

## **2008 Ordained Full-Connection Elders and Deacons**

**August 18, 2009**

**By: Sarah Combs**

### **Introduction**

From which theological school or seminary did those ordained in 2008 receive their training? This question is explored using data from the annual conference reports received at the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM).

In this paper, I show that the majority of elders and deacons went to a United Methodist school. Among schools, however, the greatest number attended a University Senate-approved school, Asbury Theological Seminary. The most widely obtained degree was the M.Div. degree. Most of the newly ordained are white male elders. The greatest number of ordained elders and deacons in 2008 are from the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

### **Data**

Data was collected from Enlistment and Candidacy at GBHEM and recorded for each newly ordained elder and deacon. There were 464 newly ordained elders and deacons in full connection in the year 2008 that were considered in this study. Twenty-nine of these did not list a school of attendance. Their annual conference, jurisdiction, school attended, degree received, gender, and ethnicity was recorded. Four elders and six deacons were listed as attending two schools and one elder attended three schools. Seven elders and six deacons were listed as having multiple degrees. These schools and degrees were also recorded. Some elders and deacons attended a school that was not currently University Senate-approved, but was at one time. These students are shown in Table 1. For the purposes of this study, if a school is, or has ever been, University Senate-approved it is designated as a University Senate-approved school. Overall, 51 conferences reported newly ordained elders and deacons in 2008.<sup>1</sup> There were 464 ordinations in 2008, 57 were deacons and 437 were elders. A school was not listed for 29 ordinands and no degree was designated for 55.

### **Data Analysis**

The questions examined in this review of the 2008 ordained elders and deacons are:

- 1) Where did elders and deacons attend school?
  - Were these schools United Methodist institutions?
  - If elders and deacons did not attend a United Methodist school, what other institutions did they attend?
- 2) What degrees were most often received by the newly ordained elders and deacons at United Methodist and non-United Methodist institutions?
- 3) Does race, gender, jurisdiction, or annual conference appear to have played a part in where one attended school and the degree they received?

### **Results**

#### *Attended United Methodist Seminary or Theological School*

In general, 57% (283) of elders and deacons attended at least one United Methodist (UM) institution. Of the 181 elders/deacons who did not go to a UM school, 92.8% went to a University Senate-approved institution. This breakdown is seen in Table 1. Not surprisingly, most of the newly

---

1. Conferences not reporting new ordinands were: Alaska Missionary, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas West, Kentucky, Missouri, New York, North Central New York, Rio Grande, Rocky Mountain, Texas, and West Michigan.

ordained who attended a UM school were elders in full connection (88%), and more elders and deacons were from the Southeastern Jurisdiction (39%); the least amount were from the Western Jurisdiction. What was surprising about attendance at these schools was that more women and racial minorities attended than at any other type of school; of all schools attended, UM schools were the only places where more women attended than men. Moreover, 78.3% of racial minorities went to UM schools. In other words, a non-UM school is more likely to have a white male than is a UM school.

**Table 1: Type of Institutions That 2008 Ordained Elders and Deacons Attended<sup>2</sup>**

| Type of Institution  | Percentage of Elders/Deacons (Number) |                             |                             |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | Elders                                | Deacons                     | Total                       |
| United Methodist School                                    | 56.8%<br>(248)                        | 61.4%<br>(35)               | 57.3%<br>(283)              |
| Not UM but Currently University Senate-approved            | 32%<br>(140)                          | 26.3%<br>(15)               | 31.4%<br>(155)              |
| Not UM but University Senate-approved in Past <sup>a</sup> | 2.7%<br>(12)                          | 1.8%<br>(1)                 | 2.6%<br>(13)                |
| Not UM or University Senate Approved                       | 2.5%<br>(11)                          | 3.5%<br>(2)                 | 2.6%<br>(13)                |
| Missing <sup>b</sup>                                       | 5.9%<br>(26)                          | 7%<br>(4)                   | 6.1%<br>(30)                |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>88.5%</b><br><b>(437)</b>          | <b>11.5%</b><br><b>(57)</b> | <b>100%</b><br><b>(494)</b> |

a. These schools are: Eastern Baptist, Reformed Theological, Bangor, Andover Newton, Erskine (Mexico), Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Gordon-Conwell, Southeastern Baptist.

b. All, except two of the elders and deacons, who did not have a school reported were from the Baltimore-Washington or South Carolina annual conference.

