General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

# Quadrennial Local Church Survey 2007

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In preparation for every General Conference since 1970, the GCSRW has conducted a survey of local churches in the United States. The main purpose of the survey it to assess the status of women as church leaders, measure any progress regarding ongoing issues such as inclusive language and sexual harassment, and provide an opportunity for local churches to address the Commission with emerging issues of concern. The following is the summary of the results of the tenth survey.

## Methods

A random sample of 1035 United Methodist churches were contacted and asked to complete a questionnaire. Of those, 271 surveys were returned, providing a 26.2% return rate, much like the return rate in 2003 of 28.5%. While this rate does not provide results that are easily generalizable, there are reasons to believe that the returned surveys do well represent the larger UMC in the United States. In particular, the percentages of women Bishops and District Superintendents indicated in the surveys (71.5% and 73.8% respectively) match very closely with those currently serving Annual Conferences (70% and 73.3%). In addition, the percentage of surveys returned from the five Jurisdictions (21.5%, 19.6%, 22.5%, 27.7% and 5.9%) do not differ significantly (chi-square = 8.42, df = 4, not significant at the 0.05 level) from the real percentages of churches in each Jurisdiction (21.3%, 21.3%, 17.4%, 34.7%, and 5.3% respectively). Those measures are three good indications that the findings from the returned surveys can cautiously be considered representative of the UMC in the United States.

Note throughout that figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number for ease of comparison and that when rows and/or columns do not add up to 100%, it is because of this rounding, or in some cases, respondents were allowed to select more than one option. Also, some numbers measuring the same item may differ slightly table to table. This is due to the fact that some respondents left items blank, causing missing data for some items and not others. And finally, all associations were measured using chi-square, except in cases where more than 20% of expected frequencies were less than 5 and/or cells included counts of 1 or less. In those cases, the Fisher's Exact test was run as a corrective.

## Women in Leadership

Congregational leadership can take many forms. Table 1 depicts the number of women leading in some of the most obvious ways: pastor, lay leader and director of music. Note only negligible changes from 2003 to 2007.

**Table 1: Women in Worship Leadership**

| Leadership Role | 2003 | 2007 |
|---|---|---|
| **Lead or Sole Pastor** | 27% | 31% |
| **Associate Pastor** | 45% | 49% |
| **Lay Leader** | 43% | 47% |
| **Director of Music** | 71% | 68% |

One of the most recently discussed statistics is the low number of women serving the very largest churches, those with membership of 1000 or more. Table 2 depicts those figures for the last three quadrennia.

**Table 2: Women Senior Pastors in Churches with 1000 Members or more**

| | |
|---|---|
| **1999** | 2% |
| **2003** | 5% |
| **2007** | 7% |

Although the slight increase is promising, there is still a statistically significant correlation between size of church and the gender of the pastor; men and women are equally likely to serve medium sized churches, but women are more likely to serve smaller churches and men are more likely to serve large ones, as seen in Table 3 (Hereafter, percentages will be marked as such and number of respondents will appear in parentheses).

**Table 3: Church Size by Gender of Pastor**

| | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|
| **Small (< 100)** | 24% | 35% |
| **Medium (100-500)** | 60% | 60% |
| **Large (>500)** | 17% | 5% |
| **Total** | 100% (179) | 100% (83) |

$x^2 = 8.7$, df = 2, $p \leq 0.05$

Another form of leadership is assisting with worship as ushers and liturgists. Table 4 shows the percentages of women in those roles for 2003 and 2007.

**Table 4: Women Ushers and Liturgists**

| Percent Women | Ushers 2003 | Ushers 2007 | Liturgists 2003 | Liturgists 2007 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0** | 16% | 18% | 6% | 3% |
| **1 - 33%** | 32% | 31% | 16% | 14% |
| **34 - 66%** | 38% | 44% | 48% | 52% |
| **67 - 100%** | 14% | 5% | 31% | 30% |

Although there has been very little change in any of these categories, it is notable that almost one in five churches has no women ushers at all. This is particularly true of smaller churches with membership under 100. Although large churches are also the least likely to use mostly or all women, that is not desirable either. Ideally, women and men serve as ushers equally, or close to it, depending on the actual members available. See Table 5 for those results.

