

**CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS:
END OF YEAR 2001**

**A Summary of the Research Data Received
Through the *Congregational Annual Report***



**Research Services
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**

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Introduction

Each year, the Research Services office develops the *Congregational Annual Report* form, a questionnaire that the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) distributes, along with the *Session Annual Statistical Report*, to all congregations. Research Services staff work with other entities of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to develop questions for inclusion in the *Congregational Annual Report* form. Instructions that accompany the form suggest that the clerk of session of each congregation complete it, reporting pertinent information for the congregation.

The 2001 *Congregational Annual Report* form included questions in the following areas: (a) International Relationships, (b) Training for Church Leaders and New Member Preparation, (c) Guest Preachers, (d) Stewardship, and (e) Curriculum. For 2001, 8,827 of the denomination's 11,142 congregations reported—a response rate of 80%. The results of the 2001 Congregational Annual Report include congregations in 159 presbyteries in 16 synods. The presbyteries that did not report are Beaver-Butler, Cascades, Dakota, Grace, Grand Canyon, Heartland, John Calvin, Lackawanna, New York City, Plains and Peaks, San Joaquin, Sierra Mission Partnership, Snake River Mission Area, Southern New England, and Yukon presbyteries.

Findings

The text of all questions and the percentage distribution of responses for each are presented in the attached appendix. A summary of the findings is presented below.

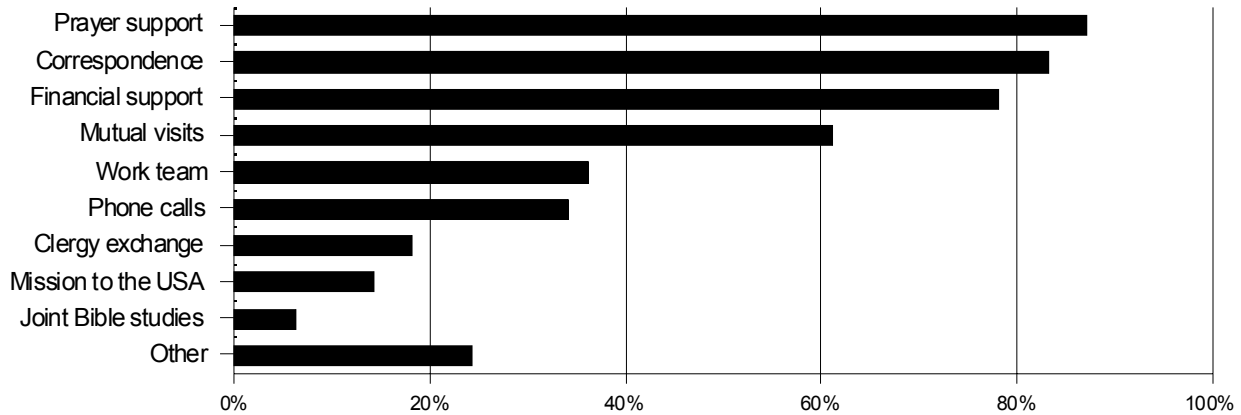
International Relationships

Eleven percent of the responding congregations reported that they have established a partner/sister/twinning relationship with an overseas congregation, agency or institution. Of those 972 churches, 90% (874 churches) established their relationship between 1990 and the present time. Larger congregations were more likely than smaller congregations to report such relationships. Almost one-third (32%) of churches with more than 600 members have established a partner relationship with an overseas congregation, agency or institution. This compares to 19% of mid-size congregations (251-600 members) and 7% of small congregations (250 or fewer members). There was very little difference by geographical region in the percentage of congregations with such relationships.

A follow-up question asked about the specific activities that have occurred within these international relationships. As can be seen in Figure 1, the activities occurring most often are in the areas of prayer support (87%), correspondence (83%), and financial support (78%). Many congregations reported more than one type of activity.