**Table 2: Type of Institutions that 2008 Ordained Elders and Deacons Attended by Sex and Race**

| Type of Institution                             | Percentage of Each Sex (Number) |                              | Percentage of Each Race (Number) |                           |                            |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
|   | Male                            | Female                       | Caucasian                        | Racial Minority           | Race Missing               |
| United Methodist School                         | 49.5%<br>(138)                  | 50.5%<br>(141)               | 78.1%<br>(221)                   | 19.1%<br>(54)             | 2.8%<br>(8)                |
| Not UM but Currently University Senate-approved | 57.6%<br>(87)                   | 42.4%<br>(64)                | 92.9%<br>(144)                   | 7.1%<br>(11)              | 0%<br>(0)                  |
| Not UM but University Senate-approved in Past   | 53.8%<br>(7)                    | 46.2%<br>(6)                 | 84.6%<br>(11)                    | 15.4%<br>(2)              | 0%<br>(0)                  |
| Not UM or University Senate Approved            | 76.9%<br>(10)                   | 23.1%<br>(3)                 | 84.6%<br>(11)                    | 15.4%<br>(2)              | 0%<br>(0)                  |
| Missing   | 53.8%<br>(7)                    | 46.2%<br>(6)                 | 6.7%<br>(2)                      | 0%<br>(0)                 | 93.3%<br>(28)              |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>53.1%</b><br><b>(249)</b>    | <b>46.9%</b><br><b>(220)</b> | <b>78.7%</b><br><b>(389)</b>     | <b>14%</b><br><b>(69)</b> | <b>7.3%</b><br><b>(36)</b> |

2. This table separates the elders and deacons who went to school at a “non-UM but currently University Senate-approved” school and “non-UM but University Senate-approved in the past” school. However, these two types of schools are merged under “University Senate-approved schools” for the remainder of this study.

Of the students who attended a UM school, the greatest number went to Candler/Emory, followed by Duke Divinity, and Garrett-Evangelical. The number of elders and deacons who went to a UM school as their first school is seen in Table 2. Additionally, of the 10 elders/deacons who identified more than one institution, and who did not attend a UM institution for their first school, four attended a UM institution. The schools attended were Drew, Duke, and Perkins; one person did a Course of Study at an unnamed UM school.

**Table 3: Number of Elders and Deacons That Attended Each UM School<sup>3</sup>**

| School (Number Attended)                      | Percentage of Elders and Deacons |         |       |                    |         |       |
|---|----------------------------------|---------|-------|--------------------|---------|-------|
|   | % Overall                        |         |       | % of UM Attendance |         |       |
|   | Elders                           | Deacons | Total | Elders             | Deacons | Total |
| Candler School of Theology <sup>†</sup> (49)  | 10.3%                            | 7%      | 10.5% | 18.1%              | 11.4%   | 17.3% |
| Duke Divinity School (42)                     | 9.4%                             | 1.8%    | 8.5%  | 16.5%              | 2.9%    | 14.8% |
| Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (32) | 5.5%                             | 14%     | 6.5%  | 9.7%               | 22.9%   | 11.3% |
| Perkins School of Theology <sup>†</sup> (28)  | 4.3%                             | 15.8%   | 5.7%  | 7.7%               | 25.7%   | 10.3% |
| Wesley Theological Seminary (24)              | 5.3%                             | 1.8%    | 4.8%  | 9.3%               | 2.9%    | 8.5%  |
| Drew University Theological School (20)       | 4.1%                             | 3.5%    | 4%    | 7.3%               | 5.7%    | 7.1%  |
| United Theological Seminary (18)              | 3.9%                             | 1.8%    | 3.6%  | 6.9%               | 2.9%    | 6.4%  |
| Methodist Theological School (17)             | 3.2%                             | 7%      | 3.6%  | 6.9%               | 11.4%   | 6.4%  |
| Saint Paul School of Theology (15)            | 3%                               | 3.5%    | 3%    | 5.2%               | 5.7%    | 5.3%  |
| Illiff School of Theology (11)                | 2.5%                             | 0%      | 2.2%  | 4.4%               | 0%      | 3.9%  |
| Claremont School of Theology (10)             | 2.3%                             | 0%      | 2%    | 4%                 | 0%      | 3.8%  |
| Boston University School of Theology (7)      | 1.4%                             | 1.8%    | 1.4%  | 2.4%               | 2.9%    | 2.5%  |
| Gammon Theological Seminary (4)               | .9%                              | 0%      | .8%   | 1.6%               | 0%      | 1.5%  |
| Course of Study (4)                           | 1%                               | 1.8%    | .8%   | 1.2%               | 2.9%    | 1.5%  |