**Table 5: Women Ushers by Church Size**

| Church Size | Percent Women Ushers | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **0%** | **1 - 33%** | **34 - 66%** | **67 - 100%** | **Total** |
| **Small (<100)** | 29% | 27% | 39% | 5% | 100% (59) |
| **Medium (100-500)** | 16% | 36% | 41% | 7% | 100% (153) |
| **Large (>500)** | 3% | 35% | 62% | 0% | 100% (34) |
| **Total** | (43) | (83) | (107) | (13) | N = 246 |

$x^2 = 14.902$, df = 6, $p \leq 0.05$

Another way for women to provide leadership is by guest preaching. This is particularly important in churches with only male pastors. Just over half of such churches had a clergywoman preach in the last year, and about three quarters of all surveyed had a lay woman preach. The exact breakdown can be seen in Table 6.

**Table 6: Women as Guest Preachers in 2006**

| | Clergywomen | Lay Women |
|---|---|---|
| **0** | 45% | 23% |
| **1 -3 times** | 33% | 57% |
| **4 – 8 times** | 12% | 15% |
| **9 times or more** | 10% | 5% |
| **Total** | 100% (186) | 100% (250) |

Among those churches that use acolytes, larger churches are less likely to use all boys than smaller churches and also, larger churches are most likely to have an even mix of girls and boys. Also, among those churches that do not have an even mix of boys and girls, it is more likely to find all girl acolytes than boys. These figures appear in Table 7.

**Table 7: Gender of Acolytes by Church Size**

| | All/Mostly Boys | All/Mostly Girls | Even Gender Mix | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Small (< 100)** | 25% | 37% | 38% | 100% (60) |
| **Medium (100-500)** | 13% | 30% | 57% | 100% (145) |
| **Large (>500)** | 3% | 18% | 79% | 100% (34) |
| **Total** | 14% (35) | 30% (71) | 55% (133) | N = 239 |

$x^2 = 17.201$, df = 4, $p \leq 0.01$

A common way women can provide leadership in the local church is through chairing committees. This year's survey found the continuation of a long term trend: that men are more likely to serve as chairs of administrative committees and women are more likely to chair programmatic committees. This is particularly notable in that many of those surveyed commented on how hard it to get men to serve in church leadership positions at all. Respondents wrote, "Our issue is getting men to participate and lead in the church" and "Women take many leadership roles because men sit back and won't accept these church roles even though they are encouraged." One respondent spoke as if this is a growing trend, saying, "The church in general is losing its male leadership." Indeed, it is true that taken together, most committee chairs are women. In addition though, we note the unchanging prevalence of men in administrative

leadership positions (Church Council, Trustees, and Finance are all more likely to be chaired by men; SPRC chairs are the close exception, at 52% women) and women in programmatic leadership, which was first found in the 1996 study (Is this true? It was cited in 1996, but was that the first time?). Table 8 summarizes the data on committee chairs. Note that the only committee never chaired by a man is that on the Status and Role of Women, except in one church where the position is shared. On the other hand, no committee is chaired only by men.

**Table 8: Gender of Committee Chairs**

| | Men | Women | Both |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Church Council** | 56% (146) | 34% (90) | 10% (27) |
| **Trustees** | 80% (212) | 15% (39) | 5% (13) |
| **Finance** | 52% (137) | 41% (109) | 7% (17) |
| **SPRC** | 43% (115) | 52% (138) | 5% (12) |
| **Education** | 10% (22) | 87% (195) | 3% (6) |
| **Worship** | 13% (28) | 83% (179) | 4% (9) |
| **Evangelism** | 28% (45) | 70% (113) | 2% (4) |
| **Missions** | 16% (32) | 77% (155) | 7% (14) |
| **Religion & Race** | 14% (6) | 79% (34) | 7% (3) |
| **Status & Role of Women** | 0 | 98% (42) | 2% (1) |
| **Ecumenical Concerns** | 14% (5) | 86% (30) | 0 |
| **Social Justice Concerns** | 19% (11) | 78% (46) | 3% (2) |
| **Higher Education** | 20% (11) | 80% (43) | 0 |
| **Children's Ministries** | 4% (9) | 93% (188) | 3% (6) |
| **Youth Ministries** | 20% (36) | 67% (124) | 13% (24) |
| **Youth Group** | 23% (37) | 59% (97) | 18% (30) |
| **Young Adult Ministries** | 29% (20) | 54% (37) | 17% (12) |
| **Adult Ministries** | 26% (27) | 63% (64) | 11% (11) |
| **Family Ministries** | 12% (12) | 80% (80) | 85 (8) |
| **Nurture** | 7% (10) | 89% (124) | 4% (5) |
| **Outreach** | 20% (29) | 74% (106) | 6% (8) |
| **Witness** | 17% (16) | 77% (74) | 6% (6) |
| **Total** | 29% (966) | 64% (2107) | 7% (218) |