Figure 1
Activities Occurring Within International Relationships
(n=972)

International Relationships

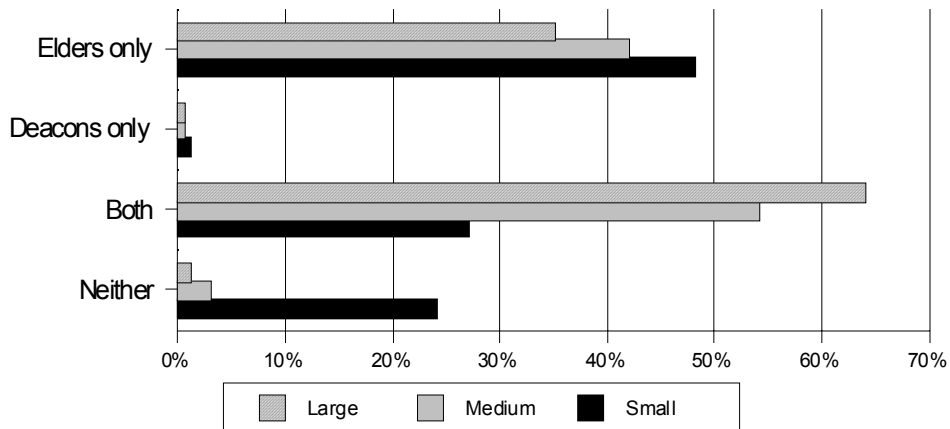


Note: Percentages add to more than 100 because respondents were asked to mark all that apply.

Training for Church Leaders

Almost half of the respondents (46%) said their session provides training for newly-elected elders, and another 35% reported that their session provides training for both newly-elected elders and newly-elected deacons. Sessions of small churches are less likely to provide training for newly-elected deacons and more likely to *not* provide training for either group of new officers. Medium-size and large congregations are more likely to provide training for both elders *and* deacons. Figure 2 shows the percentage of churches by size that provided training for newly elected elders, deacons, or both.

Figure 2
Congregations that Provide Training for Newly-Elected Officers, By Membership Size



In 90% of congregations providing new officer training, that training is lead by the pastor or head of staff. Three-quarter of congregations (75%) that provide new leader training used self-developed resources. In addition, 16% used *Called to Serve*, 10% used the Companion to the Constitution, and 18% used the video

entitled “So You’ve Been Elected Elder/Deacon.” Twenty-seven percent of the respondents said their congregations used a variety of other materials for such training.

Nearly two-thirds of the reporting congregations (63%) said that there had been continuing education for elders and deacons in their congregations in the previous year. Three-fourths of the congregations that provided training for new elders and deacons also provided continuing education for their present elders and deacons. As Table 1 shows, the majority of congregations offering continuing education for elders and deacons conducted such training during regular session meetings; however, there were several other settings for this training.

Table 1
Setting for Continuing Education of Elders and Deacons

At regular session meetings.....	65%
Retreats.....	44%
Presbytery/Synod events	38%
Home study	7%
Other.....	12%

Note: Only the 5,406 respondents who reported offering continuing education for elders and deacons in their congregations answered this question. Percentages add to more than 100 because respondents were asked to check all that apply.

New Member Preparation

More than half of the respondents (65%) said their session provides preparation for adults who became members of the congregation in 2001. In 90% of those congregations, such training is lead by the pastor or head of staff. More than three-quarters of congregations with new member classes in 2001 (84%) used self-developed resources in those classes. In addition, 15% used Scriptograph, 9% used Members Together, 7% used the video entitled “So You’re Becoming a New Member,” and 19% used a variety of other materials.

As Table 2 shows, theology, sacraments, and worship had more time spent on them during adult new member preparation than other subjects. The least amount of time was spent teaching about local church history.

Table 2
Time Spent on Adult New Member Preparation Topics

	A lot or some time	A little time	No time
Theology/sacraments/worship	88%	11%	1%
Presbyterian polity	74%	24%	2%
Presbyterian history	73%	23%	3%
Mission	72%	25%	4%
Stewardship.....	67%	29%	4%
Local church history	67%	28%	5%

Note: Only the 5,672 respondents who reported their congregations offered new member preparation in 2001 answered this question.