<sup>†</sup> These include 19 elders and 2 deacons who went to Emory and 1 elder who went to Southern Methodist University.

The degrees most received at UM schools were not surprisingly M.Div. degrees. Eighty-two percent of elders/deacons who attended these schools, at any time, received this degree. An additional 4% of elders and deacons received a degree in a basic program toward ministerial leadership. The breakdown of degrees received at a UM school is seen in Table 3.

**Table 4: Breakdown of Degrees Received at a UM School<sup>4</sup>**

| Program Type  | Number of Students Receiving |               |                |
|---|------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
|   | Elders                       | Deacons       | Total          |
| basic program toward ministerial leadership (including M.Div. degree) | 94.3%<br>(217)               | 72.2%<br>(26) | 91.4%<br>(243) |
| special/unclassified  | 4.3%<br>(10)                 | 2.8%<br>(1)   | 4.1%<br>(11)   |
| BGTS  | 0%<br>(0)                    | 19.4%<br>(7)  | 2.6%<br>(7)    |
| advanced programs in theological research and training                | .9%<br>(2)                   | 2.8%<br>(1)   | 1.1%<br>(3)    |
| advanced programs toward ministerial leadership                       | .4%<br>(1)                   | 2.8%<br>(1)   | .8%<br>(2)     |

3. This attendance is based on the first school listed.

4. Includes 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degrees received.

*Attended University Senate Approved Seminary or Theological School*

Among those who attended a University Senate-approved school, Asbury Theological Seminary, had by far, the most elder and deacon graduates. In fact, Asbury had more elder and deacon graduates than any other school, including the United Methodist schools. Four times as many men went to Asbury than did women. Most of the Asbury elders and deacons were from the Southeastern Jurisdiction, outnumbering any other school in that jurisdiction, including Candler and Duke. Additionally, the greatest number of these elders/deacons were from the Florida and Mississippi annual conferences. Brite Divinity, Princeton Theological, Lancaster Theological, and Phillips Theological also had a fair amount of newly ordained elder and deacon graduates. Seen in Table 4 are the non-UM, but University Senate-approved schools where at least five elders/deacons attended.

**Table 5: Number of Elders and Deacons that went to a Non-UM, but University Senate-approved Institution<sup>5</sup>**

| School <sup>†</sup>                | Percentage of Elder/Diacon Graduates (Number) |         |       |  |         |       |
|------------------------------------|---|---------|-------|--|---------|-------|
|                                    | % Overall                                     |         |       | % of Non-UM but University Senate approved |         |       |
|                                    | Elders  | Deacons | Total | Elders                                     | Deacons | Total |
| Asbury Theological Seminary (61)   | 12.4%   | 12.3%   | 13.1% | 35.5%                                      | 43.8%   | 36.3% |
| Brite Divinity School (10)         | 1.8%  | 3.5%    | 2.2%  | 5.3%                                       | 12.5%   | 6%    |
| Princeton Theological Seminary (8) | 1.6%  | 1.8%    | 1.7%  | 4.6%                                       | 6.3%    | 4.8%  |
| Lancaster Theological Seminary (7) | 1.6%  | 0%      | 1.5%  | 4.6%                                       | 0%      | 4.2%  |
| Phillips Theological Seminary (7)  | 1.4%  | 1.8%    | 1.5%  | 3.9%                                       | 6.3%    | 4.2%  |
| Pacific School of Religion (6)     | 1.4%  | 0%      | 1.3%  | 3.9%                                       | 0%      | 3.6%  |
| Ashland Theological Seminary (6)   | 1.4%  | 0%      | 1.3%  | 1.4%                                       | 0%      | 3.6%  |
| Hood Theological Seminary (5)      | .9%   | 1.8%    | 1.1%  | 2.6%                                       | 6.3%    | 3%    |

<sup>†</sup> The other schools that represented 34.3% of the non-UM but University Senate-approved schools can be seen in the Appendix.