There are a number of interesting statistically significant correlations regarding committee chairs related to Jurisdiction, race/ethnicity, community type, church size and gender of the pastor.[1] First, the Northeastern Jurisdiction is the only one in which the chair of the Church Council is more likely to be a woman than a man. Also, in churches made up of primarily racial/ethnic members,[2] the Church Council chair is more likely to be a woman than in primarily white churches. Those figures appear in Tables 9 (listed in order of percentage of women chairs) and 10.

[1] To simplify these comparisons, the category of "both" for committees chaired by two persons (one of each gender) was omitted.

[2] Because so few churches with primarily racial/ethnic membership (22) responded to the survey, for statistical purposes, all racial/ethnic churches had to be combined. Therefore, the differences between racial/ethnic groups could not be determined.

**Table 9: Gender of Church Council Chair by Jurisdiction**

| | Men | Women | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Northeastern** | 40% (18) | 60% (26) | 100% (44) |
| **Western** | 53% (8) | 47% (7) | 100% (15) |
| **South Central** | 59% (34) | 41% (24) | 100% (58) |
| **North Central** | 71% (36) | 29% (15) | 100% (51) |
| **Southeastern** | 72% (42) | 28% (16) | 100% (58) |
| **Total** | 61% (138) | 39% (88) | N = 226 |

$x^2 = 13.128$, df = 4, $p \leq 0.05$

**Table 10: Gender of Church Council Chair by Race/Ethnicity of Congregation**

| | Men | Women | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **White** | 65% (134) | 35% (73) | 100% (207) |
| **Racial/Ethnic** | 25% (5) | 75% (15) | 100% (20) |
| **Total** | (61%) 139 | 39% (88) | N = 227 |

$x^2 = 12.130$, df = 1, $p \leq 0.001$

Another interesting connection is that between the gender of Finance Committee chairs and both community type and church size. Perhaps not surprising, larger communities and larger churches (these often go together) are more likely to have men as chairs of the Finance Committee. Those figures appear in Tables 11 and 12.

**Table 11: Gender of Finance Committee Chair by Community Type**

| | Men | Women | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural** | 47% (70) | 53% (78) | 100% (148) |
| **Small City Area** | 62% (25) | 37% (15) | 100% (40) |
| **Large Urban Area** | 73% (36) | 27% (13) | 100% (49) |
| **Total** | 55% (131) | 45% (106) | N = 237 |

$x^2 = 11.216$, df = 2, $p \leq 0.01$

**Table 12: Gender of Finance Committee Chair by Church Size**

| | Men | Women | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Small (<100)** | 36% (21) | 64% (38) | 100% (59) |
| **Medium (100-500)** | 56% (83) | 44% (65) | 100% (148) |
| **Large (>500)** | 87% (27) | 13% (4) | 100% (31) |
| **Total** | 55% (131) | 45% (107) | N = 238 |

$x^2 = 21.955$, df = 2, $p \leq 0.001$

Size of church is also related to the gender of the SPRC chair. Again, large churches are more likely to choose men for that that position, as illustrated in Table 13.

**Table 13: Gender of SPRC Chair by Church Size**

| | Men | Women | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Small (<100)** | 34% (21) | 66% (41) | 100% (62) |
| **Medium (100-500)** | 46% (69) | 54% (82) | 100% (151) |
| **Large (> 500)** | 68% (21) | (32% (10) | 100% (31) |
| **Total** | 45% (111) | 55% (133) | N = 244 |

$x^2 = 9.568$, df = 2, $p \leq 0.01$

Also, the gender of the pastor is significantly linked to the gender of the chairs of three committees: Trustees, Worship and Witness. Interestingly, this relationship is not consistently positive. That is, churches with women pastors are more likely to have men as chairs of the Trustees, but women as chairs of Worship and Witness. Could it seem even more important, where a woman is pastor, for a man to oversee the property of a church? Might a woman pastor be more willing to work with a woman to plan worship, or are women members more willing to work on worship planning with a woman pastor? Frankly, the correlation between gender of pastor and the Witness committee chair is more curious, but significant nonetheless; in fact, where there is a woman pastor, there are no men who chair the Witness committee. All of these figures are displayed in Tables 14 through 16.

