

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR PACIFIC ISLANDER UNITED METHODISM

### PREAMBLE

It is with utmost humility, respect and gratitude that Pacific Island United Methodists cross the threshold of the General Conference of The United Methodist Church as partners in the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We come responding to the call of the Great Commission “to go and make disciples of all nations,” (Mathew 28:19-20) and recognizing that the “local churches provide the most significant arena through which disciple making occurs.” (The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church – 2008, p.87). We come with the innate gifts and graces that have shaped and molded a holistic culture for thousands of years. Those same gifts and graces have carried us over the oceans and enabled us to practice and proclaim the love of the Risen Lord in our new home, the United States of America, and throughout the world. And though the universal challenges that define the experience of immigrants in a new land, plague our existence, we have joyfully endured. The following pages will tell our stories, and invite you to further enable our journey through partnering with us to better equip the Pacific Island United Methodist community to further the work of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

### BACKGROUND AND MANDATE

In 2008, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church responded to a petition from the Pacific Island United Methodist community with a vote to adopt *The Pacific Islanders Comprehensive Plan for Ministry Study*, (Study) designating the General Secretary’s Table to act on the following mandate:

The study will (1) research and study the needs in Pacific Island communities; (2) develop recommendations to address these needs; and (3) establish priorities on the funding of programs that would begin to develop ministries in the communities that would reach Pacific Islanders Americans. These findings would be presented as recommendations to the 2012 General Conference.

Funding and administrative oversight for the Study leading to final preparation of a ministry plan was assigned to the General Board for Global Ministries. The Comprehensive Plan for Pacific Island United Methodism represents the first comprehensive Plan submitted to the General Conference of The United Methodist Church seeking The United Methodist Church’s affirmation and support of Pacific Island United Methodists effort to strengthen their growing ministries and discipleship of Jesus Christ in the United States and globally.

## BACKGROUND ON OUR FAITH AND CULTURE

According to the 2010 US Census data, at least 1.1 million Pacific Islanders are here in the United States, and many of them have been here for approximately four decades with many of them arriving as recent immigrants. Pacific Islanders represent a rapidly growing population with diverse histories, cultures, languages, demographic profiles, including political associations to the U.S. government. Native Hawaiians are descendants of the indigenous peoples of the state of Hawaii but as US citizens they have full access to the privileges and entitlement programs associated with being a US citizen. In contrast, other Pacific Islanders are represented by the migrants from the US Territories—American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and Freely Associated States—Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Republic of Palau, as well as immigrants from independent Pacific Island countries—Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. Pacific Islanders born in the United States are full citizens while U.S. migrants of the Pacific Territories are able to travel freely into the country and often are employed in the U.S. without the requirement for a work permit. Immigrants from independent Pacific Island nations face the same challenges and regulations facing all foreign residents entering the United States, both in terms of length of stay and purpose of the visit.

The universal story of migration tells us that when people move to new places they take with them the traditions, culture, and languages of their native land. The people of the Pacific Islands brought with them to the United States of America the values that sustained their civilization for centuries. Paramount among those values is love of God. Though Christianity was the “foreigner’s” religion, much of its dogma and practices were already practiced by the Pacific islanders as part of their native customs and practices. Love of others, generosity, hospitality, respect, and reciprocity are seen as traditional values that have been strengthened by Christianity. These values are intrinsic to the cultural identity of Pacific islanders. Everyday life is perpetuated through a system of interaction between people, between people and the divine, and between people and the environment. In essence, there is great clarity on the notions of interdependence and harmonious relationships that permeate throughout all levels and interactions of the community.

Leaving the security of this communal context for a foreign land can be a very traumatic experience. Therefore, it is not uncommon for Pacific Islanders to move and settle in places where others of their kind have already settled. Alienated and removed from their native surroundings, Pacific Islanders have resorted to the most definitive aspect of their cultural heritage, communal life, in order to succeed in a new land. Perhaps, the most apparent manifestation of this form of communal living in the United States and elsewhere is the Church.

The ancient culture of the Pacific is founded on the value of reciprocity and mutuality. Each member of the community helps and supports each other in times of needs. It is the practice of each member doing their part, as the table will turn, and it will be done unto

them, as they did unto others. This system of reciprocity is the social and economic glue that holds the community together. In a setting where economic resources are scarce, it is the social currency that is exchanged by members of the community, and valued by everyone as critical in finding real meaning to life. Everyone is expected to contribute to the work of the community. Obligation to the corporate body is not viewed as a liability, but it is celebrated as an honor. Moreover, there are clear channels of relatedness which flows back and forth, and requires the practice of reciprocity in order to have an effective community. There is mutual cooperation and interdependence between members of the groups which give rise to the development of social and personal confidence and security for each member of the group.

The ethnic and cultural values of Pacific Islanders are affirmed and solidified in the way of Christianity. Pacific Island Christians truly believe that their identity, culture, and religious heritage, indeed, their way of life, is good and is where God is present and is at work. As a result, Pacific Islanders build churches wherever they settle. The Church becomes an affirmation of God's presence in their journey. In addition, the Church in their new surroundings becomes the kin group or the village that they have left behind. The local church is the new kin group that finds further interconnectedness within The United Methodist Church. The multiple significance and value of the Church to the Pacific Islanders ensures its existence in places where Pacific Islanders settle. As they go forth into new territories, they have practiced their way of living. Part of that way of life is being the Church. For Pacific Islanders being the Church is more than a Sunday affair. The Church cannot be separated from the community and the society. Pacific Islanders seek to re-establish this reality as they knew it in their native surroundings. Doing so will allow Pacific Islanders to become an integral part of the whole Church and whole society. Pacific Islanders bring a deep sense of commitment to offer their gifts and graces as contribution entire Church and the society.

### **A THEOLOGY OF RECIPROCITY AND MUTUALITY**

Theologians have had enlightening dialogue on the theology of mutuality, as a recognized school of thought. Pacific Islanders live out this theology of mutuality as a matter of practicality. To borrow from the writing of Rev. Dr Jacob S. Dharmaraj, an Asian American pastor and scholar, "This mutual indwelling has a circular structure wherein we are always living from God and toward God, as well as living from one another and toward one another." In this theology of reciprocity, Pacific Islanders are living from God, receiving the gift of life through salvation. The ultimate redemptive act of Jesus Christ dying on the cross deserves nothing less than the reciprocal act of giving one's life back to God. Indeed this notion of discipleship is the very basis of Christianity, but it has very functional ramifications within the Pacific Islander context, as it affirms the fundamental life practices of the Pacific Islands. Discipleship then becomes more than just another choice for life; it is the only choice.

Likewise, Pacific Islanders, as a matter of necessity, live “from one another and toward one another.” Pacific Island society was built on this notion of interdependence. People needed one another to live comfortably and safely, to avoid food shortage, and maximize labor. The life experiences that define the lives of first generation immigrants have mandated the interdependent practices that ensure the survival in this new setting in the USA. Pacific Islanders are able to face the ever present challenges of life in a new country by retreating to the ancient practices of reciprocity and mutuality that have been the lifeline of the Pacific Island society for generations. This social environment is shaping and molding a rich and resilient Pacific Island theology that is the basis for the strength of Pacific Island Methodism.

Pacific Islanders live out this theology consistent with the Pauline picture of a healthy, growing church.

Speaking the truth in love,  
we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,  
from whom the whole body, joined and  
knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped,  
as each part is working properly,  
promotes the body’s growth  
in building itself up in love. (Eph 4:15-17)

There is deep clarity in the concept of Christ as the head as it resonates with indigenous social orders that ensure harmony within the Pacific Island society. Members “grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” through the daily practice of worship, small groups, fellowships and personal devotions. The harsh immigrant social environment has forced Pacific Islanders to chart a new course for themselves in their new setting. It is a course that inevitably “knit together” the lives of Pacific Islander as they respond to God’s grace which promotes the body’s growth in love. The basic unit of Wesleyan theology, the small group, administered within the system of mutual interrelatedness, binds the members in a cohesive body. Pacific Islanders find refuge in the practices of corporate worship and prayer, wherein they celebrate their togetherness and the strength of their need of each other. Members celebrate the art of the oral culture in corporate prayer sessions, where exuberant and poetically colorful prayer offerings tell tales of God’s incarnate love and the people’s sheer dependence on that Love for life in this new setting. With assurance, people sing with abandoned joy, lifting members and visitors to the throne of grace with praise, prayer, and witness.

Times of fellowships and meals are inherently spiritual as they promote the body’s growth by making the mundane sacred. Meals are never just a time of eating, but it is always a time of sharing the journey through speeches that are littered with compulsive laughter and honest tears that make light of the challenges of life and reaffirm one’s place in the community, indeed in life. Meal times are times of celebration and feasting. The abundant display of food affirms the bountiful providence of God irrespective of the meager and scarce circumstances that make up the reality of most members’ life. It is always a

celebration of what God is able to do in the midst of countervailing circumstances. Hence, in the midst of the worse of economic recessions, Pacific Island hospitality overflows with abundance because their reality is not defined by current economic experts and trends, or by the theology of scarcity, but always by God's grace and the people's response to grace. This is the very essence of the theology of reciprocity. It is the knowledge borne out of a collective accountability between God and people and between the people themselves.

It is this theology of reciprocity and mutuality that informs Pacific Island stewardship. The practice of sacrificial giving is the standard in Pacific Island stewardship. In the Pacific Island context, stewardship is a non-negotiable and takes high priority. Pacific Islander knows what it is to "give until it hurts" as they give abundantly out of their meager resources. But this practice, is yet again, another manifestation of their living theology. God's ultimate incarnate gift of love came through the pain of the cross. In turn, we too must experience pain in giving our very best back to God. The result is a strange transformation that baffles outsiders as they attempt to comprehend the logic in giving all that a family has in order to support the church and other family obligations, knowing that there is nothing left for tomorrow. Herein lies the assurance of mutual accountability that is the basis of Pacific Island relationships. They know that in this system of reciprocity, they can give all that they have, for God will give it back to them in their times of needs.

The cross generational communal life in congregations seek to insure that the "whole body . . . [and] each part is working properly." There are clear channels of cross generational relationships that ensure order and cohesiveness within the body. Everyone is affirmed through this system of interactions between generations. The older generation is seen as an asset and their contribution is vital to the work of the church. They have the responsibility of passing their wisdom to the younger generation through conversations, speeches, worship, prayers, and other opportunities. These teaching opportunities are effective because the older generation speak with authority as they have already proven themselves through their work. Recognizing their role in the circular structure of life, the parent/adult generation affirms their responsibility to provide for the needs of the older generation and younger generation, as this is their time to be the provider in this reciprocal system. Once again, the responsibility and the obligation to provide the needed resources within the church and within the family are seen as an honor. There is deep appreciation for the elder generation that has brought us this far, and there is high aspirations and hope for what the younger generation will bring in the future. But always, there is the notion, that the current adult generation must show the way through action. The younger generation live out their time of learning and eventually following the living examples of the older generation. Knowing one's place in the whole body further ensures that there is peace and harmony among the individual parts. Youth socialize among peers, participate in athletic events, study and worship together to grow into Christ. While youth participate in their activities with adult advisers, parents and grandparents are visiting among themselves and younger siblings are playing alongside them.

Pacific Islander congregations are “knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped.” Pacific Island congregations live out their faith in organic units of kinship on the local level, within the local church. The need for fellowship and communal support leads to further connections among themselves nurtured in the currently limited Pacific Island regional and national gathering. Thousands of youth are building ties among themselves in assemblies at Easter, and on other occasions. Adults from the networks are growing in their partnerships with Annual Conferences, and are increasingly members of General Church Boards, Agencies, and special task forces. Youth are clear, they want to be part of the action along these fronts! Because Pacific Islanders speak the language of their own people, missional connections with their homeland offer inviting possibilities for other United Methodists to join them in strengthening ecumenical and missional efforts globally.

The bottom line in this biblical passage says that these qualities and efforts “promote the body’s growth in building itself up in love.” The connection is important to notice: “the body’s growth” happens “in,” or as a consequence of the body “building itself up in love.” Pacific Islanders often refer to one’s participation in the communal system of interaction as a sort of “work out” that allows one to get stronger and better at what one is doing, by the very act of participating in the action. Qualitative growth in love towards God involves participation in the very work that builds up the body. As they do so, Pacific Islanders nurture support and accountability relations in their communal life, and in their outreach among diverse people. Thus, by building themselves up in love **qualitatively**, they promote the body’s growth **quantitatively**. The very act of building themselves up in love leads to real transformation. While Pacific Islanders are transforming the world, they are making disciples of Jesus Christ.

### ASSETS

The Pacific Island culture and way of life are the very elements that fuel the growth of Pacific Island United Methodism. Methodism in the Pacific Islands dates back to 1822 when the Methodist Church of Australia sent its first missionaries to Tonga. Methodism grew in the Pacific Islands because, from its earliest days, Tongans themselves shared in the evangelization of not only Tonga but also of other islands in the region. The work of evangelization continues today, as Pacific Islanders find themselves in new settings, and seek to make their faith experience relevant and applicable to life in a new country and culture. This challenge has not hindered the growth of Pacific Island ministries in the United States. In fact Pacific Islanders have embraced United Methodism with fervor and passion and Pacific Island United Methodism has benefitted from the people’s sense of loyalty to God that was instilled in their native surroundings, and affirmed and reaffirmed in their life experiences. Pacific Islander live a life where the culture and faith come together to form a strong and resilient foundation that impels them to embrace United Methodism and all its charge. In these challenging times, a vibrant faith and resiliency borne out of a proven way of life, are needed assets for The United Methodist Church.

Pacific Islander live out their faith consistent with a theology of abundance, and this is an asset for The United Methodist connection as it struggles to meet overwhelming needs with scarce resources. As mentioned earlier, Pacific Islanders are not limited by existing resources. This is evidenced by the growth of the Pacific Island United Methodism in spite of the lack of the denomination's institutional financial support. Pacific Island ministries are built on the premise that God will provide the means to spread the gospel, and although, money is needed, it is not the basis for building ministries. The system of mutuality that undergirds the Pacific Island culture and life plays an important role in ensuring that everyone participates in the work of building the ministry.

For Pacific Islander, living out of a theology of abundance leads to overflowing hospitality. In response to shrinking resources, the church as an institution is sometimes seen as being remote and detached and Pacific Islanders can provide much needed lessons on hospitality, even in the midst of shrinking resources. It is commonly known that the work of growing church and effective mission and evangelization must be based on building effective relationships. Within the Pacific Islanders communal context, relationships are valued, and everyone is affirmed, and hence worthy of hospitality. And, is often is the case, when the end is affirmed and celebrated, the means always follows.

