

California-Pacific Annual Conference Profile

Prepared for the 2008 Western Jurisdiction Conference

a. Geographical location & description:

- The California counties of Imperial, Inyo, Kern (only that portion described as the Antelope Valley to the base of the Tehachapi Mountains and that portion extending easterly from the Sierra Nevada Mountains), Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara (excluding the town of New Cuyama), Ventura, and excluding the cities bordering the Colorado River (namely Blythe, Needles, and Fort Yuma,) and the entire State of Hawaii, the Territory of Guam and other territories of the United States in the Pacific Region.
- The Cal-Pac Conference includes beaches, mountains, islands, deserts, large urban areas, suburban communities, agricultural lands, and sparsely populated areas. The number of square miles covered by land and sea is huge, covering seven time zones and crossing the International Date Line.

b. Demographics:

Clergy Members	752*	Lay Members	87,300
○ Active elders	398	○ 0-99 members	123 churches
○ Active deacons	16	○ 100-199 members	100 churches
○ Probationers	56	○ 200-599 members	128
○ Licensed Local Pastor	66	○ 600-999 members	16
* Retired and on-leave included in 752, excluded below.		○ 1000-9999 members	6
		Churches	373

c. Conference Mission Statement:

To Be the Cup Overflowing in a spiritually thirsty, physically hurting world, so that all might “have life, and have it abundantly.”

- Overflowing with **Grace**: people being disciples to make disciples; people walking the Wesleyan Way, creating communities where “the least, the last and the lonely” may experience God’s transforming grace, are nurtured along their journey of faith, practicing Wesley’s Acts of Piety.
- Overflowing with **Compassion**: communities of believers being “the Body of Christ” in specific places of ministry, expressing God’s transforming compassion through Wesley’s Acts of Mercy.
- Overflowing with **Justice**: the Body of Christ fulfilling God’s prophetic call to speak truth to power on behalf of the powerless, so that grace, compassion and the life abundant may abound for all.

d. Political and Social Makeup:

- **Political environment**: complete spectrum of very liberal to quite conservative; slightly more registered Democrats than Republicans in California. Primary issues are: rapid growth and development combined with rising housing costs leading to displacement of lower-income families, plus the increase in commuting (and congestion) and therefore stress; immigration (documented and undocumented); homelessness; quality and accessibility of primary education; affordability of health care, growing concern for the environment, living wages; and violence (gang and juvenile).
- **Church trends**: there is wide theological diversity in the conference, bound together by a commitment to ministries of compassion and justice. Styles of worship cover the whole spectrum. Church membership continues to decline, however worship attendance is stable with modest growth. All congregations continue to struggle with financial commitments and aging physical infrastructures. A strong focus on the common mission of the Church is beginning to take hold, strengthened by successful management of shared long term pension commitments, leading to several bold initiatives focused on leadership and strengthening congregations. Diligent efforts in new church starts are still waiting to bear fruit. A delicate balance between the number of clergy and available appointments continues. A process of

accountability has been implemented for clergy and congregations (“Covenant for Vital Ministry.”) The concern over the nominal presence of young people in ordained leadership is accelerating. Response to the Council of Bishops’ invitation to join in reclaiming “the Wesleyan Way” has been positive.

- **Social environment:** the ethnic make-up of the Conference is extremely diverse, with strong continuing growth of Hispanics and Asians in the general population; African-Americans and Pacific Islanders continue to be significantly represented, with Anglos predominant in most U.M congregations. Every church is either in or within easy driving distance of areas of extreme poverty, highlighting the increasing gap between the upper and lower economic classes.
- **Ecumenical environment:** ecumenical and interfaith efforts are primarily focused at the local level in ministerial associations, ecumenical/interfaith councils or council of churches. The Conference has celebrated the new sharing of communion with the Lutheran church; Bishop Swenson meets her counterparts in other faith groups on a regular basis.

e. Financial status:

Apportionment receipts have risen from 77.5% in 1997 to 85.6% in 2006, the highest receipts since 1992. Giving per member continues to rise to \$845 per member. Apportionments as a percentage of local church giving has dropped from 20.14% in 1977 to 16.7% in 2006.

f. Issues:

- The primary issues of the annual conference transcend lay and clergy, and are issues of the whole Body of Christ. These include an aging population of professional (appointed) and volunteer (resident) leaders/members, plus a declining infrastructure in the midst of a young, exploding and extremely diverse population that is enamored of the newest and shiniest that the southern California culture epitomizes and makes readily accessible. The ideal question—“Can the UMC in this region move to the leading edge of spiritual leadership and social transformation?” is becoming reduced to “Will the UMC be evident in this region 25 years from now?”
- *Clergy issues:* stress in all its forms, evidenced by high insurance claim rates; conflicting desire for yet fear of genuine accountability, with an accompanying insistence on clarity of purpose and thus priorities for “what am I supposed to do that I will be held accountable for?”; doubt and therefore anxiety about the future capacity of the Church to meet its promises to current and future retirees; lack of fruitfulness in calling the next generation into discipleship, and then some into professional ministry.
- *Lay issues:* A strong desire for lay leadership training and development; a request for assistance in dealing with clergy who are partially or wholly ineffective; concern for the future well-being of local congregation; lack of fruitfulness in calling the next generation into discipleship, and then some into professional ministry
- *Conference strengths:* strong lay and clergy leadership at the local and connectional levels plus strong Episcopal leadership with strong support; growing clarity of vision and shared purpose; explicit desire to move forward and make a difference as The Church in its assigned region, especially on issues of social justice; extraordinary ethnic diversity with all its opportunities and challenges; a pattern of (relatively) strong apportionment support and special giving, compounded by the positive status of funding for pension obligations; often an excess of appointable clergy compared to openings.
- *Areas for improvement:* continue the shift from a survival mentality to one of abundance; strengthen the willingness to see liabilities (church property) as assets to be used creatively; need to eliminate a sense of entitlement among clergy, and of parochialism among congregational leaders (lay and clergy); need to radicalize a sense of shared responsibility for communications in an era of increasingly dense, high quality media.

g. Conference Episcopal Leader Expectations:

Resident Bishop Mary Ann Swenson is a strong, positive, dynamic leader who clearly shapes this Conference's expectations of future leadership. Therefore, this conference looks for someone who~

- Shows and practices a passion for healing the world.
- Builds the Kingdom of God, not a denomination.
- Sees him/herself working as part of a team, opening and inviting many to the table.
- Represents the church of the future, not of 30 years ago.
- Can propel the conference forward on its path to its own transformation and the transformation of the world.
- Is hands-on with the mission of the Conference.
- Acts decisively knowing the consequences.
- Engages young people in leadership, making pathways for them into leadership.
- Is willing to "turn the conference upside down."
- Is ready to get serious about ineffective pastors.
- Is willing to get arrested [for causes of justice.]
- Has a demonstrated capacity to think and implement outside the box.
- Is at least bi-lingual.
- Demonstrates self-care and care for the environment.
- Embraces diversity.
- Listens deeply.
- Stays connected (communicates readily, constantly.)
- Builds consensus and then acts boldly.

h. Nine Elements of the Jurisdictional Vision Statement

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1= mastered; 2=doing much of the time; 3=mixed results; 4=needs work; 5=no work begun;) What is your conference doing towards fulfilling the jurisdictional vision of~

- 3__ 1. A multicultural, inclusive church
- 3__ 2. Churches engaged in life of the community
- 2__ 3. Confident, effective leadership
- 4__ 4. Congregations forming disciples
- 2__ 5. Diverse ministry settings
- 4__ 6. Congregations living as global citizens
- 4__ 7. A church that thinks and acts regionally
- 3__ 8. Fully accessible churches
- 2__ 9. Ministry enhanced by technology