**Table 14: Gender Trustee Chair by Gender of Pastor**

| | Male Chair | Female Chair | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Male Pastor** | 81% (142) | 19% (33) | 100% (175) |
| **Female Pastor** | 92% (70) | 8% (6) | 100% (76) |
| **Total** | 84% (212) | 16% (39) | N = 251 |

$x^2 = 4.852$, df = 1, $p \leq 0.05$

**Table 15: Gender of Worship Committee Chair by Gender of Pastor**

| | Male Chair | Female Chair | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Male Pastor** | 18% (26) | 82% (119) | 100% (145) |
| **Female Pastor** | 3% (2) | 97% (60) | 100% (62) |
| **Total** | 14% (28) | 86% (179) | N = 207 |

$x^2 = 8.029$, df = 1, $p \leq 0.01$

**Table 16: Gender of Witness Committee Chair by Gender of Pastor**

| | Male Chair | Female Chair | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Male Pastor** | 24% (16) | 76% (50) | 100% (66) |
| **Female Pastor** | 0 | 100% (24) | 100% (24) |
| **Total** | 18% (16) | 82% (74) | N = 90 |

$x^2 = 7.076$, df = 1, $p \leq 0.01$ (Fisher's Exact correction run to account for cell with 0)

Finally, the majority of churches said their Lay Leadership/Nominations Committee intentionally seeks gender balance (84%) and that the church is deliberate in recruiting women and girls to lead in worship (78%). Note that larger membership churches are more likely to say they are deliberate in recruiting women and girls to lead in worship, as illustrated in Table 17.

**Table 17: Deliberate Recruitment of Women/Girls Worship Leaders by Community Type**

| Church Membership Size | "We are deliberate in recruiting women and girls as leaders in worship" | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Agree** | **Disagree** | **Total** |
| **Small (<100)** | 66% (44) | 34% (23) | 100% (67) |
| **Medium (100-500)** | 81% (121) | 19% (29) | 100% (150) |
| **Large (>500)** | 94% (32) | 6% (2) | 100% (34) |
| **Total** | 78% (197) | 22% (54) | N = 251 |

$x^2 = 11.858$, df = 2, $p \leq 0.01$

**Inclusive Language**

Inclusive language was one of the foci of the GCSRW in the 1980s, culminating in the production of the study guide, *Words that Hurt, Words that Heal* in 1985. That resource was used broadly in the early 1990s, but declined thereafter. Since then, it seems that little progress has been made. One respondent wrote, "Jesus referred to God as His Father. Why does this survey question this?" Another pastor wrote that inclusive language is very important to him, but not to his congregation. This year's survey attempted to assess both the current usage of and concern about inclusive language through a number of questions. Summary results for each of those questions follow. The first questions asked about terminology used by clergy and laity when referring to God and/or people. As seen in Table 18, the pastor quoted above is not alone: clergy report that they are more comfortable using gender inclusive terms for God (Father/Mother or Parent/Creator) than laity, who are happier with the term "Father." Still, the large majority of both groups tend to use male-only language for God. Notably, no one indicated that they were most comfortable with the term "Mother," so that option does not appear in the Table.

**Table 18: Clergy and Lay Language about God**

| | When talking about God, we are most comfortable with the term(s): | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Father** | **Father/Mother or Parent/Creator** | **Total** |
| **Clergy** | 68% (173) | 32% (80) | N = 253 |
| **Laity** | 95% (251) | 5% (13) | N = 264 |

$x^2 = 60.62$, df= 1, $p \leq 0.001$

In answer to a similar question, it was reported that clergy are more comfortable using the word "humankind" when referring to "all people," as illustrated in Table 19. Here, the large majority of clergy use inclusive language for people, though most laity do not.

**Table 19: Clergy and Lay Language about People**

| | **Mankind** | **Humankind** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Clergy** | 20% (54) | 79% (209) | N = 263 |
| **Laity** | 65% (166) | 35% (91) | N = 257 |

$x^2 = 101.58$, df = 1, $p \leq 0.001$

To better understand the distribution of exactly who is using inclusive language, it is important to look at how it is related to other variables. In short, one is more likely to hear inclusive language of some sort in larger churches, in larger communities, in churches where there are women pastors, and in the Western Jurisdiction. Those statistically significant relationships which are shown in Tables 20 through 23.