Pacific Island United Methodism will help ensure the growth of younger membership in The United Methodist Church. It is a known fact that membership in The United Methodist Church, particularly in the United States, is aging and declining. As mentioned earlier, one of the known facts about Pacific Island culture is that the younger generation is tied to the older generation through a system of mutual obligation. Membership in any faith community is a family affair that binds not only the parent, but every member of the family, resulting in younger members in the pews. The fact is that Pacific Island young people are in the church, and that is an asset for the United Methodist denomination.

Pacific Island United Methodism is an asset for The United Methodist Church as it will help to inform the Church's response to the growing global nature of the denomination. As The United Methodist Church becomes more of a global church, it will be important to affirm the pluralistic and diverse theologies employed by a diverse membership to give meaning and relevance to their faith journey. The global membership of The United Methodist Church defies any singular affirmation of a superior or right theological concept. Rather, in affirming the diverse interpretations and practices of Christian discipleship, the entire connection is affirmed and strengthened.

### **COMPELLING REASON FOR CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The creation of the Comprehensive Plan for Pacific Islander United Methodism is consistent with The United Methodist Church living out its mandate of "making disciples for the transformation of the world." The task of "making disciples" must involve an understanding of who the intended disciples are. Such an understanding will guide and

inform the process of “making disciples,” and will ensure that such a process is contextually appropriate, leading to a higher degree of effectiveness and success. Thus, the Comprehensive Plan for Pacific Islander United Methodism is the most effective tool to be used for the making of Pacific Island disciples who bring a wealth of assets to the denomination “for the transformation of the world.”

In the Pacific Island context, as stated earlier, the concept of kinship manifested through an interdependent relational order, is central to Pacific Island identity. The migration process, rather than destroying this reality, further solidified it. As Pacific Islanders found themselves dispersed in different parts of the world, they found ways of maintaining the kinship system, and as mentioned earlier, the church became one of the primary means of maintaining this system. It is from within this context that Pacific Island Methodism has flourished, as members find the strength to live out their Christian discipleship within this system of kinship. The United Methodist Church will benefit by adopting a comprehensive approach that can harnesses the strength that is found within Pacific Island Methodism. Harnessing this strength will enhance the viability of existing congregations and ministries, and more importantly, will provide a meaningful platform for Pacific Islanders to share this gift with the rest of the denomination. This requires a concerted effort to create a tool that is consistent with this important characteristic of Pacific Islanders, as it will enhance the ability of Pacific Islanders to make the most of this resource. The alternative of not having a comprehensive tool or plan will further isolate Pacific Islanders and add significant hardship to their efforts to form viable and effective ministries. Navigating the United Methodist structure can be a very daunting undertaking, particularly, for people who are new to the system. This will result in the loss of prospective growth in membership, and the loss of strength and assets that could have significant influence and impact on the denomination.

Another critical need for the creation of a comprehensive approach is help respond to the changing demographics within the Pacific Islander United Methodist community. As mentioned above, the kinship system remains strong and resilient, but there are life cycle changes that will inevitably alter this system. A comprehensive approach will live into these changes and find the most appropriate means for creating ministry even in the midst of changes. Annual conferences, agencies, and other players in the denomination, by themselves, will be ill prepared to proactively respond to these, and Pacific Islanders will be left at the mercy of goodwill and chance. An example of a changing demographic that provides compelling reason to create a comprehensive tool is the generational shift. As stated earlier, at present, Pacific Islander young people are sufficiently yokes to the parent generation through the relational system of reciprocity, and as a result, there is growing membership from Pacific Islander youths and young adult. A comprehensive plan will have the appropriate resources to proactively respond to the need of this sector of the membership and ensure that the denomination meets their needs and ensure their viability and growth. Investing in this process will bear hundred fold fruits, as there are strong growth indicators within this sector of the Pacific Island community.

The need to create a comprehensive tool for ministry was clearly identified by Pacific Island United Methodists as a major need. In the existing data compiled by this Study Group, the majority of the respondents indicated that Pacific Islanders should work together as a group in order to be more relevant through participation in the life of The United Methodist Church and to more effectively share their message with the larger church body. This is not a surprising find, as Pacific Islanders find strength in each other and in working together.

Another compelling reason for the creation of a comprehensive plan is grounded on the Wesleyan mandate to do good and do no harm. Pacific Island United Methodists are eager to become a vital part of The United Methodist Church and connection, but find themselves in a web of disorientation due to the differences in church structure, cultural context, language, and other associated barriers. The United Methodist Church structure is a quasi-political body that is driven by a variety of different forces and influences consistent with the Western social political paradigm. As first generation immigrants, Pacific Islanders find themselves outside of this paradigm which further entrenches their existence in the margins of The United Methodist Church. Creating a comprehensive tool to help bridge this gap is simply, “do(ing) good,” and will lessen the existing divide between United Methodist structure and Pacific Island Methodism. Christian hospitality is more than just opening the door, but requires an intentional effort to offer compassion and justice. The deep desire to achieve equity in The United Methodist Church is another of the basic findings in data collected by the Study Group.

The Pacific Islander’s deep desire to achieve equity in The United Methodist Church is a critical need. The journey from where they are now to a future where they are valued and feel that they have a space at the table must entail their participation in building mission and ministry with guidance and support of the denomination. To be effective, Pacific Islanders must take the lead in this dialogue and take the initiative in creating a platform where the task of working for equity is done. As a necessary means of self-determination, the comprehensive plan will allow Pacific Islander to participate in creating an effective tool for mission and ministry for Pacific Islanders. Such a tool will come out of the joint efforts of Pacific Islanders and United Methodists leaders, bringing together the best of the two worlds, and thus empowering all parties involved. Real equity occurs only when Pacific Islanders have had the appropriate training and guidance, allowing them to have fuller participation in the life of the church. The church is strengthened by the sharing of responsibility and power throughout the connection. This need is further affirmed in the data collected as Pacific Islanders recognize the need to work as full partners within the present system through voting and being active in church polity and discipline. Self-determination and participation leads to a higher level of accountability and responsibility from Pacific Island United Methodists.

Another reason for creating a comprehensive plan is to resource The United Methodist Church connection by providing a unifying approach for doing ministry and mission for Pacific Islanders. At present, Pacific Islander United Methodists remain true to structures

and practices from their home country, and without a comprehensive approach, United Methodist leadership will be at a disadvantage in trying to meet their needs which most likely have its basis in a variety of practices from the home country. Naturally, the structures and practices that Pacific Islander United Methodists have transplanted into The United Methodist Church are part of a complex web of cultural and social context that are not easily understood by others outside of the culture. The complexity deepens when we are dealing with several Pacific Islands with particular practices. A unifying approach takes into account these regional differences but provides a much needed bond using the organic values that are true to all people from Oceania. But perhaps, the most daunting challenge is that this is not merely about existing structures and practices, but, ultimately, it is about a way of life, and a particular ethos. Hence, the critical need for a tool that is created by those who understand that particular ethos and way of life, in partnership with denominational staff and resources.

### **PROCESS AND RESEARCH**

In the first year, a 10-member Planning Committee was formed to develop a work plan framework, identify priorities, collect and analyze data, and write the Comprehensive Plan for Pacific Islander United Methodism. Early on in the process, the Committee hired Dr. Sela V. Panapasa of the University of Michigan Research Institute to provide guidance as a consultant for the work of Committee. The Committee convened a total of 10 face-to-face meetings at selected church settings and conducted numerous conference calls. A scientific method and approaches were used to assure broad participation by church members and balanced information. Altogether five primary sources were used to obtain these resources—1) demographic profile of the overall Pacific Islander American population using national-level data collected by the US Census Bureau; 2) survey of the Pacific Islander American clergy and the local church; 3) General Board of Global Ministries database on the church communities where Pacific Islanders typically live and worship; 4) focus group interviews of Pacific Islander American UMC youth, women and men in selected geographical and Pacific Island sub-ethnic congregations - Fijian, Samoan, and Tongan; and 5) web-survey of The United Methodist Church Bishops in selected Conferences where the largest number of Pacific Islander United Methodist Church congregations resided and worshiped.

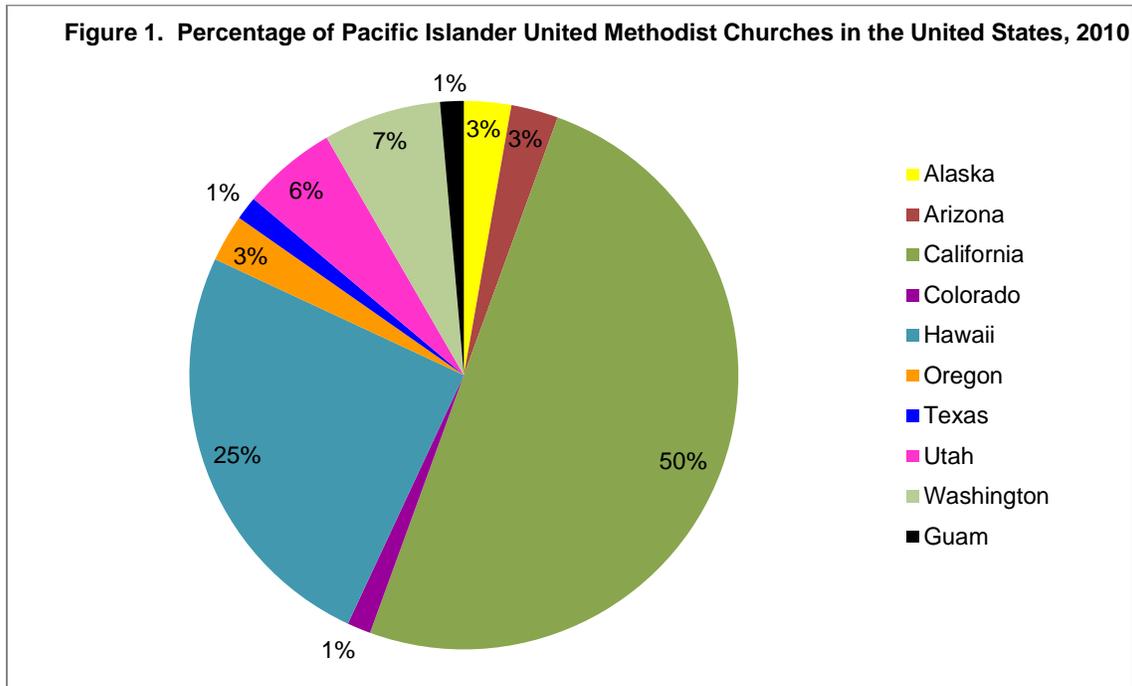
As the first comprehensive plan for Pacific Islander Americans and migrants, this comprehensive approach is designed to provide an overview of this faith population and offer concrete examples of the current realities and challenges facing Pacific Islander American United Methodists and local church communities. The 2010 US Census data serves as our starting point as it provides nationally representative demographic information and comparative statistics on the Pacific Islander population. Even this minimal amount of information was difficult to obtain in the past as prior to the 2000 Census, Pacific Islander Americans were aggregated with Asians, to form a broad Asian Pacific Islander category that did not adequately inform us on the composition of Pacific Island people. In 1997, this need was recognized by the federal government and the Office

of Management and Budget mandated that federal agencies collect and report data using the revised categories for race and ethnicity wherein Asians and Pacific Islanders were disaggregated into two categories—Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders.

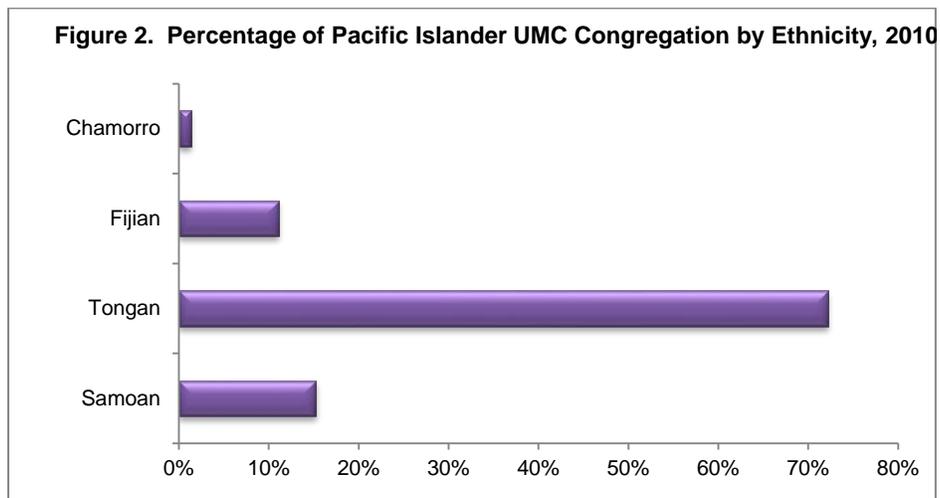
This change in policy has created new opportunities for understanding the status of Pacific Islander Americans and the information reflected in this report provide a first look at the lives of Pacific Islanders, most of whom remain immersed in their faith based communities. In February of 2010, during the Consultation on the Pacific Islander Ministry Plan and the Annual Pacific Islander National Caucus United Methodists, (PINCUM) meetings at Los Angeles, California, a survey was administered to the participating Pacific Island clergy. The purpose of the survey was to obtain Pacific Island clergy input for the Pacific Islander Comprehensive Plan and to learn about the state of Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches in the United States and their ongoing ministries. The Pacific Islander United Methodist Church clergy survey was administered to 31 clergy nationwide and was designed as a tool that allowed them to share in their perspectives about the core issues facing their congregations as well as to learn about the ministries and activities offered by their churches. The General Board of Global Ministries community information helped define the context of Pacific Islander United Methodist Church communities and added more detail to the basic information obtained from the 2000 Census data. The focus group interviews provided further in-depth information from Fijian, Samoan and Tongan congregants from 10 different church communities. These focus groups involved members of the congregations and asked them about the challenges and strengths that helped them affirm their faith. It also sought the insights of the laity on how they would like to help empower Pacific Islander United Methodists so they could more fully participate in the life of the Church and be agents of Christian love and service within the world community. Finally, The United Methodist Church Bishop web-interviews was designed to share in the Bishop's vision for the growing Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches and elicit their guidance on how Pacific Islander United Methodists Churches could be better integrated within The United Methodist Church, ensuring their full and active participation in their faith journey.