Of the elders/deacons at a University Senate-approved non-UM school, 91% (149) received a M.Div., which means that 38% of M.Div. degrees were from an accredited non-UM school. Three additional elders/deacons received a M.Div. degree as their secondary degree, and an additional seven received a degree in a basic program toward ministerial leadership. The breakdown of degrees received from a non-UM, but University Senate-approved, school are seen in Table 5.

Of those who attended a non-UM, but University Senate-approved institution, 91% (152) were elders (31% of all elders) and 10% (16) were deacons (3% of all deacons). Twenty percent of men and 15% of women went to a University Senate-approved school. No jurisdiction was more likely to have elder and deacon graduates from these institutions. However, of the 50 conferences who had new elders or deacons reported, nine had more non-UM, but University Senate-approved, graduates than they had UM school graduates.

5. This attendance is based on the first school listed.

**Table 6: Breakdown of Degrees Received at a Non-UM, *but* University Senate-approved Institution<sup>6</sup>**

| Program Type  | Number of Students Receiving |              |                |
|---|------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
|   | Elders                       | Deacons      | Total          |
| basic program toward ministerial leadership (including M.Div. degree) | 98.7%<br>(150)               | 52.9%<br>(9) | 94.1%<br>(159) |
| BGTS  | 0%<br>(0)                    | 29.4%<br>(5) | 3%<br>(5)      |
| advanced program toward ministerial leadership                        | .7%<br>(1)                   | 5.9%<br>(1)  | 1.2%<br>(2)    |
| special/unclassified  | 0%<br>(0)                    | 11.8%<br>(2) | 1.2%<br>(2)    |
| advanced program in theological research and training                 | .7%<br>(1)                   | 0%<br>(0)    | .6%<br>(1)     |

*Attended a Non-UM and Non-University Senate-Approved Seminary or Theological School*

There were seven schools that elders and deacons attended that were not approved institutions.<sup>7</sup> The smallest amount of the newly ordained elders and deacons attended these schools (3%). Overall, 2.5% of elders/deacons received a M.Div. degree from a non approved school. Two elders/deacons received a second degree from these institutions. The degrees, both first and second, received at a non-approved school are shown in Table 6. Eleven elders (2%) and two deacons (.4%) went to these schools. Moreover, three times as many men (10) than women went to these schools. Like the other schools, no jurisdiction or annual conference was more likely to have elders and deacons attend these schools than another.

**Table 7: Breakdown of Degrees Received at a Non-UM, *and* Non-University Senate-approved Institution**

| Program Type  | Number of Students Receiving |              |             |
|---|------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
|   | Elder                        | Deacons      | Total       |
| basic program toward ministerial leadership (including M.Div. degree) | 83.3%<br>(10)                | 66.7%<br>(2) | 80%<br>(12) |
| BGTS  | 8.3%<br>(1)                  | 0%<br>(0)    | 6.7%<br>(1) |
| advanced program toward ministerial leadership                        | 8.3%<br>(1)                  | 0%<br>(0)    | 6.7%<br>(1) |
| special /unclassified   | 0%<br>(0)                    | 33.3%<br>(1) | 6.7%<br>(1) |

*So Why Do Elders and Deacons Attend Non-UM Schools?*

Degree attained, sex, and race do not appear to have influenced elders or deacons toward non-UM schools. So why did more elders and deacons choose Asbury, and the other Senate-approved non-UM schools? Part of the answer may be location. For Asbury graduates, at least, the closest UM school was United Theological Seminary, 153 miles north. Moreover, for the most widely attended Senate Approved but non-UM schools, the closest UM school was usually more than 100 miles away. For example, it may make sense that some would have chosen the Pacific School of Religion when the closest UM school was Claremont School of Theology, 400 miles away. But this does not explain why those who went to Princeton Theological Seminary chose it over Drew University Theological School,