**Table 20: Churches Where Clergy/Laity Use Inclusive Language by Size**

| | **Churches Using Inclusive Language** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Laity for People** | **Clergy for People** | **Laity for God** | **Clergy for God** |
| **Small (<100)** | 24% | 63% | 1% | 16% |
| **Medium (100-500)** | 36% | 84% | 3% | 34% |
| **Large (>500)** | 58% | 94% | 19% | 48% |
| **Total** | 36% (89) | 80% (203) | 5% (12) | 31% (76) |
| significance level | $p \leq 0.01$ | $p \leq 0.001$ | $p \leq 0.001$ | $p \leq 0.01$ |

**Table 21: Communities Where Clergy/Laity Use Inclusive Language for God by Type**

| | **Churches Using Inclusive Language for God** | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Clergy** | **Laity** |
| **Rural** | 24% | 2% |
| **Small City Area** | 35% | 7% |
| **Large Urban Area** | 52% | 10% |
| **All Clergy/Laity** | 31% (76) | 4% (11) |
| significance level | $p \leq 0.001$ | $p \leq 0.05$ |

**Table 22: Clergy Who Use Inclusive Language by Gender**

| | **Inclusive Language for God** | **Inclusive Language for People** |
|---|---|---|
| **Male Clergy** | 25% | 75% |
| **Female Clergy** | 46% | 90% |
| **All Clergy** | 32% (80) | 79% (209) |
| significance level | $p \leq 0.001$ | $p \leq 0.01$ |

**Table 23: Clergy Who Use Inclusive Language for God by Jurisdiction**

| | **Father** | **Father/Mother or Parent/Creator** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Western** | 42% (5) | 58% (7) | 100% (12) |
| **South Central** | 63% (37) | 37% (22) | 100% (59) |
| **Northeastern** | 64% (34) | 36% (19) | 100% (53) |
| **North Central** | 65% (33) | 35% (18) | 100% (51) |
| **Southeastern** | 85% (58) | 15% (10) | 100% (68) |
| **Total** | 69% (167) | 31% (76) | N = 243 |

$x^2 = 14.665$, df = 4, $p \leq 0.01$

Two questions were asked regarding the church's views on inclusive language. Most respondents indicated that inclusive language is not a priority for their churches (64%) and in

fact, that "it would be considered a frivolous concern" (58%). These responses differed though, depending on church size, type of community and race/ethnicity of most members. That is, those from large churches and communities are more likely to see inclusive language as important and not frivolous, and most respondents from primarily racial/ethnic congregations do not see the issue as frivolous, whereas those from primarily white churches do. Tables 24 through 26 show this data.

**Table 24: "Inclusive Language is a Priority"/"Considered a Frivolous Concern" by Size**

| | **Priority** | **Frivolous** |
|---|---|---|
| **Small (<100)** | 25% | 73% |
| **Medium (100-500)** | 36% | 56% |
| **Large (>500)** | 65% | 29% |
| **All Churches** | 37% (95) | 57% (147) |
| significance level | $p \leq 0.001$ | $p \leq 0.001$ |

**Table 25: "Inclusive Language a Priority"/"Frivolous Concern" by Community Type**

| | **Priority** | **Frivolous** |
|---|---|---|
| **Rural** | 29% | 66% |
| **Small City Area** | 41% | 52% |
| **Large Urban Area** | 57% | 37% |
| **All Churches** | 37% (94) | 58% (147) |
| significance level | $p \leq 0.01$ | $p \leq 0.001$ |

**Table 26: "Inclusive Language a Frivolous Concern" by Race/Ethnicity**

| | **Agree** | **Disagree** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **White** | 60% (141) | 40% (95) | 100% (236) |
| **Racial/Ethnic** | 33% (7) | 67% (14) | 100% (21) |
| **Total** | 58% (148) | 42% (109) | N = 257 |

$x^2 = 5.508$, df = 1, $p \leq 0.05$

To get an idea about actual use of inclusive language, questions were asked about the version of the Bible used in worship, the hymnal that is used, and the version of the doxology (if any) which is sung. The most commonly used Bible is the New Revised Standard Version (54%, up from 46% in 2004) which uses inclusive language for humanity with male God language. This was followed by the New International Version (32% up from 21% in 2004) which uses male language for both God and people. (Is that true? I don't have an NIV to check.) *The United Methodist Hymna*l and/or *The Faith We Sing* is used by the large majority of congregations (75%, up from 62% in 2004); no other hymnal comes close, although a wide variety of resources are used by 51% of churches, including those who use *The United Methodist Hymnal* as their primary hymnal.