### **STATUS OF PACIFIC ISLANDER CONGREGATION AND CLERGY**

Overall there are 81 Pacific Islander United Methodist churches spread over 7 conferences—Alaska Missionary, California-Pacific, California-Nevada, Central Texas, Desert Southwest, Oregon-Idaho, Pacific Northwest, Rocky Mountain. Figure 1, presents the percent distribution of the total Pacific Island United Methodist churches across 10 states with 50% of the churches located in California followed by 25% in Hawaii and less than 10% located in the remaining states. As expected the result mimics the general distribution of the Native Hawaiian Pacific Island population and reinforces the geographical areas where Pacific Islander communities are most concentrated.



The Pacific Islander United Methodist Church congregations are primarily represented by four ethnic groups. According to Figure 2, Tongans have the largest percentage of congregations (72%) with Samoan (15%) and Fijians (11%) lagging behind and one Chamorro congregation based in Guam. These congregations typically worship in their native language. As a social people who have a tradition of helping each other, Pacific Islanders rely on the church not only to nurture their spiritual life, but also to act as a bridge to help them negotiate a better understanding of the services and information that are useful in their transition to US society. Further, the church community represents a powerful force that helps reinforce Pacific People’s island identify and preserve their cultural heritage and church traditions through customized in-language materials, music in the native language, and in-language training services.



## RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS

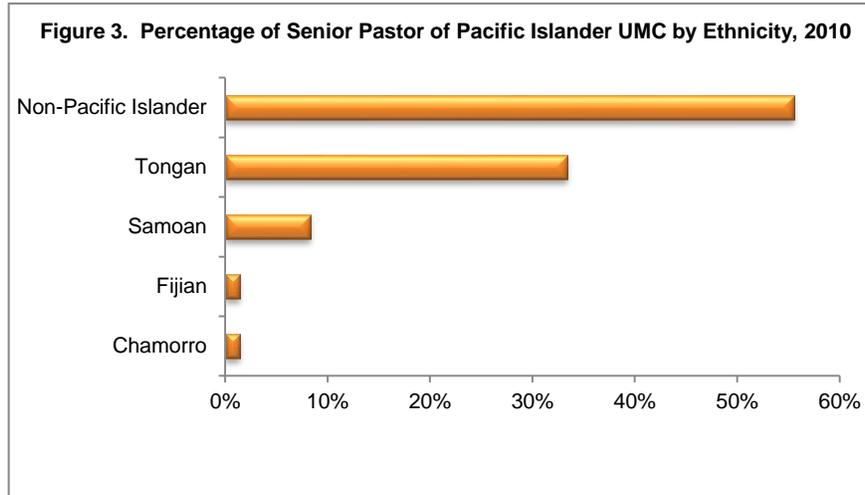
### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership Development is a critical need within the Pacific Islander United Methodist Church ministry. In general, Pacific Islanders have been here in the United States for approximately four decades with many of them arriving as recent immigrants. In line with that state of recent migration, we have a United Methodist Church Pacific Island ministry that is young and fluid. As a result, much of the Pacific Island ministry that exists today is a hybrid of ministry. It is similar to the ministry in the home country and remnants of The United Methodist Church structure and polity as practiced here in the United States. There is a wide gap between The United Methodist Church system as it is practiced and lived out and the Pacific Island United Methodists ministries as they exist here in the United States. This is due to the fact that the majority of the leaders, both lay and clergy, were trained in their native country, and have relied primarily on that training for the administration of the church. In fact, 78% of all practicing Pacific Island clergy were trained outside of the United States, and according to existing trend in education among Pacific Islanders, it can be expected that this pattern is replicated by the lay population.

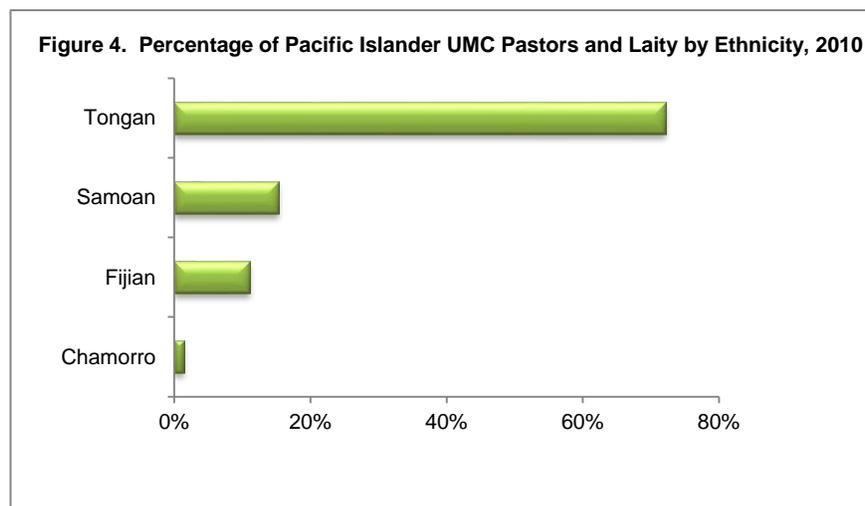
Pacific Islanders value self-determination and seek to participate in ministries. However, they are ill equipped to fully participate due to lack of knowledge and experience. As stated in other parts of this report, Pacific Islanders naturally desire to take on the responsibilities of being in ministry, but there is a wide gap between ministry as they know it, and ministry as it is administered here.

Pastoral leadership is key to building strong sustainable congregations. According to Figure 3, a majority of Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches are led by non-Pacific Islander senior pastors (56%), with 33% of the senior pastors being of Tongan ethnicity and less than 10% of pastors drawn from the Samoan, Fijian and Chamorro community.

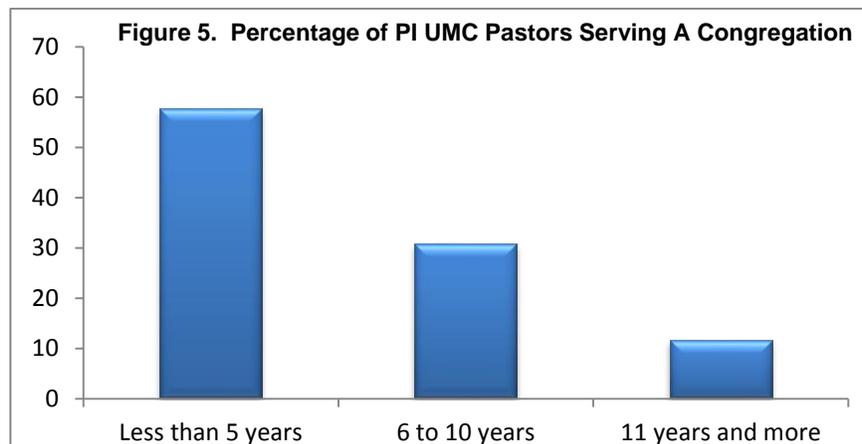
There are tremendous opportunities and a clear need to increase the number of senior Pacific Island pastors through training and new opportunities to serve growing Pacific Island population and communities, as well as The United Methodist Church at large.



As we would expect the distribution of Pacific Islander pastors reflects the number of church congregations by ethnicity. According to Figure 4 among the total number of Pacific Island United Methodist Church pastors and laity, 52% are Tongan, 15% Samoan 11% are Fijian while Chamorro are least represented among these Pacific Islander groups. As these populations are projected to continue to grow quite rapidly, there will again be a need to increase recruitment for Pacific Islander United Methodist Church pastors and there are numerous opportunities to provide adequate training and opportunities to encourage these individuals to serve in their communities.



There is considerable variation when we look at the pastoral experience among Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches pastors. As reflected in Figure 5, more than half of the Pacific Island pastors currently report having less than 5 years of serving a congregation compared to 31% reporting 6 to 10 years of service and only 12% reporting more than 11 years of experience as pastors of a congregation.



Major training events will occur twice in the 2013-2016 quadrennium. This is such a critical need among Pacific Islanders. It is essential that The United Methodist Church provide immediate and substantial attention to training. It is the key to the effectiveness and success of the Pacific Island ministry. Providing the education and sharing accurate information is only the beginning for bringing Pacific Island ministry into equal footing with the rest of The United Methodist Church. It is intended that clergy and laity from all of the existing Pacific Island congregations, ministries and fellowships will have access to this training, and thereby ensuring that the dissemination of information is wide spread and thorough throughout the Pacific Island United Methodist Church community.

In addition, the learning process is enhanced by making specific opportunities for learning and further education through the availability of grants. These grants will be available for further leadership development to be done on a smaller scale depending on needs and availability of training throughout the denomination.

## **YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Youth and young adult is a primary focus of the work of Pacific Island ministry. Existing Pacific Island ministry has provided more than a spiritual home for first generation Pacific Islanders. The church has also been the center of communal life thus ensuring that there is a continuity of cultural traditions, customs, and practices. The benefit of this reality is seen in the lives of the first generation Pacific Islanders. The church becomes a place of security, where one is nurtured spiritually and socially. In most instances, the Pacific Island church

is able to meet the spiritual and social needs of its adult members, but fail miserably in meeting the needs of the second generation. According to data gathered through the youth focus groups, it was clear that while the first generation have found everything within the four walls of the church, the youth and young people have sometimes wandered outside of the church to find a place to fit in and to find things to fill the deep need for belonging and affirmation. As second generation, they are rejected on several levels, beginning with the home, where the cultural clash leads the first generation to reject their second generation children, and even outside the home, in schools, work places, where the mainstream culture rejects them for being different. In the end, these second generation young people look into destructive means such as gang, substance abuse, violence, and sex, in order to feel accepted and affirmed. The result is seen in the entire existing Pacific Island ministry.

The focus of leadership development in this area will be directed to the specific needs of youth and young adults, as noted above. As a matter of necessity, it differs from the training that is directed at the clergy and laity of the church. It must be administered on different levels. And more importantly, the need is so great within this area. There needs to be a very intentional and concerted effort for the training and development of leadership among the young people, in order to begin to turn the dangerous tide of hopelessness that second and third generation Pacific Islanders are currently riding on.

On a more positive note, the training will ensure that second and third generation Pacific Islanders will maintain their denominational identity. The current trend is that the young people are members, and this is consistent with the Pacific Island traditional norms, which dictates that young people follow the practices of their parents, until they leave the home or get married. Hence, it is more critical to provide this sort of training as it will bring much needed clarity and meaning to the practice that these young people are obligated to endure. The end result will be that the young people will find that the church is relevant to their life experience, and not something that is completely removed from their life, but must be endured because of traditional obligation of obedience to parents. They will be able to continue to attend The United Methodist Church, and thereby follow the wishes of their parents, which is an important value among Pacific Islanders and also find relevancy in their faith experience. The United Methodist Church will benefit from having these young people become active.

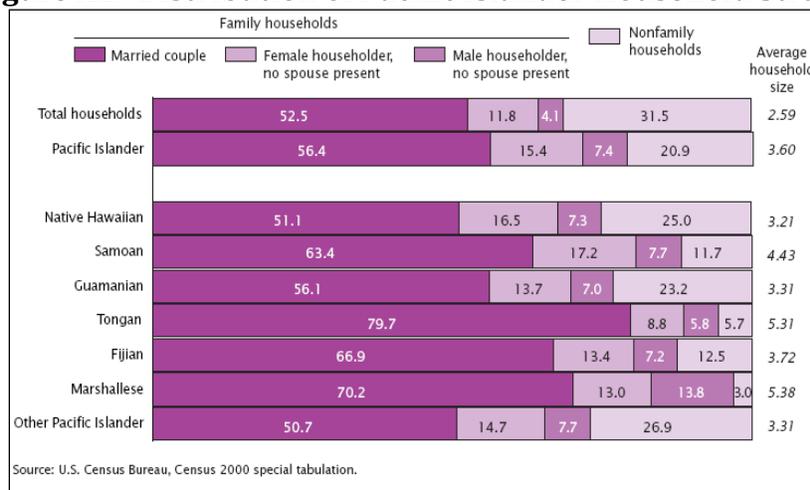
## **MINISTRY WITH THE POOR**

As first generation immigrants, Pacific Islanders identify themselves with the poor in this country and their needs align with the needs of the poor. As with any new immigrant group, there is great need among the new immigrants, as they transition from their native surroundings to their new surroundings with limited resources. The Church is, next to the family, the focal point of the Pacific Island immigrants' life. In light of that, the Church is in the best place to provide the resources that can be used to alleviate the effect of poverty in its member's lives, and even for people in the community. People newly arrived to the United States often need assistance in finding work and providing for their families. On a

more basic level they may need assistance in navigating their way through often complex governmental and community systems for things as simple as school enrollment to things as challenging as getting adequate health care for their families. These barriers can often become insurmountable when they are combined with a lack of English fluency and a reluctance to seek help alone. The church can play a vital role, not only in nurturing the spiritual needs of the community but also in assisting newly arrived members settle in their communities so they in turn can become productive members of the church itself. Poverty is an area where Pacific Islanders require considerable assistance as it is part of the vicious cycle of low education, low paying jobs and unmet needs that can trap families one generation after another.

Pacific Islander families typically live in married couple households often with immediate family members and extended relatives living in the home as well. Figure A2 presents the percentage of family households and household type among Pacific Islanders in 2000. It is reassuring to find that the majority of Pacific Islander family households have married couples as their foundation. Among Tongans this accounts for 80% of all households, among Marshallese it is 70%, among Fijians it is 67% and among Samoans 63% of all households had married couples as their foundation. What is striking in this figure, however, is the large size of Pacific Islander households compared to the national average. While the US as a whole reported an average household size of about 2.5 persons, Tongans and Marshallese household sizes were twice that with over 5 people on average per household while Samoans and Fijians reported an average of 4 people per household. Having large household sizes could be a positive experience as there are members within the household who could share in the responsibility of maintaining a home, but it could just as easily be a burden on the household heads in terms of care and expenses incurred by the household if all members are not contributing to its upkeep in some way.