6. Includes 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degrees received.

7. The schools attended that were not UM, or University Senate approved, were: Central Theological Seminary, Dallas Theological Seminary, Mid America Baptist, New Orleans Baptist Seminary, Seminario de Superacion Ministerial, Southern Baptist, and Southwest Baptist.

which is 40 miles away, or why some went to Brite Divinity instead of Perkins School of Theology, which is 30 miles east in the same Metroplex. Similarly, location does not explain why some chose Ashland Theological Seminary over the Methodist Theological Seminary 70 miles away? Another explanation may be that elders/deacons wanted a non-denominationally affiliated learning experience which would explain attendance at Asbury and Pacific School of Religion but not other schools. All the other top attended Senate Approved non-UM schools are denominationally affiliated (these affiliations are seen in Table 7). Perhaps the choice has to do with better financial aid and scholarships offered at these schools. No clear answer appears in this data as to why students relatively close to a United Methodist school would choose another school. Further research is needed to uncover the reasons for these choices.

**Table 8: Denominational Affiliation and Miles Away from Closest UM School of Top Attended Non-UM, but University Senate-approved Institutions**

| School                         | Denominational Affiliation             | Closest UM School                          |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Brite Divinity School          | Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) | Perkins School of Theology<br>33 miles     |
| Princeton Theological Seminary | Presbyterian                           | Drew University<br>40 miles                |
| Lancaster Theological Seminary | United Church of Christ                | Wesley Theological Seminary<br>119 miles   |
| Phillips Theological Seminary  | Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) | Saint Paul School of Theology<br>245 miles |
| Pacific School of Religion     | Ecumenical                             | Claremont School of Theology<br>404 miles  |
| Ashland Theological Seminary   | Evangelical                            | Methodist Theological School<br>68 miles   |
| Hood Theological Seminary      | African Methodist Episcopal Zion       | Duke University<br>105 miles               |
| Asbury Theological Seminary    | Ecumenical/multi-denominational        | United Theological Seminary<br>153 miles   |

## Summary

The newly ordained elders and deacons were most likely to have attended a United Methodist institution. However, many also attended a non-UM, but University Senate-approved school. In fact, 91% of the elders and deacons attended in some way a United Methodist University Senate-approved school. Asbury Theological Seminary accounted for the greatest number of elder/deacon graduates. The majority of elders and deacons, regardless of institutional affiliation, received a M.Div. degree. While race and gender do not appear to play a large role in where elders and deacons attended school and the degrees they received, women and racial minorities are more likely to attend the United Methodist schools than any other type. Roughly one third of the annual conferences reported more elders and deacons attending a non-UM school than a UM school; however, no jurisdiction was more likely to have elders and deacons attending a UM school than not.

## Conclusion

It is not surprising that the majority of the newly ordained elders and deacons went to a United Methodist school. Nor is it surprising that most of the ordained elders and deacons have M.Div. degrees or degrees in a basic program toward ministerial leadership. However, it is surprising that Asbury Theological Seminary (not a UM, but University Senate-approved institution) had the most elder/deacon graduates. Moreover, it is encouraging that racial minorities and women are more likely to attend a United Methodist school than any other.

## **Appendix**

Non-UM but University Senate-approved Schools with fewer than five elder/deacon attendants:

Andover Newton, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Bangor, Chicago Theological Seminary, Christian Theological Seminary, Eastern Baptist, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Eden Theological Seminary, Erskine (Mexico), Evangelical School of Theology, Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, Fuller Theological Seminary, Gordon-Conwell (Wesley), Harvard Divinity School, Memphis Theological Seminary, Palmer Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Reformed Theological, Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry, Sioux Falls Seminary, The School of Theology at the University of the South, Southeastern Baptist, Union Theological Seminary, Union Theological Seminary & Presbyterian School of Christian Education, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, and Vanderbilt University Divinity School.