Respondents indicated the version of the doxology they use by choosing from three options: the traditional male God version (*UM Hymnal* #94), an inclusive language version also found in the hymnal (#95), and a simple inclusive language adaptation of the first option, changing "Him" to "God" and ending with "Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost." Since we wanted to compare use of inclusive language, the last two options were combined for analysis. As a

result, we found that Inclusive language versions are more likely to be heard in large churches and in the Western Jurisdiction, as seen in Tables 27 and 28.

**Table 27: Churches Using Traditional or Inclusive Language Doxology by Size**

| | Traditional | Inclusive | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Small (<100)** | 97% (68) | 3% (2) | 100% (70) |
| **Medium (100-500)** | 82% (125) | 18% (28) | 100% (153) |
| **Large (>500)** | 62% (20) | 37% (12) | 100% (255) |
| **All Churches** | 84% (213) | 16% (42) | N = 255 |

$x^2 = 20.088$, df = 2, $p \leq 0.001$

**Table 28: Churches Using Traditional or Inclusive Language Doxology by Jurisdiction**

| | Traditional | Inclusive | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Western** | 50% (7) | 50% (7) | 100% (14) |
| **Northeastern** | 77% (41) | 23% (12) | 100% (53) |
| **North Central** | 85% (47) | 15% (8) | 100% (55) |
| **South Central** | 86% (50) | 14% (8) | 100% (58) |
| **Southeastern** | 91% (68) | 9% (7) | 100% (75) |
| **All Churches** | 84% (213) | 16% (42) | N = 255 |

$x^2 = 16.135$, df = 4, $p \leq 0.01$

Finally, respondents were asked if in the last year, anyone had suggested a word change or a different hymnal so as to achieve more inclusive language, and/or if there had been an organized study about gender and language. The overwhelming majority of churches answered no to both: 90% of respondents said no word/hymnal change had been requested, and 93% indicated that there had been no study of gender and language. Again though, each of these differed significantly by church size and community type. That is, although no church is likely to have heard concerns about or studied inclusive language, one is more likely to encounter both in larger communities and larger churches than in smaller ones, as seen in Tables 29 and 30.

**Table 29: Word/Hymnal Change and/or Study of Inclusive Language by Community Type**

| | Word/Hymnal Change Requested | Study Held |
|---|---|---|
| **Rural** | 4% | 4% |
| **Small City Area** | 16% | 11% |
| **Large Urban Area** | 28% | 19% |
| **All Churches** | 11% (27) | 7% (19) |
| significance level | $p \leq 0.001$ | $p \leq 0.01$ |

**Table 30: Word/Hymnal Change and/or Studying Inclusive Language by Size**

| | Word/Hymnal Change Requested | Study Held |
|---|---|---|
| **Small (<100)** | 4% | 3% |
| **Medium (100-500)** | 7% | 6% |
| **Large (>500)** | 42% | 24% |
| **All Churches** | 11% (27) | 7% (19) |
| significance level | $p \leq 0.001$ | $p \leq 0.001$ |

It seems fair to say that inclusive language is little used, even less studied, and of only slight concern to most United Methodists.

**Sexual Harassment Training and Policies**

The 1996 General Conference mandated that each Annual Conference and local church adopt a sexual harassment policy. The GCSRW has tried to monitor the denomination's progress toward that goal. Table 31 summarizes the figures for those churches that indicated they did/do have such a policy since 1995, the year before the mandate was instituted. Note that, with two exceptions (possibly due to sampling issues), more and more churches of every size continue to show a steady increase in the percentage with sexual harassment policies. The very smallest churches continue to have the longest way to go toward the goal of 100%, but in every other category, at least six out of ten churches are in compliance, and in the largest churches, that number is almost nine out of ten.