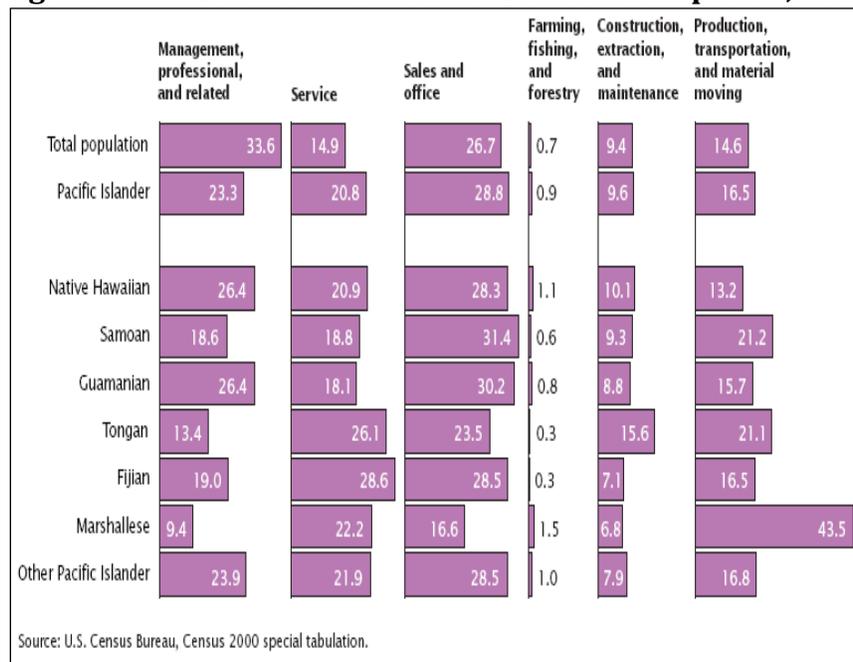
**Figure A2. Distribution of Pacific Islander Household Structure, 2000**



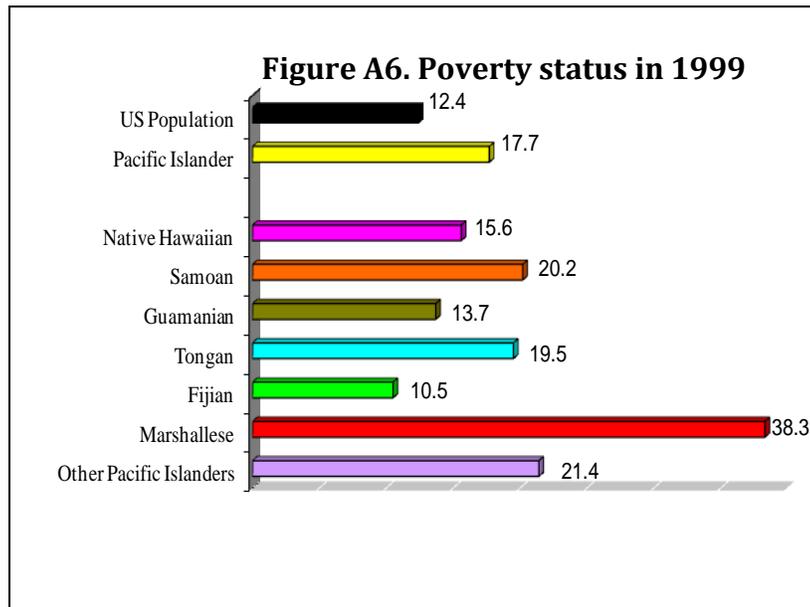
Like education, employment rates and the type of job a person has can significantly influence their lives and their ability to care for a family and contribute to their faith

community. Looking at Figure A4, it can be seen that the majority of Pacific Islanders are employed in the service, sales and office sectors with a high percentage of Marshallese, Tongans and Samoans involved in production, transportation and material moving, and 16 percent of Tongans involved in construction. In contrast, Pacific Islanders are considerably less likely to be found in the more economically rewarding activities such as management and professional positions. While over a third of the US reported they worked in these areas as of 2000, less than a quarter of Pacific Islanders were employed in these kinds of positions.

**Figure A4. Distribution of Pacific Islander Occupation, 2000**



Education and employment are directly related to economic stability and opportunities to grow and develop in American society. Pacific Island people continue to lag behind much of the US in these areas and as a consequence they are at greater risk of poverty and unmet needs. Looking at Figure A6, a much higher percentage of Pacific Islanders live below poverty when compared to the total population. While 12.4% of the US lives in poverty on average, almost 18% of all Pacific Islanders lived in poverty. By Pacific Islander ethnicity this difference is even starker with 34% of Marshallese living in poverty and about 20% of all Tongans and Samoans existing in an impoverished state. This is very problematic and suggests there is often a great need for services and support in areas where Pacific Islander Americans live.



The following is a summary of the resources that the church can provide as part of its ministry with the poor, with particular emphasis on the needs of Pacific Islanders: English as Second Language, job training, computer classes, Immigration, financial planning, tax preparation. The critical thing here is to meet these people's needs where they are. As they evolve, their needs will evolve as well, and we will respond to them accordingly. This fund will be administered through grants, and congregations and ministries will request for specific projects.

## HEALTH

Pacific Islanders have great health challenges. The change in lifestyle and food intake has led to disturbingly high rates of serious chronic illness, including congestive heart disease, hypertension and diabetes among Pacific Islanders and yet, they are among the highest number of uninsured people in the United States. The church can be part of the solution in trying to end this downward spiral of quality of life due to bad health and end to this cycle so that it does not affect the second generation in the same critical way. In addition, as this first generation of immigrants age, they have pressing health care needs. The church needs to play a major role in ministering to the Pacific Island people in this area. Much of the work of prevention and education can be administered as part of the church's programmatic work for its members, as well as outreach to the community at large. The church is the center of life for most Pacific Islanders and therefore people would naturally be inclined to get this information from church, if the church has the resources to provide it. In addition, most Pacific Island immigrant churches are located in economically depressed areas and, therefore, this service would be an excellent outreach tool to the community as well.

Language is a big hindrance for immigrants and acts to discourage people from getting the help that they need. Although this is true for all needs, such as ministry with the poor and other areas, it is critical in areas of health, as it could have the effect of saving lives. Having access to information in their native language is important especially in areas of dire need, such as critical health problems and thus will have a lifesaving effect.

Little is known about the health among Pacific Islanders, due in large part to limitations found in nearly all national data collections which routinely fail to report any information on these populations. An accurate assessment of morbidity and mortality among Pacific Islander has also been hampered by the practice of aggregating their results with Asians. While this increased their sample sizes, it also made it impossible to look at heterogeneity within this diverse population (Takeuchi & Yong, 1994; Srinivasan & Guillermo, 2000; Ro & Singer 2007; Panapasa et al, 2008). Still, with a growing federal emphasis on addressing health disparities among minority populations, the reporting of health outcomes among Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islander's has improved in recent years. Reports suggest Pacific Islanders face elevated risks for cardiovascular disease (Mau et al, 2009), cancer (Goggins & Wong, 2007; Miller & Chu, 2008), obesity and diabetes (Chai et al, 2003; Baruffi et al, 2004; Davis et al, 2004;), and mortality across the life course (Braun et al, 1997; Cho et al, 2001; Panapasa et al, 2010). However, baseline health statistics from larger national data bases on specific health issues remain sparse and represent a vital element to inform policies on Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander health and well-being.

These concerns will only increase with the growth of Pacific Islander populations in the United States. Several years ago the US Census Bureau estimated that the NHPI population would exceed 1 million people as of 2007 and with the recent administration of the 2010 Census we will soon be able to verify the actual growth of our people since the year 2000. Regardless of overall growth however, the challenges to health among Pacific Islanders is well established and it is only a question of the actual number of people who actually face these concerns. As Pacific Islanders have among the highest proportion of uninsured people in US, their ability to both seek and obtain adequate health care, particularly preventative care is significantly limited (KFF & APIAHF, 2008). The health literature has shown repeatedly that people who lack health insurance will often defer seeking medical help until they are very sick and therefore more difficult to treat and to cure. Uninsured persons are also more likely to lack a regular doctor and to use emergency rooms for treatment often meaning that they lack an established relationship with a health care provider who understands their needs and their past medical history. This pattern of poor care and late treatment is a particular concern for Pacific Islanders. They often engage in physically demanding and dangerous work such as unskilled labor, construction and landscaping which carries with it increased risks for job related injuries and long term disability.

Of even greater concern is the established fact that Pacific Islanders have disturbingly high rates of highly debilitating chronic illness including congestive heart disease, hypertension

and diabetes (Cho & Hummer, 2001; Williams & Mohammed, 2008). These diseases are not only progressive in terms of the harm they do to the health of the individuals, but they also require ongoing monitoring by health care professionals. Without adequate health care and access to medications these kinds of diseases so common among Pacific Islanders only get worse and ultimately lead to heart attacks, strokes, amputations and death. Similarly, Pacific Islanders are seriously challenged by problems associated with obesity. Being excessively overweight not only increases the risks of heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes, it also negatively impacts a person's quality of life at almost all levels from self-esteem to simply getting outside and enjoying a walk in a park.

Grants will be made available for health projects within the Pacific Island United Methodist Churches community. There are a variety of needs depending on areas and existing community health resources in those areas. Hence, it would be best to make funds available through grants and each congregation/ministry can respond to this need in the best possible form.

### **CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Developing new congregations and revitalizing existing congregations is a priority for the Pacific Island ministry. Thus far, we have managed to maintain existing church communities that have for the most part been transplanted from the home country. In most instances, people found themselves in communities that were shaped according to family, village, and regional ties from the home countries, and, therefore, it was easy to bind them together in church through their existing affiliation. Thus far, there has not been an intentional effort at developing and starting new congregation. The growing Pacific Island population and the changing demographics within that population require the church to respond to it by finding the appropriate means for developing new Pacific Island congregations. Congregational development must be a response to organic needs within the community and cannot be a one size fit all approach. It is critical for Pacific Islanders to find the appropriate means of developing congregations and seek out the best practices for doing the critical work within the context of the Pacific Island people and community. This is a big challenge to the work of the Comprehensive Plan, and demands substantial resources to ensure that this work is done. The Plan envisions starting up and revitalizing 10 new and existing congregations within the next quadrennium.

### **LANGUAGE RESOURCES**

As recent immigrants, Pacific Islanders have great language resources needs. The majorities of Pacific Islanders speak only their native language and understand very limited English. However, their numbers are not sufficient enough to demand much attention from local government and existing community resources. Therefore, there are no or very little resources available to them. The church once again can be instrumental in providing resources in this area. Currently, there are no existing United Methodist Churches

resources in any of the Pacific Island languages. Most of the existing congregations rely on resources from their home country for their day to day needs here in the US.

### **CHURCH AS COMMUNITY**

In the Pacific Island context, the church is the community and the family is the community. This is certainly a gift and we want to use it to further the work of the church. We would like to enhance the role of the churches in this area by being able to provide resources that will ensure the preservation of this value within the Pacific Island community. At the same time, this very notion can become a hindrance to growth in this new setting. Recognizing that this is a gift that Pacific Islanders can offer to the denomination and to the community here, exploring ways that the Pacific Islander culture and tradition can be made relevant to this new setting and thereby contribute to its preservation in the long run. Possible projects include parenting, elderly care, domestic violence, and cultural knowledge and preservation.

### **ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

In order to implement the Comprehensive Plan for Pacific Island United Methodism, a committee will need to be established. It is recommended that the committee be composed of the following:

- Two (2) persons from each of the related Pacific Island Sub-ethnic groups (currently approximately 10 persons)
- One (1) Staff of the Office of Asian Pacific Ministries of the General Board of Global Ministries
- One (1) Staff of the Pacific Islanders National Caucus United Methodists
- Other persons as needed (to be determined by the Committee)

The committee will meet at least annually to:

- Determine the ministries that will be developed for that current year.
- Recommend funding for new or continuing projects.
- Develop guidelines and policies for the use of the funds.
- Develop reports of the ministries that are in process.
- Evaluate projects funded.
- Recommend changes in order to accomplish the work.
- Support each other's work.
- Develop recommendations for the following quadrennium.

**BUDGET****2013-2016 PACIFIC ISLANDER NATIONAL PLAN FOR UNITED METHODISM - Draft**  
**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

2013 Training Event	\$ 40,000	
2015 Training Event	40,000	
Grants (Conferences, Ethnic Groups, Women, Churches, etc.)		100,000
Training Scholarships (Cong. Dev., Christian Education, etc.)		<u>20,000</u>
		\$180,000

**YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMS**

Scholarships to Attend Youth Events	15,000	
Youth/Young Adult Training	15,000	
Develop Pacific Islander Education Resources	10,000	
Youth Education and Outreach (Gang Intervention , Substance Abuse, Teen Pregnancy, etc.)		<u>20,000</u>
		60,000

**MINISTRY WITH THE POOR**

Training on Outreach Ministry with the Poor	15,000	
Training Resources (language specific)	5,000	
Grants to Churches Providing Ministry with the Poor	<u>40,000</u>	
		60,000

**HEALTH**

Training on Healthy Living (language specific) (Prevention, Diabetes, Hypertension, etc.)		20,000
Grants to local churches/community services (Parish Nursing/Health Services as Community Outreach, etc.)		35,000
Resource Development (language specific)		<u>5,000</u>
		60,000

**CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Plant new congregations/strengthen existing congregations (20 @ \$10,000)	200,000	
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**LANGUAGE RESOURCES**

Translate/create Resources in Pacific Islander languages (Stewardship, Polity translation, class/small group, Youth material, PI Curriculum for youth, discipleship, training material in languages – Tongan, Samoan, Fijian)	40,000	
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**CHURCH AS COMMUNITY**

Train churches to provide services to the community (Parenting, elderly care, domestic violence, cultural	20,000	
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knowledge, etc.)		
Grants to churches providing community services	<u>25,000</u>	45,000

**ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES**

Program Support Services	\$ 75,000	
Administrative Expenses (Committee Meetings, etc.)	35,000	
Consultant Services	<u>45,000</u>	145,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b><u>\$790,000</u></b>

**STATISTICAL REPORT ON PACIFIC ISLAND**  
**By Dr. Sela V. Panapasa**

**SOME BASIC FACTS**

Pacific Islanders represent a rapidly growing population with diverse histories, cultures, languages, demographic profiles, including political associations to the U.S. government. Native Hawaiians are descendants of the indigenous peoples of the state of Hawaii but as US citizens they have full access to the privileges and entitlement programs associated with being a US citizen. In contrast, other Pacific Islanders are represented by the migrants from the US Territories—American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and Freely Associated States—Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Republic of Palau, as well as immigrants from independent Pacific Island countries—Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. Pacific Islanders born in the United States are full citizens while U.S. migrants of the Pacific Territories are able to travel freely into the country and often are employed in the U.S. without a the requirement for a work permit. Immigrants from independent PI nations face the same challenges and regulations facing all foreign residents entering the United States, both in terms of length of stay and purpose of the visit. Figure 1 is a map of the Pacific illustrating the origins of Pacific Islanders residing in the United States.

