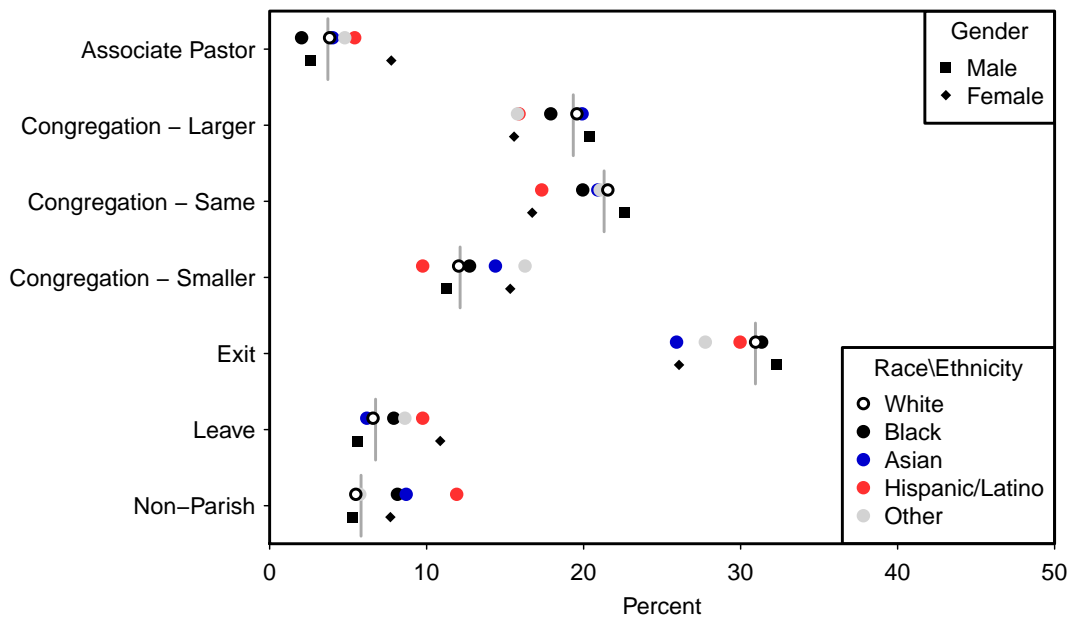


Note: Percentages are based upon the years 2006-2008.

Variation in the percent of congregational positions served by racial/ethnic pastors is also large, but does not correspond to broad US regions. Racial/ethnic pastors are concentrated in a few annual conferences. These conferences have high representation of racial/ethnic clergy (20-50%), while the percentage of racial/ethnic clergy is relatively low in the majority of conferences. Annual conferences with high levels of racial/ethnic clergy often contain a large metropolitan area, and the specific history of the region appears to determine which racial/ethnic group is highly represented. For example, most racial/ethnic clergy in the *Baltimore-Washington* conference are Black, but Asian clergy comprise largest group in the *California-Nevada* conference.

This concentration of racial/ethnic pastors is greatly influenced by the location of ethnic congregations, which are highly likely to be served

Appointment Status in 2008 for Clergy Serving at Congregations in 2000



Gray lines indicate the overall percentage of pastors found in each state in 2008. These overall averages are overlaid by the splits between genders (diamonds vs. squares) and race (colored circles).

by a racial/ethnic clergy member.² Over 90% of appointments to ethnic congregations were racial/ethnic pastors. From the perspective of racial/ethnic clergy, however, this division is not so complete—ethnic congregations comprise just 60% of the appointments of racial/ethnic clergy. Forty percent of the time they serve in cross-cultural appointments.

Racial/ethnic and female clergy remain less likely to lead the largest congregations than their White/ male counterparts. The greater average seniority of White/male clergy is a major contributing factor to this difference, but the gap persists even after seniority is taken into account. Female and racial/ethnic clergy are also more likely to serve congregations as an associate rather than a lead pastor.

In order to better understand how female and racial/ethnic clergy fare under the appointment system, the report examined the job status of pastors after 8 years (from 2000 to 2008). In 2008, female pastors were less likely than their male counterparts to be appointed to congregations of similar or larger size to their 2000 congregation, and were more likely to be an associate pastor. The same pattern was not observed for racial/ethnic clergy. At the same time, both racial/ethnic and female clergy were more likely to move out of parish ministry, either into extensional appointments or to go on leave. Statistical modeling indicates that these trends did not result from the influx of female pastors into the ministry or from other demographic factors.