**Table 31: Churches with Sexual Harassment Policies by Membership Size**

| | 1995 | 1999 | 2003 | 2007 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1-50** | 9% | 15% | 33% | 34% |
| **51-100** | 18% | 19% | 61% | 73% |
| **101-300/100-200 (03/07)** | 15% | 41% | 56% | 60% |
| **301-500/201-500 (03/07)** | 26% | 41% | 65% | 62% |
| **501-1000** | 30% | 64% | 76% | 75% |
| **1000+** | 36% | 33% | 75% | 86% |

Ninety percent of pastors have attended at least one sexual ethics training, and just over three quarters (76%) found it to be helpful. In addition, just over one fourth (28%) have participated in supplementary training. Not surprisingly, whether or not a church has a policy is positively related to whether or not the pastor has attended such training. See Table 32 for those responses.

**Table 32: Pastors with Training by Churches with Policies**

| | Church has Policy | No Policy | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Sexual Ethics Training** | 65% (155) | 35% (84) | 100% (239) |
| **No Training** | 31% (8) | 69% (18) | 100% (26) |
| **Total** | 61% (163) | 39% (102) | N = 265 |

$x^2 = 11.506$, df = 1, $p \leq 0.001$

Attending a sexual ethics training and having sexual harassment policy is also related to church size, as illustrated in Table 33. In short, those from larger churches are more likely to have a policy, and they are even more likely to have attended a training.

**Table 33: Churches with Policies and Pastors with Training by Church Size**

| | Church has Policy | Pastor Attended Training |
|---|---|---|
| **Small (<100)** | 54% (39) | 80% (57) |
| **Medium (100-500)** | 61% (95) | 93% (142) |
| **Large (>500)** | 79% (27) | 97% (32) |
| **Total** | 61% (161) | 90% (231) |
| significance level | $p \leq 0.05$ | $p \leq 0.01$ |

In addition, churches from mid-sized and large communities are more likely to have sexual harassment policies. Those figures appear in Table 34.

**Table 34: Churches with a Sexual Harassment Policy by Community Type**

| | Church has Policy |
|---|---|
| **Rural** | 55% (165) |
| **Small City Area** | 73% (44) |
| **Large Urban Area** | 62% (51) |
| **Total** | 62% (161) |

$x^2 = 8.814$, df = 2, $p \leq 0.05$

**Pastoral Care Issues for Women**

Finally, respondents were asked about the specific concerns women and girls bring to pastoral care settings. A list of 16 options was given, and a space for "other" topics was provided. The percentages for all the issues listed appear in Table 35, from the most to the least commonly cited concerns.

**Table 35: Pastors Reporting Specific Pastoral Care Issues for Women**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Marriage/Divorce** | 62% |
| **Depression** | 51% |
| **Aging Parents** | 50% |
| **Finances** | 48% |
| **Employment** | 42% |
| **Work/Family Balance** | 36% |
| **Parenting** | 35% |
| **Alcoholism/Drug Addiction** | 32% |
| **Child Care** | 27% |
| **Mental Illness** | 22% |
| **Domestic Violence** | 20% |
| **Unplanned Pregnancy** | 14% |
| **Abusiveness to One's Children** | 12% |
| **Child Abuse** | 11% |
| **Sexual Harassment and Misconduct** | 12% |
| **Rape** | 11% |

Interestingly, some of these issues are more prevalent than others, depending on the community type, the size of the church, the racial/ethnic makeup of the congregation, and most

significantly, the gender of the pastor. Those statistically significant relationships are depicted in Tables 36 through 39.

**Table 36: Pastoral Care Issues Related to Community Type**

| | **Rural** | **Small City Area** | **Large Urban Area** | sig. level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Marriage/Divorce** | 58% | 7% | 71% | $p \leq 0.05$ |
| **Work/Family** | 28% | 57% | 53% | $p \leq 0.001$ |
| **Child Care** | 23% | 29% | 43% | $p \leq 0.05$ |

Table 36 shows that these three issues are more prevalent in pastoral care settings of larger communities. We cannot know if the problems themselves are more common, or if people from larger towns and cities are more apt to discuss these (or any) issues with their pastors. The same is true for church size, as seen in Table 37. It may be that those who live in rural areas are less beset by these problems and/or it may be that they are reticent to discuss these issues with their pastors.