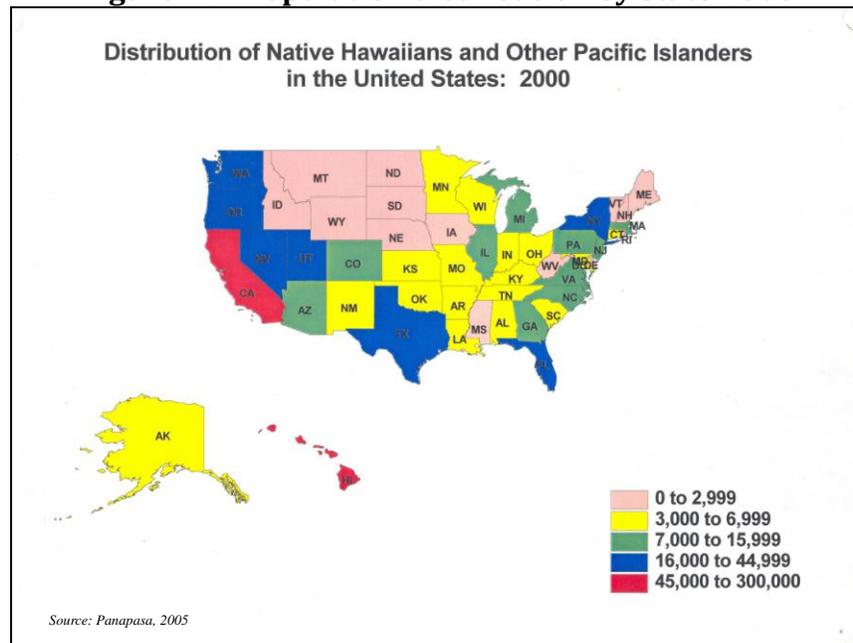
Figure 1. Map of the Pacific Islands



*Population growth—geographically, ethnically (more subgroups), numerically*

**1.1 Pacific Islander Population Distribution.** According to the 2000 census, there were approximately 874,000 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (NHPIs) or 0.03 percent of the total population in the United States excluding its Pacific Territories (US Census 2005). Although they live in every state, Pacific Islanders are primarily concentrated in states making up the Western Region—Hawaii, California, Washington, Arizona, Utah and Nevada, as well as select states in the Northeast—New York and the South—Florida and Texas as illustrated in Figure A1. A review of population data also shows a marked potential for the growth and expansion of PI United Methodist Churches into the Northeast and South, as well as the West due to their increasing proportion of Pacific Islanders.

**Figure A1. Population distribution by State 2000**



**1.2 Ethnic Diversity.** Few people fully recognize the ethnic and cultural diversity inherent among Pacific Islanders. Table 1, presents a breakdown of Pacific Islanders living in the U.S. in 2000 into three categories—Polynesian, Micronesian and Melanesian. Each ethnic group has a distinct language and culture that is widely celebrated and represents the importance they feel for defining their own group's identity. Since the introduction of Christianity to the Pacific, these unique elements have become fully integrated into the spirituality of Pacific Islanders, with worship, prayer and praise fully integrated in the native language and the cultural beliefs of the people [CITE]. This work began with the early arrival of the missionaries who almost immediately sought to translate the Bible (often the King James Bible) and Hymnals into the native language.

Table 1 presents a detail breakdown of the NHPI population enumerated in 2000.

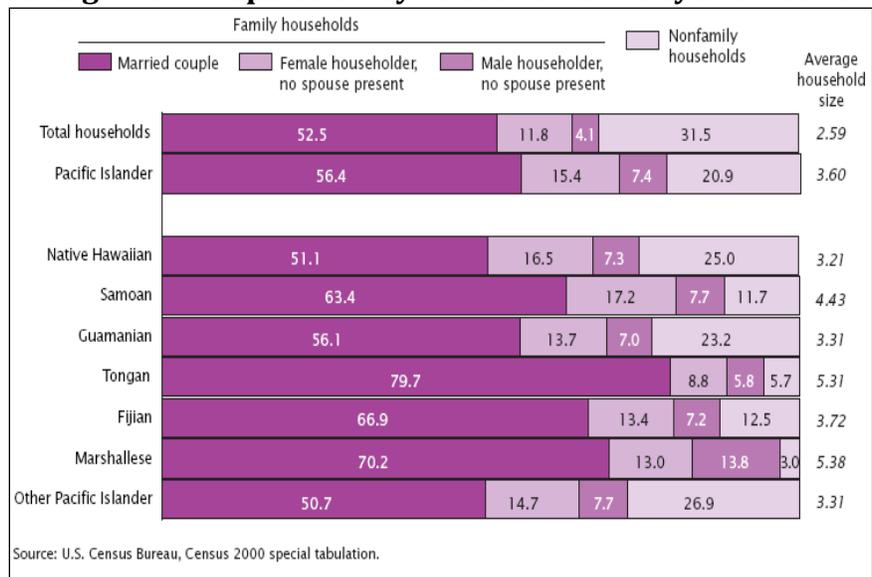
<b>Table 1. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Population, 2000</b>	
Total US Population	281,421,906(100%)
Total NHPI Population	874,414 (0.03%)
<b>Polynesian</b>	
Native Hawaiian	401,162
Samoan	133,281
Tongan	36,840
Tahitian	3,313
Tokelau	574
Other Polynesian	8,796
<b>Micronesian</b>	
Guamanian or Chamorro	92,611
Mariana Islander	141
Saipanese	475
Palauan	3,496
Chuukese	654
Yapese	368
Marshallese	6,650
I-Kiribati	175
Other Micronesian	9,940
<b>Melanesian</b>	
Fijian	13,581
Papua New Guinean	224
Solomon Islander	25
Ni-Vanuatu	18
Other Melanesian	315
Other Pacific Islander	174,912

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000. Census 2000 Brief, C2KBR/10-4

**1.3 Pacific Islander Immigrants.** Immigration issues continue to be a issue of particular importance and often significant challenge to churches that minister to Pacific Islander communities. According to Figure A5 Pacific Islanders began entering the U.S. before the 1970s. The biggest migration waves occurred in the last decade, this is particularly true for

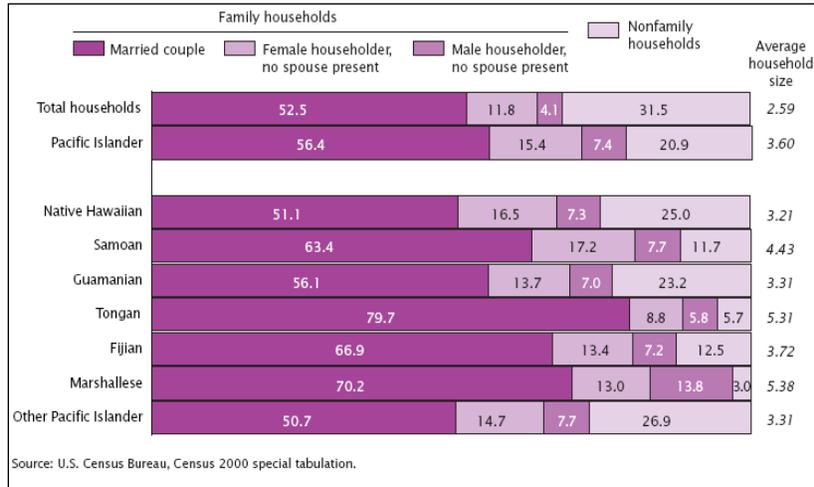
Guamanians, Fijians and Marshallese. Comparatively, Samoans and Tongans have had stayed longer in the US.

**Figure A5. Foreign-Born Population by Race and Ethnicity and Year of Entry, 2000**



**1.3. Households and Families.** Pacific Islander families typically live in married couple households often with immediate family members and extended relatives living in the home as well. Figure A2 presents the percentage of family households and household type among Pacific Islanders in 2000. It is reassuring to find that the majority of Pacific Islander family households have married couples as their foundation. Among Tongans this accounts for 80% of all households, among Marshallese it is 70%, among Fijians it is 67% and among Samoans 63% of all households had married couples as their foundation. What is striking in this figure, however, is the large sized of Pacific Islander households compared to the national average. While the US as a whole reported an average household size of about 2.5 persons, Tongans and Marshallese household sizes were twice that with over 5 people on average per household while Samoans and Fijians reported an average of 4 people per household. Having large household sizes could be a positive experience as there are members within the household who could share in the responsibility of maintaining a home, but it could just as easily be a burden on the household heads in terms of care and expenses incurred by the household if all members are not contributing to its upkeep in some way.

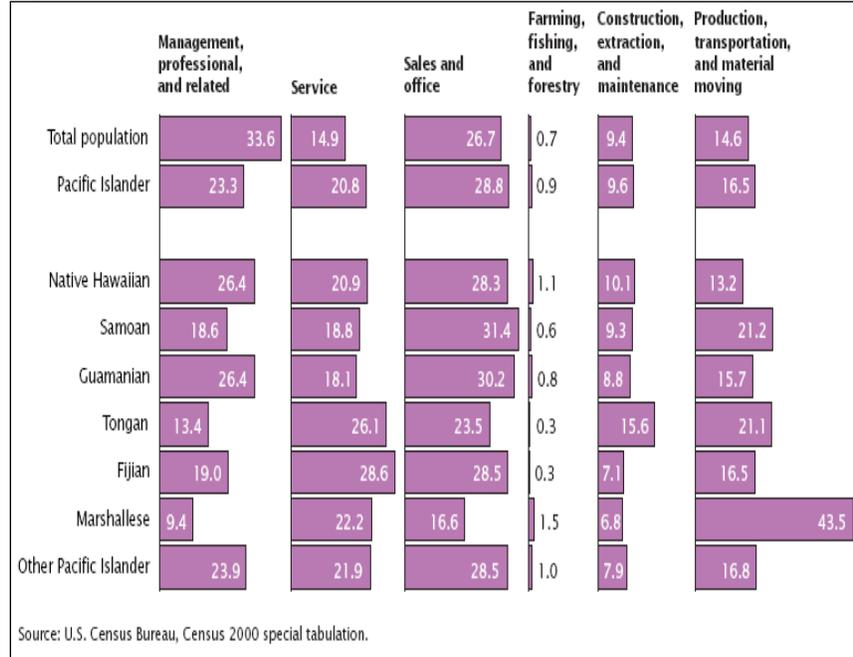
**Figure A2. Distribution of Pacific Islander Household Structure, 2000**



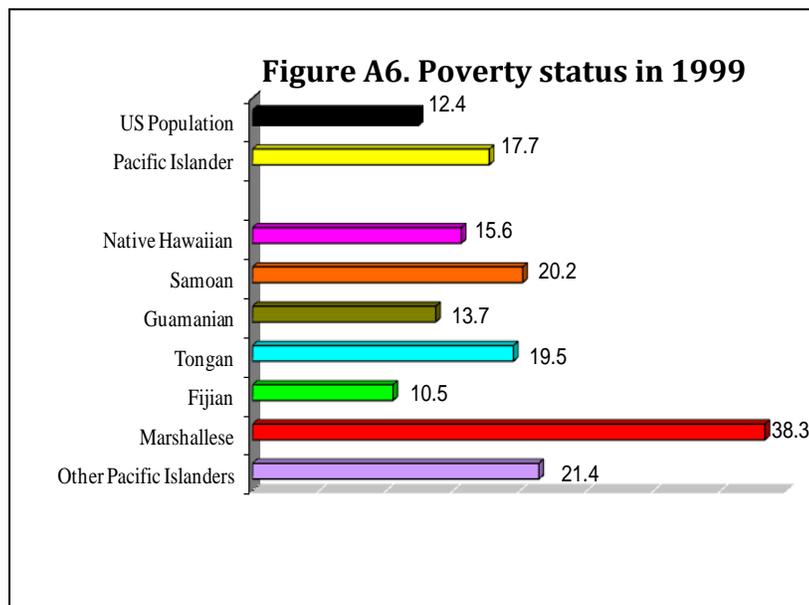
*High Risk of Poverty and Vulnerability—low socioeconomic status, service occupations, low educational attainment, high percentage of uninsured*

**1.5 Occupational Status.** Like education, employment rates and the type of job a person has can significantly influence their lives and their ability to care for a family and contribute to their faith community. Looking at Figure A4 it can be seen that the majority of Pacific Islanders are employed in the service, sales and office sectors with a high percentage of Marshallese, Tongans and Samoans involved in production, transportation and material moving, and 16 percent of Tongans involved in construction. In contrast, Pacific Islanders are considerably less likely to be found in the more economically rewarding activities such as management and professional positions. While over a third of the US reported they worked in these areas as of 2000, less than a quarter of Pacific Islanders were employed in these kinds of positions.

**Figure A4. Distribution of Pacific Islander Occupation, 2000**



**1.7 Poverty Status.** Education and employment are directly related to economic stability and opportunities to grow and develop in American society. Pacific Island people continue to lag behind much of the US in these areas and as a consequence they are at greater risk of poverty and unmet needs. Looking at Figure A6, a much higher percentage of Pacific Islanders live below poverty when compared to the total population. While 12.4% of the US lives in poverty on average, almost 18% of all Pacific Islanders lived in poverty. By Pacific Islander ethnicity this difference is even starker with 34% of Marshallese living in poverty and about 20% of all Tongans and Samoans existing in an impoverished state. This is very problematic and suggests there is often a great need for services and support in areas where Pacific Islander Americans live.



*High Risk of Mortality and Chronic Diseases eg. obesity, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, heart disease and disability*

**1.8 Health Results.** Little is known about the health among Pacific Islanders, due in large part to limitations found in nearly all national data collections which routinely fail to report any information on these populations. An accurate assessment of morbidity and mortality among Pacific Islander has also been hampered by the practice of aggregating their results with Asians. While this increased their sample sizes, it also made it impossible to look at heterogeneity within this diverse population (Takeuchi & Yong, 1994; Srinivasan & Guillermo, 2000; Ro & Singer 2007; Panapasa et al, 2008). Still, with a growing federal emphasis on addressing health disparities among minority populations, the reporting of health outcomes among NHOPi's has improved in recent years. Reports suggest Pacific Islanders face elevated risks for cardiovascular disease (Mau et al, 2009), cancer (Goggins & Wong, 2007; Miller & Chu, 2008), obesity and diabetes (Chai et al, 2003; Baruffi et al, 2004; Davis et al, 2004;), and mortality across the life course (Braun et al, 1997; Cho et al, 2001; Panapasa et al, 2010). However, baseline health statistics from larger national data bases on specific health issues remain sparse and represent a vital element to inform policies on Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander health and well-being.

