



American Baptist Churches USA

Church Renewal & Organizational Development

Church Size Makes a Difference

Keli Rugenstein
N=200 Congregations

Significant Findings:

1. Pastors of larger congregations more frequently believed it was appropriate to have friends in the congregation.
2. Pastors of large churches have more friends (8) to (3) on average.
3. Pastors of large churches more frequently report experiencing a change in their beliefs since entering the pastoral ministry.
4. Pastors of large churches either believe the pastor should be involved in programming or not (strongly) while pastors of smaller churches are more ambivalent.
5. Pastors of small churches are more likely to agree that pastoral family should be an example of Christianity to the congregation.
6. Pastors of small churches are more likely to believe that their spouse should be a leader in the congregation.
7. Pastors of small churches felt less able to access counseling for their own needs.
8. Pastors of small churches are more likely to agree that it reflects poorly to seek help for any difficulties.
9. Pastors of small churches receive more “unannounced visits.”
10. Those who left the ministry were more likely to have served only small churches.

A Profile of High and Low Vitality Mainline Congregations Cynthia Woolever, CLS data, N=2000 congregations

High Vitality:

- Younger worshipers
- More women (> 60%)
- Growing attendance
- Some conflict
- Procedural concerns
- Ministry energy
- Culture creation

Low Vitality:

- Older worshipers
- Fewer women
- Stable or declining attendance
- No conflict
- Money concerns
- Asset energy
- Culture continuation

Vitality Measures:

- Spiritual Growth
- Meaningful Worship
- Participation in congregation
- Sense of belonging

- Care for young people
- Focus on the community
- Share faith with others

- Welcome new worshippers
- Empowering leadership
- Focused on the future

Differences among Clergy by Size of Congregation
Deborah Bruce, CLS Data

Characteristics of Clergy	Size of Congregation			
	< 100	100-350	351-1000	>1000
Gender (% male)	88%	92%	92%	100%
Median age	50.8	51.3	50.7	50.3
First called*	24.8	20.4	20.1	20.7
Previous Occupation*	72	51	39	44
Grad. Theol. Training*	62	79	87	80
Grad. Non-theol. Degree*	54	70	80	73
Bivocational*	33	14	6	9
Time Spent... (in hours)				
Preaching	11	12	13	12
Administration	5	8	9	13
Teaching	5	5	6	6
Pastoral Counseling	4	5	6	5
Promoting vision	5	6	6	3
Leading worship	5	5	6	4
Converting Others	5	5	6	3
Visiting the sick	4	4	6	2
Attending Meetings	2	4	4	3
Training People	2	3	4	3
Denominational Involvement	2	2	2	1
Community Involvement	2	2	2	2
Visiting Prospects	1	1	1	1
Total Hours in a week	53	62	71	58
Problem finding time for recreation, relaxation	52%	64%	76%	62%
Too many demands	11	26	40	24
Constantly challenge laity*	26%	32%	36%	49%
Encourage innovation in laity*	55	72	75	84
Discuss future with laity	53	58	66	61
Keep things running smoothly	74	68	64	51

* Statistically significant, alpha < .01

Data Point: Owners, Executives Cite Advantages of Small Firms

Small-business owners have their problems, but they are grateful for their post in life, too. In a survey of more than 1000 owners or top-ranking executives of smaller companies, 79% say that it is more rewarding to work in a small business than a large one. Here are some of their reasons....

Small-business owners rate the advantages of small firms:

	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
<i>Less bureaucracy</i>	77%	10%
<i>Ability to act more quickly</i>	77%	6%
<i>More flexibility</i>	76%	7%
<i>Fewer regulations</i>	45%	28%
<i>Better compensation</i>	39%	27%
<i>Fewer financial constraints</i>	35%	40%

**Survey conducted by Frank Magid Associates*

***Source: The Wall Street Journal*