**Table 37: Pastoral Care Issues Related to Church Size**

| | **Small** | **Medium** | **Large** | significance level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Marriage/Divorce** | 51% | 63% | 85% | $p \leq 0.01$ |
| **Finances** | 31% | 53% | 68% | $p \leq 0.001$ |
| **Employment** | 28% | 48% | 56% | $p \leq 0.01$ |
| **Work/Family** | 19% | 40% | 59% | $p \leq 0.001$ |
| **Parenting** | 26% | 33% | 59% | $p \leq 0.05$ |
| **Alcohol/Drugs** | 25% | 31% | 56% | $p \leq 0.01$ |
| **Child Care** | 18% | 26% | 59% | $p \leq 0.01$ |

Race is significantly related to only two pastoral care issues: depression and unplanned pregnancy. Pastors in racial/ethnic congregations are less likely to hear about depression than their colleagues serving primarily white churches. Conversely, they are more likely to hear about unplanned pregnancies than those serving white churches. Those results appear in Table 38.

**Table 38: Pastoral Care Issues Related to Race/Ethnicity of Congregation**

| | **Depression** | **Unplanned Pregnancy** |
|---|---|---|
| **White** | 54% | 11% |
| **Racial/Ethnic** | 32% | 36% |
| significance level | $p \leq 0.05$ | $p \leq 0.001$ |

Nine issues are more commonly heard by clergywomen than clergymen at a statistically significant level. Are clergywomen more skilled, or more welcoming pastoral counselors? Do parishioners feel more comfortable bringing their problems to a woman? Or are these issues simply coming from women who seek out a counselor of the same gender, perhaps thinking she will better understand? From this data, we cannot know the reason, but the relationship between over half of these issues and the gender of the pastor is notable. Table 39 summarizes these data.

**Table 39: Pastoral Care Issues Related to Gender of the Pastor**

| | **Female Pastor** | **Male Pastor** | significance level |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Depression** | 68% | 44% | $p \leq 0.001$ |
| **Aging Parents** | 63% | 44% | $p \leq 0.01$ |
| **Employment** | 52% | 35% | $p \leq 0.05$ |
| **Work/Family** | 45% | 33% | $p \leq 0.05$ |
| **Mental Illness** | 32% | 17% | $p \leq 0.01$ |
| **Domestic Violence** | 31% | 15% | $p \leq 0.01$ |
| **Abusive to Children** | 21% | 7% | $p \leq 0.01$ |
| **Sexual Harassment** | 11% | 2% | $p \leq 0.01$ |
| **Rape** | 9% | 2% | $p \leq 0.05$ |

**Summary**

Perhaps the best way to end this survey summary report is by sharing some of the more "typical" comments from respondents about the survey and the GCSRW itself. There seemed to be two basic themes: condemnation and praise.

To start with the negative, a number of people were upset that the survey offered no option of simply "no" to the question of whether or not they have a sexual harassment policy. It is because the church mandates that these policies be in every church, that that option was not offered. Beyond that specific critique, most negative comments (there were 17) went something like this:

- GCSRW should be abolished. It is of NO concern to smaller evangelical churches! I believe it has outgrown its usefulness – too radical for conservatives!
- None of these out in the country – waste of time.
- Your questions reveal your bias. This is not a fair or balanced survey. This is a leading, self-serving survey.
- Enough is enough! The Church of Jesus Christ has more important things to worry about. Why waste the church's precious time and money for this?

Those opinions were countered by positive comments (a total of 9) more like this:

- Thank you, keep up the good work.
- Thank you for polling a small town.
- Seemed fair enough, good questions, objective.
- This survey is thought provoking and shows that we have some areas to work on, especially to see whether we have a sexual harassment policy (this respondent did not know).

As every year, some are happy that the United Methodist Church is monitoring its progress regarding the status and role of women, and some find it unnecessary. One respondent said, "To me, equal treatment between the sexes should come naturally…This is creating a problem where none really exists." Unfortunately, gender equality does not come naturally, any more than Christian discipleship does, and it is those various manifestations of inequality that this project purports to measure. Judging from the findings of this year's Local Church Survey, most of our churches still have a ways to go, especially in the areas of inclusive language, women as senior pastors of large churches, and women as chairs of the Trustees. Many churches still don't have the mandated sexual harassment policy either, and a few don't even intend to get one. In good Wesleyan fashion, we must continue to be fastidious about self-monitoring so we can "go on to perfection," creating a church where all people are truly equal in every way.