These concerns will only increase with the growth of Pacific Islander populations in the United States. Several years ago the US Census Bureau estimated that the NHPI population would exceed 1 million people as of 2007 and with the recent administration of the 2010 Census we will soon be able to verify the actual growth of our people since the year 2000. Regardless of overall growth however, the challenges to health among Pacific Islanders is well established and it is only a question of the actual number of people who actually face these concerns. As Pacific Islanders have among the highest proportion of uninsured people in US, their ability to both seek and obtain adequate health care, particularly preventative care is significantly limited (KFF & APIAHF, 2008). The health literature has shown repeatedly that people who lack health insurance will often defer seeking medical help until they are very sick and therefore more difficult to treat and to cure. Uninsured persons are also more likely to lack a regular doctor and to use emergency rooms for treatment often meaning that they lack an established relationship with a health care provider who understands their needs and their past medical history. This pattern of poor care and late treatment is a particular concern for Pacific Islanders. They often engage in physically demanding and dangerous work such as unskilled labor, construction and landscaping which carries with it increased risks for job related injuries and long term disability.

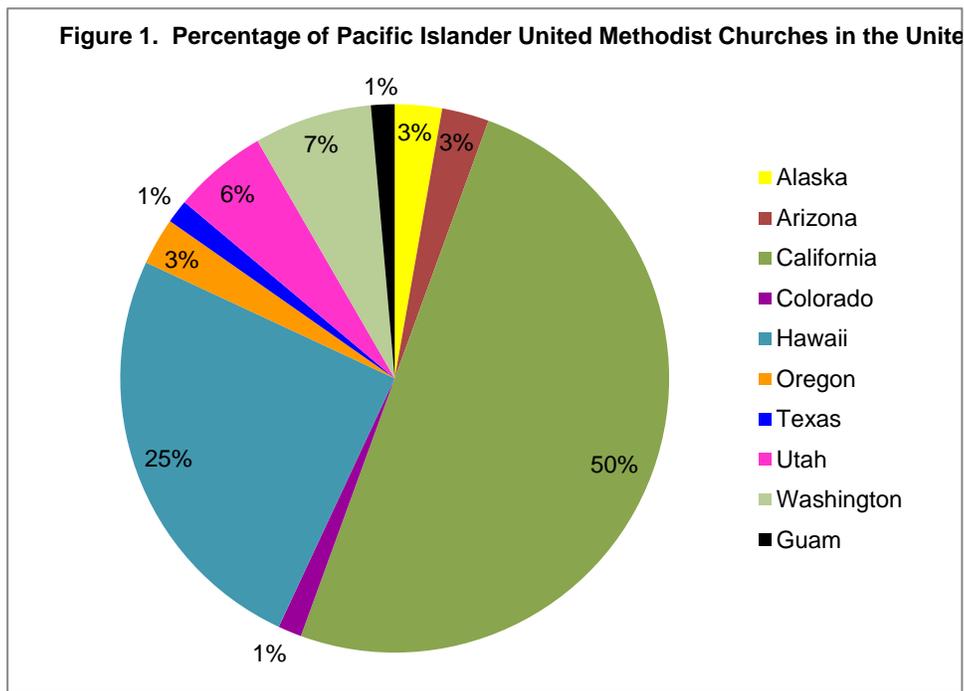
Of even greater concern is the established fact that Pacific Islanders have disturbingly high rates of highly debilitating chronic illness including congestive heart disease, hypertension and diabetes (Cho & Hummer, 2001; Williams & Mohammed, 2008). These diseases are not only progressive in terms of the harm they do the health of the individual, they also require ongoing monitoring by health care professionals. Without adequate health care and access to medications these kinds of diseases so common among Pacific Islanders only

get worse and ultimately lead to heart attacks, strokes, amputations and death. Similarly, Pacific Islanders are seriously challenged by problems associated with obesity. Being excessively overweight not only increases the risks of heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes, it also negatively impacts a person’s quality of life at almost all levels from self esteem to simply getting outside and enjoying a walk in a park.

*Capacity Building—PI clergy, PI leaders within The United Methodist Church Connection, Empowering PI youth, women, men and families to effectively grow spiritually within the church.*

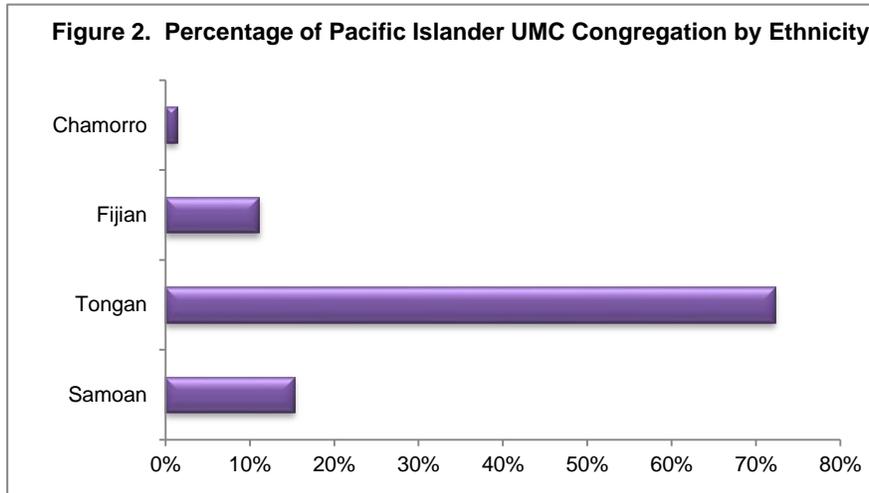
**2. Survey of PI Clergy and Laity Input.**

**2.1 Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches Clergies.** Overall there are 72 Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches spread over 7 districts—Alaska Missionary, California-Pacific, California-Nevada, Central Texas, Desert Southwest, Oregon-Idaho, Pacific Northwest, Rocky Mountain. Figure 1, presents the percent distribution of the total PI United Methodist Churches across 10 states with 50% of the churches located in California followed by 25% in Hawaii and less than 10% located in the remaining states. As expected the result mimics the general distribution of the NHPI population and reinforces the geographical areas where Pacific Islander communities are most concentrated.

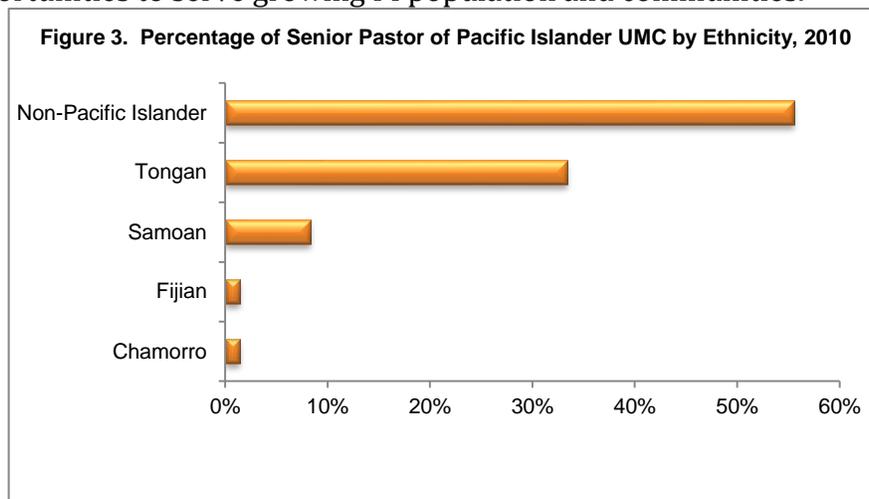


**2.1.2 Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches Congregations.** The Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches congregations are primarily represented by four ethnic groups. According to Figure 2, Tongans have the largest percentage of congregations (72%) with Samoan (15%) and Fijians (11%) lagging behind and one Chamorro congregation based in Guam. These congregations typically worship in their native language. As a social people

who have a tradition of helping each other, Pacific Islanders rely on the church not only to nurture their spiritual life, but also to act as a bridge to help them negotiate a better understanding of the services and information that are useful in their transition to US society. Further, the church community represents a powerful force that helps reinforce Pacific People’s island identify and preserve their cultural heritage and church traditions through customized in-language materials, music in the native language, and in-language training services.

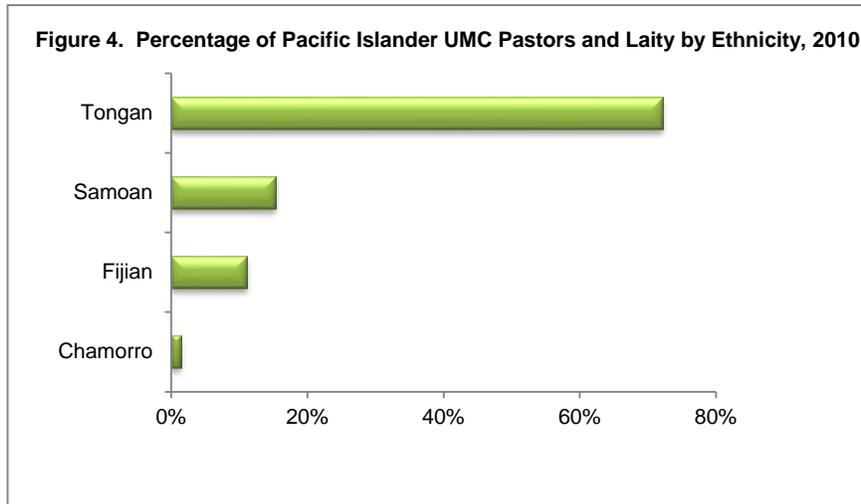


**2.1.3 Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches Leadership.** Pastoral leadership is key to building strong sustainable congregations. According to Figure 3, a majority of Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches are led by non-Pacific Islander senior pastors (56%), with 33% of the senior pastors being of Tongan ethnicity and less than 10% of pastors drawn from the Samoan, Fijian and Chamorro community. There are tremendous opportunities and a clear need to increase the number of senior PI pastors through training and new opportunities to serve growing PI population and communities.

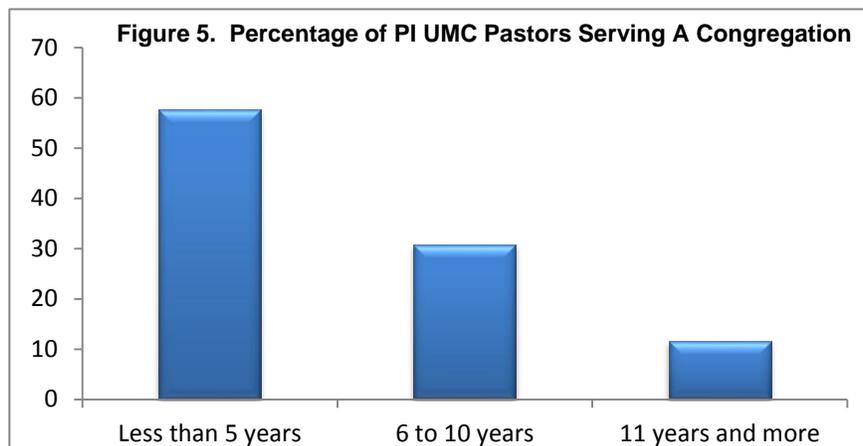


**2.1.4 Pacific Islander Leadership by Ethnicity.** As we would expect the distribution of Pacific Islander Pastors reflects the number of church congregations by ethnicity.

According to Figure 4 among the total number of PI United Methodist Churches pastors and laity, 52% are Tongan, 15% Samoan 11% are Fijian while Chamorro are least represented among these Pacific Islander groups. As these populations are projected to continue to grow quite rapidly, there will again be a need to increase recruitment for Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches pastors and there are numerous opportunities to provide adequate training and opportunities to encourage these individuals to serve in their communities.



2.1.5 Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches Pastoral Experience. There is considerable variation when we look at the pastoral experience among Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches pastors. As reflected in Figure 5, more than half of the PI pastors currently report having under 5 years of serving a congregation compared to 31% reporting 6 to 10 years of service and only 12% reporting more than 11 years of experience as pastors of a congregation.



60% of the PI Pastors belonged to a Charter Church and 21% are Fellowship Congregations.

2.1.6 Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches Church Programs.

<b>Table 2. Percentage of PI United Methodist Churches and the Type of Services Offered to the Local Community</b>	
<b>Program Type</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<i>N=27 churches</i>	
Education	82
Adolescent/Youth	61
Childcare	57
Soup Kitchen/Food Bank/Pantry	50
Health Screenings	36
Homeless Shelter	36
Immigration	32
Parenting	29
Domestic Violence	29
Prison/Jail Program	29
Programs for the Elderly	25
Child Abuse/Neglect	21
Scouting (Boys/Girls)	21
Vaccination	18
Substance Abuse/Neglect	18
Adoption/Foster Care	11
Job Training/Employment	11
Long-Term Severe Illness/Depression	7

75% of Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches survey participants indicated cooperating with other social agencies, groups or churches in dealing with local community needs.

38% of the Pacific Islander United Methodist Churches survey participants indicated that their church was cooperating with other social agencies, groups or churches in dealing with global community needs. Examples of the global activities that PI United Methodist Churches have contributed to are AMCORE, Pacific Islander Student Alliance, Tonga Mission, United Methodist Churches OR, Nigeria Orphanage, Heifei Project International, and Natural Disaster Relief Programs in the Pacific and Haiti.

68% of the survey respondents indicated that they and members of the staff currently volunteer for another church, community organization or someone else.

Over 75% of the survey participants indicated that they offered programs to support Pacific Islander children, youth, young adults, as well as adult men and women.

83% of the respondents indicated that compared to 2005, there is a greater need for the church to offer services to the local congregation and community compared to 17% who felt that the level of need is about the same in their local community. A major factor in this problem is due to financial hardships with a slow economy. Another reason is due to the lack of knowledge and capacity of church leaders to leverage resources to address local needs.

23% of the respondents indicated having to cancel programs and services formerly offered in 2005 due to the lack of resources.

20% of the respondents indicated experiencing positive changes with their local United Methodist Churches.

The majority of the respondents indicated that Pacific Islanders should work together as a group in order to improve their position in The United Methodist Church and to more effectively share their message with the larger church body. Similarly to achieve equity in The United Methodist Church, Pacific Islanders recognize the need to work as a full partner within the present system by voting and being active in church polity and discipline. The respondents also indicated that to gain equal access to resources with the United Methodist Church, Pacific Islanders should also seek to be employed as staff in the general agencies in order to better understand the operations of The United Methodist Church as well as to provide greater representation of the PI people outside their participation in community churches. Almost 90% of all respondents reported an interest and willingness to serve as a staff member at an agency within The United Methodist Church.