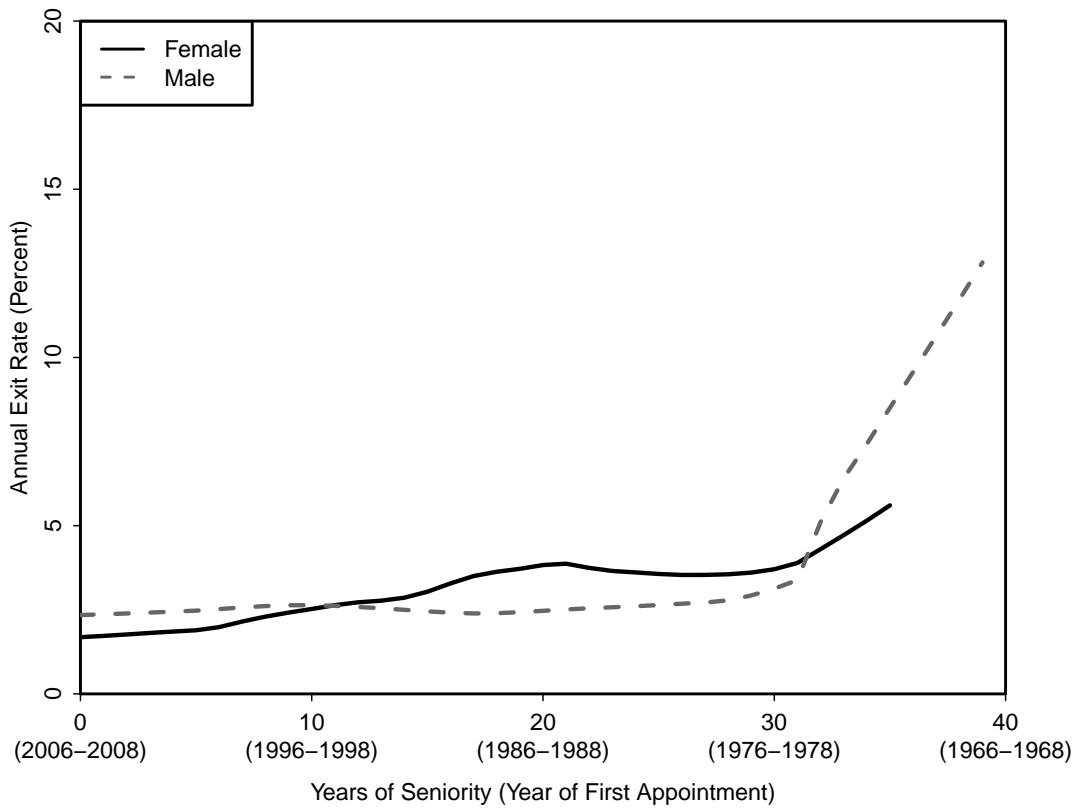
Female and racial/ethnic pastors were more likely to enter the clergy as Elders rather than Local Pastors, but there was little difference in

the size of initial appointments between male and female entrants. Either the pattern of size differentiation observed above arises over the course of clergy careers, or there is less differentiation in recent cohorts than in earlier cohorts. Racial/ethnic clergy, however, did have initial appointments in smaller congregations than White pastors. However, this is probably due to the smaller size of ethnic congregations in general.

Neither racial/ethnic or female pastors from recent cohorts exited the clergy in greater numbers than their white/male counterparts. If anything female clergy in recent cohorts was less likely to exit the clergy than male clergy. Female, Black, and Asian clergy from older cohorts which entered the ministry between 1970 and 1989 did leave the clergy at higher rates during the study period, however. Statistical analysis suggests that the higher exit rates in these groups resulted from their disproportionate placement in positions that had higher exit rates in all groups.

²Defined as congregations that report more than 40% nonwhite membership.

Annual Rate of Leaving the Clergy for 2006-2008



This figure shows the annual rate at which pastors left the UMC clergy for the years 2006-2008. Rates of leaving are calculated separately by year of seniority (points). A pastor's years of seniority correspond closely to their cohort. Corresponding three-year cohort windows are listed beneath the years of seniority.