Efforts to Foster Continued Spiritual Growth of Members

The settings most frequently used by responding congregations to provide programs designed specifically for the continued spiritual growth of their members are worship (91%) and Sunday education or church school (87%). Two-thirds of responding congregations (66%) said weekday and weeknight events are used for this purpose, while 44% use take home materials, and 31% reported retreats as settings for programs to encourage spiritual growth.

Guest Preachers

In 1999, the General Assembly urged congregations to invite racial ethnic ministers to preach during Sunday worship services at least once a year. Less than one-third of reporting congregations (31%) said they had invited a racial ethnic minister to preach in 2001 (this does not include the congregation's own pastor if he or she is racial ethnic). This is a slight increase from 29% in 2000. Large congregations with more than 600 members are more likely to have invited a racial ethnic minister to preach (44% did) than are mid-size or small congregations. Of small congregations with less than 250 members, 29% invited such a guest preacher, as did 35% of mid-size congregations (251-600 members). There are also differences by region. Congregations in the West (43%) and Northeast (35%) are more likely to have invited a racial ethnic minister to preach than churches in the South (30%) and Midwest (25%).

Of the 31% who said they had invited a racial ethnic minister in 2001, 52% invited a guest preacher on one Sunday, and another 23% asked such ministers to preach on two Sundays in 2001. Eight percent of responding congregations invited a racial ethnic minister to preach during Sunday worship services for six or more Sundays in 2001.

Congregations that did not invite racial ethnic ministers to preach in 2001 were asked when the last time was that they had done so. Table 3 reflects their answers. Four in ten had done so in the previous three years.

Table 3
Last Time a Racial Ethnic Minister Was Invited to Preach
Among Congregations that Did Not Do so in 2001

During 2000	20%
2 - 3 years ago	21%
4 - 6 years ago	12%
7 - 9 years ago	5%
10 years or more.....	15%
Never.....	27%

Note: Only the 5,913 congregations that did not invite a racial ethnic minister to serve as guest preacher in 2001 were asked to answer this question.

Stewardship

Two-thirds of responding congregations (67%) said that they had conducted a financial stewardship campaign in 2001. The majority of these congregations (68%) reported direct mail as the primary method used for their financial campaign. Other congregations reported using Consecration Sunday (16%), personal

delivery such as Pony Express (5%), every member visitation (3%), telephone solicitation (1%), or a variety of other means (6%) as the primary method to conduct their financial stewardship campaign in 2001.

The majority of respondents (66%) said that their congregation has a stewardship education emphasis. Of those congregations, 39% said they spent a month or less per year on stewardship education; almost one quarter (23%) reported that their congregations has a year-round stewardship education emphasis; 17% said the emphasis was on one Sunday per year; and 16% spent two to three months per year on stewardship education.

Most of the responding congregations (89%) emphasize non-financial aspects of stewardship in their stewardship campaigns. Slightly more than one-third (34%) said they emphasize non-financial aspects to a great extent, and 55% do so to some extent. Table 4 shows the non-financial aspects of stewardship that congregations emphasized in the last year.

Table 4
Non-Financial Aspects of Stewardship Emphasized by Congregations

Time	91%
Talent.....	88%
Community service.....	70%
Personal well-being	27%
Environment	16%
Other	6%

Note: Percentages add to more than 100 because respondents were asked to mark all that apply.

Curriculum

Congregations were asked what curriculum package(s) they are presently using. Each congregation could mark as many as apply from a list of 15 possibilities. One-fifth of the responding congregations (20%) use David C. Cook, and almost a fifth use Cokesbury (19%) or Present Word (18%) or write their own materials (18%). All other curriculum packages were used by less than 18% of the congregations. Faith Weavers (4%) was the least used curriculum package among the 15 options listed.