### 3. Pacific Islander UMC Focus Group Results

#### 3.1 Pacific Islander UMC Youth Group

<p>Q1. What are your thoughts about the challenges you are facing in your local community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing up in a ghetto neighborhood, young groups, violence, gun shots etc.</li> <li>• Drugs, smoking cannabis</li> <li>• Laziness, being unemployed</li> <li>• Community struggles and budget cuts</li> <li>• Completing school, getting a college education, and getting a job</li> <li>• Supportive family and church, and having money</li> <li>• Making smart choices</li> <li>• Balancing life between church, school, work, and friends</li> <li>• Families are trying to make a life here (U.S.) so all their time is spent at work or school and it hurts the family</li> <li>• Parents being closed-minded</li> <li>• There is not enough leaders in our community and those that do lead, don't know what they're leading them into</li> </ul>
<p>Q2. What are some of the causes of these problems?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening to rap songs and movies</li> <li>• Negative influence from the parents and community</li> <li>• Peer pressure</li> <li>• Lack of attention and boredom</li> <li>• Lack of money</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stress from working to support the family</li> <li>• Lack new drive and excitement</li> <li>• Parents (especially from the islands) are scared of change</li> </ul>
Q3. Do you think your experiences or problems are any different than that of other racial groups? How so?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The same, just our food is different</li> <li>• When Tongans have problems they take it to heart and let it out with beating and abuse</li> <li>• I don't think its race, it depends on your surroundings, the only difference is the culture</li> <li>• I think we are all the same. Hispanics are family oriented, just like Samoans and Blacks, we just see things differently</li> <li>• As a Samoan youth we learn to "Fa'a'alo'alo-Respect" others and especially our elders</li> </ul>
Q4. What are the challenges and opportunities facing the Pacific Islander United Methodist Church in the United States?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of money</li> <li>• They (church and parents) blame everything on money, but have a group come from Tonga, they would be cool to dish up tens of thousands of dollars at the (fundraising) concert</li> <li>• People within the church need to love one another and get along with each other</li> <li>• I think it is size. Our church is too small to reach out and volunteer and be more active</li> <li>• Gang violence</li> <li>• Lack of spiritual guidance</li> </ul>

Q5. What do you think is the greatest gift your church has to offer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praise and worship in English</li> <li>• Providing a new home for new people</li> <li>• Computers and homework center</li> <li>• Fellowship and opportunities to connect back to our culture</li> <li>• An open-minded Pastor</li> </ul>
Q6. Is your church in a shared facility? If so, what are the challenges and opportunities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We share with the Mexicans, but space is an issue</li> <li>• We share non-Tongans, but sometimes they don't like us because they said the Tongans destroy the church</li> </ul>

Q7. Is your church involved in community development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, the community groups would hold events at the church</li> <li>• We provide security for the neighborhood</li> <li>• Serve at the homeless shelter</li> </ul>
Q8. Can you describe leadership development in your church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People at church come and help me during the after school program.</li> <li>• Give failotu's (worship leader) to the young people to build their strength in God</li> <li>• We have confirmation classes</li> <li>• We have Young Leaders and Young Adults who help us worship more</li> </ul>
Q9. The stated purpose of the UMC is "to make disciples for the transformation of the world." How is your church carrying out this mission?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praise and worship helps everyone get along</li> <li>• To'utupu (Youth Day), whereby each church prepares their own way and come together and worship</li> <li>• Evangelism, a group would visit people who do not go to church</li> </ul>
Q10 How can the Pacific Islander United Methodist Church be more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeless shelter</li> <li>• Place of worship</li> </ul>

effective in serving the congregation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money to support the church—maintenance, programs and services</li> <li>• Provide classes in anger management</li> <li>• Create opportunities to share with peers in other churches</li> <li>• We need to fellowship with Samoans, Tongans, Fijians and Guamanians. We need to mix it up and to fellowship more as Pacific Islanders</li> </ul>
Q11. Does your church provide programs in these 4 areas: 1) Develop leaders; 2) Create place for new people? 3) To eliminate poverty; and 4) Improve health globally?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, leader development</li> <li>• This church is really open to attending conferences, internship in DC</li> <li>• Yes, we feed the homeless and sing to the elderly</li> </ul>
Q12. How can the lay people including you help the Pacific Islander United Methodist Church in America meet the needs of the church community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As an individual, we are the future of the church</li> <li>• Keep having active programs</li> <li>• More programs associated with other churches</li> <li>• Appointing new officers for the Youth</li> <li>• Provide scholarships to help the Youth</li> <li>• We need programs to eliminate poverty</li> </ul>
Q13. Do you feel that your local church is truly a part of The UMC? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No</li> <li>• To me, we are not involved; a lot of us don't know anything about the programs. We are not aware of programs because of the lack of communication</li> <li>• The leaders need to educate us on how we can get involved with district for the UMC and fellowship with them. I understand we are busy with our own local churches, but we want to be involved</li> </ul>
Q14. Does the church play a vital and integral role in your life/your family's life? Yes/No? How so? Give examples?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, it plays a spiritual role in my family</li> <li>• My second home is my church. Without my church I wouldn't know my history, I wouldn't be here, I wouldn't be in school, church is encouraging</li> <li>• It is part of our routine</li> <li>• Keeps us grounded</li> <li>• My family plays an active role in helping and participating where we can</li> </ul>

Q15. What is your understanding of the role of the Annual Conference in the life of your local church?	N/A
Q16. What programs and activities of the Annual Conference have proven effective for your church?	N/A
Q17. What Boards and Agencies of the Annual Conference, if any, are effective, in your context?	N/A
Q18. What is your understanding of the structure of the UMC?	N/A
Q19. What is your understanding of connectionalism of The UMC? How it works? The relationship between your local church and The Whole Church?	N/A

3.2 Pacific Islander UMC Women's Group

<p>Q1. What are your thoughts about the challenges you are facing in your local community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems begin at home, need parents to teach children</li> <li>• Leaders of the church should be more open to programs that bring fellowship and connection among (Tongan) women</li> <li>• Local church lacks resources and information about school districts, teacher training, county services and community programs to help local families</li> <li>• Lack of information on immigration and healthcare</li> <li>• Women don't have jobs</li> <li>• Money is the main challenge within our Women's group and community</li> </ul>
<p>Q2. What are some of the causes of these problems?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language barriers, with the older generation speaking little English and the younger generation dropping out between Middle and High School</li> <li>• Parents do not meet with school counselors out of fear of losing face because they lack understanding</li> <li>• Women lack education for a good job because of the belief that it's not what you know but who you know</li> <li>• A lot of women don't have money and that is why they don't come and participate in church</li> <li>• Lack of health insurance</li> </ul>
<p>Q3. Do you think your experiences or problems are any different than that of other racial groups? How so?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel Tongan people lack resources and we do not participate in program offered in the community</li> <li>• The opportunity and resources are available, but Tongans are afraid to go out of their comfort zone to take advantage of the outreach programs</li> <li>• There is a general consensus that the experiences or problems that Fijian women are facing are not really different from what other groups, especially Pacific Islanders are facing.</li> <li>• The difference for Samoan women is our culture. Samoans carry their culture everywhere</li> </ul>
<p>Q4. What are the challenges and opportunities facing the Pacific Islander United Methodist Church in the United States?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I see the Tongan women moving away from working together, but by working individually. The church is encouraging people to remember their heritage of sharing and it helps</li> <li>• In the United Methodist Church I see a lot of things that I was raised in, in Tonga, especially the John Wesley way of teaching. I see a problem in doing too much Tongan way and not adapting to the United Methodist way</li> <li>• Our greatest challenge is not having money for the Pastor's salary</li> <li>• Our greatest challenge is that we don't get along</li> <li>• I think there are too many churches, but not enough members to fill the church</li> <li>• We need programs to bring all the churches together to discuss our differences and plan for the future</li> </ul>
<p>Q5. What do you think is the greatest gift your church has to offer?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fellowship with other Tongan Christians</li> <li>• Spiritual health, counseling from the pastor and support</li> <li>• Group discussion, morning devotion, bible study, feasting, dancing etc.</li> <li>• Gift of teaching our kids the word of God through Sunday school</li> <li>• Our FAITH, which are our blessings from God!</li> </ul>
<p>Q6. Is your church in a shared facility? If so, what are the challenges and opportunities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, we share with 4 other racial/ethnic groups</li> <li>• We have 3 language groups sharing the facility. Yes, there is a lot of complaint from the palangi's (White members) on how the Tongan's treat the facility. We are reminded to clean up after a big feast.</li> <li>• One advantage is learning from each other and appreciating the various cultures within the church.</li> <li>• Yes we share with the Hispanic group. It helps with expenses of the property. If we have meetings then we would have to schedule around the Hispanics.</li> </ul>

<p>Q7. Is your church involved in community development?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, there are many programs like participating in community street fairs, peace and justice walks, immigration volunteers, hosting workshops and boy scouts</li> <li>• Held a donation center at the church, feed the homeless, praise and worship that is open to all races and we volunteer at Red Cross</li> <li>• Most community development programs are done individually by church members, like helping and feeding the homeless. I do not have any information of any Fijian congregation taking active participation in any community development programs</li> <li>• Yes, by having school meetings, police officers have programs and our church participates.</li> </ul>
<p>Q8. Can you describe leadership development in your church?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The church offers training for young adults who are first time preachers. Fridays are our youth programs in which the youth are trained in programs like debates, bible discussions, bible games etc. The church offers a holistic leadership development.</li> <li>• This is a major problem facing Fijian churches. No one seems to care about having well educated leaders. I don't think there is a leadership development program in any of our Fijian churches. The UMC should ensure that every Fijian congregation should have a leadership development program in place, and candidates should be identified to go through the program.</li> <li>• The question is, how well do the English pastors communicate with the Fijian lay leaders. Do they disseminate valuable information on education, leadership development, and other resources to their Fijian lay leaders? If the gap is there, then that would probably give the lay leaders not other option but to look for support from the Fiji Methodist Church.</li> <li>• We don't have any programs for leadership development. Only our Samoan Pulenga Youth our programs help, but we don't have anything else.</li> <li>• We do not have any leadership programs from all 3 churches for lay leaders. We don't have any programs for youth, women or men for leadership.</li> </ul>
<p>Q9. The stated purpose of the UMC is "to make disciples for the transformation of the world." How is your church carrying out this mission?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in The Steven Ministry, internships, bishop camps, confirmation camps and conferences</li> </ul>
<p>Q10. How can the Pacific Islander United Methodist Church be more effective in serving the congregation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church offering collected through fundraising</li> <li>• Traditional concerts</li> <li>• Youth ministry</li> <li>• Immigration and social welfare clinics to assist families</li> <li>• Communicate opportunities for employment, housing and transportation</li> <li>• Money to support enrichment programs for the youth, women and men</li> </ul>
<p>Q11. Does your church provide programs in these 4 areas: 1) Develop leaders; 2) Create place for new people? 3) To eliminate poverty; and 4) Improve health globally?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome new people</li> <li>• Food shelter for the poor</li> <li>• Workshops and fairs on global health</li> <li>• Need leadership development and educational programs for church leaders</li> <li>• We are mostly concentrating on spiritual matters. But when the congregation is not healthy physically and emotionally, then the church will also be weak</li> <li>• Initiate culturally relevant health programs</li> </ul>

<p>Q12. How can the lay people, including you, help the Pacific Islander United Methodist Church in America meet the needs of the church community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve knowledge and communication about The UMC</li> <li>• Comfort our children and support our husbands</li> <li>• Use our gifts and graces to guide the church into deeper faith</li> <li>• We work closely with the English congregation in maintenance of the facilities and grounds</li> <li>• Get involved in various committees and agencies of the church at the national, regional and local levels</li> <li>• Innovative ways to raise funds for the church</li> <li>• Sharing our gifts of language and singing</li> </ul>
<p>Q13. Do you feel that your local church is truly a part of The UMC? Why?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, because our Pastor changed the order of service to match The UMC format</li> <li>• The Pastor has started an English praise and worship for the young people</li> <li>• We pay our financial contribution to the English charter church and our financial accounts are audited by The UMC</li> <li>• Yes, we believe we are part of The UMC</li> </ul>
<p>Q14. Does the church play a vital and integral role in your life/your family's life? Yes/No? How so? Give examples?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The church plays a vital role in the life of our family</li> <li>• Our children are active in church work and their character is built on solid foundation of the church</li> <li>• The Bible provides discipline for our children and it's an investment for their future</li> <li>• The church helps nurture our faith life</li> <li>• The church teaches us to pray to God</li> <li>• In Samoa, it's your church and your family</li> </ul>

3.3 Pacific Islander UMC Men's Group

<p>Q15. What is your understanding of the role of the Annual Conference in the life of your local church?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coming from Tonga and being of the older generation, I don't know much but I do follow the Wesleyan teachings</li> <li>• Our lay leader who is a member of the Commission on Religion &amp; Race briefs us on the activities of the Annual Conference</li> <li>• The conference helps with the guidelines, rules and resources of The UMC</li> </ul>
<p>Q16. What programs and activities of the Annual Conference have proven effective for your church?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afterschool tutorials for the children of the church and community</li> <li>• Funding for our youth's praise and worship band equipment</li> <li>• The resolution of the UMC Immigration Task Force and the need to know our rights in relation to immigration issues</li> <li>• Conference program that helps pay the Pastor's salary</li> <li>• The meetings in Redlands</li> </ul>
<p>Q17. What Boards and Agencies of the Annual Conference, if any, are effective, in your context?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Mission had helped the UMC Women do outreach programs</li> </ul>
<p>Q18. What is your understanding of the structure of The UMC?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
<p>Q19. What is your understanding of connectionalism of The UMC? How it works? The relationship between your local church and The Whole Church?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UMC is connected to ALL UMC of the world</li> </ul>
<p>Q1. What are your thoughts about the challenges you are facing in your local community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding employment</li> <li>• Immigration</li> <li>• Housing</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language barrier among the elders</li> <li>• Education achievement</li> <li>• Lack of resources and knowledge of federal government programs and resources</li> </ul>
Q2. What are some of the causes of these problems?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of education to qualify for a good job</li> <li>• Lack of leadership</li> <li>• Lack English Proficiency</li> <li>• No organization to look after new immigrants from Fiji</li> </ul>
Q3. Do you think your experiences or problems are any different than that of other racial groups? How so?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As Pacific Islanders we like to compete with each other and withhold information</li> <li>• Lack leadership</li> <li>• We do not like to leave our comfort zone. What we do in the islands we carry on here in the US</li> <li>• Our customs and cultures are different and this can contribute to the obstacles and problems that we face</li> <li>• Abuse in kava drinking</li> <li>• One main problem is 'Alcohol'</li> </ul>
Q4. What are the challenges and opportunities facing the Pacific Islander United Methodist Church in the United States?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members are not attending the meetings, but if they do, they do not participate or speak up</li> <li>• The male is the leader of the family and when he comes to church he cannot be vulnerable because he is afraid of making mistakes and letting his family down</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge on how The UMC operates</li> <li>• We need Fijian pastors</li> <li>• We need money to help us do God's work</li> <li>• We are losing membership because they don't have money to continue supporting the church</li> </ul>

Q5. What do you think is the greatest gift your church has to offer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiritual guidance provided by the Pastor</li> <li>• Gift of singing</li> <li>• Personal talents and resources that are useful to church activities and development</li> <li>• Cultural entertainment</li> </ul>
Q6. Is your church in a shared facility? If so, what are the challenges and opportunities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We provide space for a private middle school that is on the church property</li> <li>• We host community meetings for Asian Americans and other races</li> <li>• We have an African American family use the chapel for worship</li> <li>• The challenge is for our people (Tongans) learning to value and respect the space they have</li> <li>• All Fijian congregations worship in shared spaces. We have been continuously blamed for any damages to the facility, increase in utility bills and allowing children to litter the facility, but other ethnic groups also use the facility and contribute to the problem</li> </ul>

Q7. Is your church involved in community development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a soup kitchen and provide Thanksgiving dinner for the homeless</li> <li>• We provide volunteers for home construction for people with low income</li> <li>• We support global warming activities</li> <li>• We donated to a community development project organized by the Young People's Department at the Fiji Methodist Church</li> <li>• Participate in inter-cultural programs organized by the church</li> </ul>
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<p>Q8. Can you describe leadership development in your church?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have young adults in Steven Ministry</li> <li>• We have interns attending the Ethnic Young Adults Training in Washington DC</li> <li>• The Fijian congregation requests a leadership development training program</li> </ul>
<p>Q9. The stated purpose of the UMC is "to make disciples for the transformation of the world." How is your church carrying out this mission?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We need to improve the work of evangelism</li> <li>• The missions we provide are: marches for Justice and Peace, crop walks for the homeless, health clinics for the low income and workshops on healthy eating</li> <li>• Through Bible Study using bible study booklets translated in the Fijian language</li> <li>• Use of live internet worship services broadcast every Sunday</li> <li>• Home visitation which brings new members to the church</li> <li>• Live a Christ-like life</li> <li>• Contribute to the Church's global missions</li> </ul>
<p>Q10. What do you think is the greatest gift your church has to offer?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer as a security guard for the church</li> <li>• Bible Studies every Sunday</li> <li>• Financial assistance program for members who are unemployed and whose relatives have passed either in the US or Fiji</li> <li>• Provide health programs and services</li> </ul>
<p>Q11. Does your church provide programs in these 4 areas: 1) Develop leaders; 2) Create place for new people? 3) To eliminate poverty; and 4) Improve health globally?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We welcome people</li> <li>• We do mission work in the community</li> <li>• We help our neighbors and feed the homeless</li> <li>• We have a youth outreach and afterschool tutorial</li> <li>• A lot of our leadership development is provided through our district and Annual Conference</li> </ul>
<p>Q12. How can the lay people including you help the Pacific Islander United Methodist Church in America meet the needs of the church community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a lay leader I bring a good relationship between the pastor and the people. I travel with the pastor to make home visits and hospital visit and help the worship committee make calls to the members</li> <li>• We bring carpentry skills, wall brick making and it helps with mission work and church custodial work</li> <li>• Help with spiritual matters and social responsibilities affecting members</li> <li>• Organize educational workshops for the congregation</li> <li>• We are to provide the Word of the Lord to the community at large</li> <li>• Our culture and language, which I believe strengthens cultural diversity in The UMC</li> <li>• Advocate for the church by serving on committees and participating in conferences</li> <li>• Need opportunities to serve at the general conference level, jurisdiction level, district level and on all the committees and boards</li> </ul>
<p>Q13. Do you feel that your local church is truly a part of The UMC? Why?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No, we are still stuck in the teachings of the Wesleyan Church of Tonga</li> <li>• No, we need more time to adapt to the structure of The UMC</li> <li>• Yes, we have programs that identify with The UMC</li> <li>• Our Fijian congregation is truly a part of The UMC. We closely follow the guidelines, and administrative structure of The UMC, but some of the Fijian congregations are more aligned with the Methodist Church in Fiji</li> <li>• Yes, many of us belong to Annual Conference, some attend jurisdictional and general conference meetings</li> </ul>
<p>Q14. Does the church play a vital and integral role in your life/your family's life? Yes/No? How so? Give examples?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, Christianity has changed my life</li> <li>• Church life is part of my family life</li> <li>• Yes, the church is where you get Strength and Comfort</li> </ul>

<p>Q15. What is your understanding of the role of the Annual Conference in the life of your local church?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am still learning about the Annual Conference</li> <li>• Our Fijian congregation need to understand the role of the Annual Conference</li> <li>• The conference helps with salary for the pastors and funding for members of the annual conference</li> </ul>
<p>Q16. What programs and activities of the Annual Conference have proven effective for your church?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Annual Conference provides salary support for our pastor and associate pastor</li> <li>• I have not seen a Fijian delegate from our church attend the Annual Conference. Only the White delegates attend the Annual Conference session</li> </ul>
<p>Q17. What Boards and Agencies of the Annual Conference, if any, are effective, in your context?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, PUMA</li> <li>• The Conference Commission on Religion and Race has taught me a lot about other boards and agencies</li> <li>• The Board of Ordained Ministry allowed us to seek a pastor outside our annual conference and bring in a pastor from Samoa</li> </ul>
<p>Q18. What is your understanding of the structure of the UMC?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is the Bishops, then the DS, then circuit leaders and local pastors</li> <li>• I understand very few of our Fijian congregations and even lay leaders do not fully understand the structure of the UMC</li> <li>• The UMC goes by steps a connectional system, from the Bishop down to the local churches</li> </ul>
<p>Q19. What is your understanding of connectionalism of The UMC? How it works? The relationship between your local church and The Whole Church?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't know</li> </ul>

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PACIFIC ISLANDER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR MINISTRY  
STUDY COMMITTEE ROSTER

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**Dr. Sela V. Panapasa**

**SELA PANAPASA**, PhD is a research investigator with the Survey Research Center program on Social Environment & Health, part of the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at the University of Michigan . Dr. Panapasa is a sociologist, trained in demography at the Population Studies and Training Center at Brown University . Since receiving her doctorate, Dr. Panapasa, a native Pacific Islander, has been actively involved in research on the relationship between disability, family support networks and health outcomes. She has worked with several island nations in the Pacific, advising and evaluating censuses and national surveys including Fiji and Tonga . She recently completed the first phase of a US Census Bureau project evaluating the quality of Pacific Islander data from the US 2000 Census.



Dr. Panapasa's research interests have centered on minority health issues with a special emphasis on the elderly in underrepresented populations. Her more recent research has focused specifically on Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (NHPI) populations in the United States and Pacific basin. She is particularly interested in health disparities between Pacific Islanders in the United States as compared to the Pacific territories of American Samoa and Guam .

Her work has had an ongoing impact in policy development including contributions to the constitutional review process in Fiji where she was part of a research team that provide a demographic overview of the ethnic composition of the country required for establishing electoral districts and parliamentary allocations. Her recent work with the US census will serve as an important foundation for understanding the socioeconomic, disability, migration and demographic patterns of NHPis. She is currently working with Professor David Williams at the University of Michigan on a project that will provide the first comprehensive set of national indicators on health, morbidity and mortality among NHPI populations in the United States.

## **TIME LINE**

*April 2008* – General Conference – Mandate to create a committee to study Pacific Islander ministry and prepare a ministry plan to be presented to the next General Conference.

*May – September 2008* – Outreach to Pacific Island United Methodist community to disseminate information regarding the creation of a Study Committee.

*August 2008* – Meeting of the Pacific Islander National Caucus to begin to strategize and develop plans for the creation of a Study Committee.

*September-December 2008* – On-going conversation and communication with General Board of Global Ministries Staff.

*September – December 2008* – Collaborated with ethnic caucus leaders and constituents to make up the Study Committee roster according to the mandate that was passed at General Conference.

*January 2009* – Meeting of Pacific Islander National Caucus leaders with General Board of Global Ministries Staff: General Secretary Ed Paup, Rev. Sam Dixon, Rev. Jorge Dominguez, Rev. Kelvin Sauls, and Rev. Nam-Jin Jun in New York to strategize and plan.

*May 2009* – First meeting of the Pacific Islander Comprehensive Plan For Ministry Study Committee (Study Committee) in Los Angeles, CA.

*August 2009* – Hiring of consultant, Dr. Sela V. Panapasa to assist the committee's work.

*November 2009* – Second meeting of the Study Committee in Santa Ana, CA.

*February 2010* – Third meeting of the Study Committee in Los Angeles, CA.

*February 2010* – Consultation of Pacific Island Ministry that brought lay and clergy leaders from every Pacific Island congregation for the purpose of looking at Pacific Island ministry comprehensively. Focus groups and surveys were also done at this event.

*March 2010* – Small Task Force of the Study Committee met in Santa Ana, CA to look at data collected at February Consultation.

*May – July 2010* – On-going committee work regarding existing data.

*August-September 2010* – Gathering of data.

*September 2010* – Writing Task Force Meeting in Santa Ana, CA to begin the work of writing the report.

*September – November 2010* – Held focus group interviews all over the western jurisdiction.

*November 2010* – Fourth meeting of the full Study Committee in Palo Alto, CA.

*November – January 2011*—Writing of the report, or the comprehensive plan for ministry.

*February 2011* – Fifth meeting of the Study Committee in Irvine, CA to discuss report.

*February-March 2011* – Completion of draft of report and budget and turned into General Board of Global Ministries.

*April 2011* – Sixth meeting of the full Study Committee in San Jose, CA.

## 2008 PETITION AND MANDATE

### PACIFIC ISLANDERS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR MINISTRY

#### Introduction

The common identity of people who are known as the Pacific Islanders is founded in their common legacy of being inheritors of the Earth's largest body of water, the Pacific Ocean. For centuries, they have called the islands that are scattered across the vast Pacific Ocean, their home. Anthropologists have conveniently grouped these islands into three distinct groups, the Micronesians, Melanesians and Polynesians. The Micronesians is made up of thousands of islands, big and small, including the Marianas, the Carolinas, the Marshalls, the Gilbert, Ellice and Phoenix groups. The Micronesian islands border Asia which is separated from the Pacific by the Philippine Sea. The Melanesians are made up of hundreds of islands, including, the Fiji, the New Caledonians, which include the Solomons and the New Hebrides, the New Guineas, and the Uvea groups. Finally, Polynesian group of islands includes the Hawaiian, the Easter Island, the Pitcairn Island, the Gambier, the Tuamotu, the Marquesa, the Society, the Tahiti, the Cook Islands, the Samoan, and the Tonga groups of islands.

Pacific Islanders have been in our midst from the beginning. The Hawaiian Islands were illegally annexed by the United States in 1893. Many years later, other Pacific Islanders began arriving. Beginning in the early 1950s, Pacific Islanders have been migrating. The first group came as military personnel workers, service industry workers, religious workers and students. The majority were professing Christians. Early after their arrival in the United States, they sought places of worship.

For the Pacific Islanders, religious and cultural heritage come together in the form of the Church. The ethnic and cultural values of Pacific Islanders are affirmed and solidified in the way of Christianity. Pacific Island Christians truly believe that their identity, culture, and religious heritage, indeed, their way of life, is good and is where God is present and is at work. As a result, Pacific Islanders build churches wherever they settle. The Church becomes an affirmation of God's presence in their journey. In addition, the Church in their new surroundings becomes the kin group or the village that they have left behind. The multiple significance and value of the Church to the Pacific Islanders ensures its existence in places where Pacific Islanders settle. As they go forth into new territories, they have practiced their way of living. Part of that way of life is being the Church.

The first Samoan congregation was established as a Methodist Church in Honolulu, HI on February 13, 1963. The first Tongan United Methodist fellowship was organized at Honolulu First United Methodist Church in Hawaii at a watch night service in 1970. On September 18, 1978, the first Tongan United Methodist Church was chartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. In the 1970s, an agreement was made between The United Methodist Church Council of Bishops and the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga whereby the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga would not establish churches in the United States but that support would be given to the establishment of Tongan United Methodist Churches. Methodist members from the Fiji islands have also established ministries within several western states. The first United Methodist Church in Guam was chartered in Barrigada in 1980. The first church in Saipan was established

in 1995. Both of these churches are within the bounds of the Western Jurisdiction (California-Pacific Annual Conference).

The 2005 U.S. census has identified 850,000 Pacific Islanders across forty-six states. This shows a significant potential for disciple making of Pacific Islanders across the U.S. Currently there are approximately 63 Pacific Island United Methodist churches, fellowships, and ministries across the U.S.

#### **Mandate**

The Pacific Islander's National Caucus of The United Methodist Church (PINCUM) hereby petitions the General Conference to establish the Pacific Islands United Methodist Church Ministry Study. The study will (1) research and study the needs in Pacific Island communities; (2) develop recommendations to address these needs; and (3) establish priorities on the funding of programs that would begin to develop ministries in the communities that would reach Pacific Islanders Americans. These findings would be presented as recommendations to the 2012 General Conference.

#### **Implementation**

In order to implement the Pacific Island United Methodist Church Ministry Study, a committee will be established. The committee will be composed of the following persons/categories:

10 Pacific Islanders sub-ethnic caucus members (selected by the caucuses)

1 Staff (related to racial/ethnic ministries) from each of the general agencies of the UMC

1 GBGM Staff of the Asian American and Pacific Islanders Ministries

1 Staff from the PINCUM

Other persons as needed (to be determined by the committee)

The committee will meet twice annually to design and administer an effective research tool for the gathering and analysis of information from Pacific Island communities throughout the United States. As part of this task, regional meetings throughout the United States (Hawaii, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Pacific Northwest, Salt Lake, Dallas, Florida, Midwest, Northeast) will be instituted. The administrative oversight of the study be assigned to the General Board of Global Ministries Office of Asian American and Pacific Islander Ministries in collaboration with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry as needed. It is recommended that a budget of \$300,000 be approved to carry out the following tasks of the study: regional meetings/hearings, meetings of study committee, development/translation of material, administrative costs and consultant services.

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