

Southern Baptist Congregations Today

Phillip B. Jones

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Executive Summary

In early 2000, a representative sample of Southern Baptist congregations was asked to participate in a study titled *Southern Baptist Congregations Today: A Survey at the Turn of a New Millennium*. This survey is one of a group of studies of religious congregations known as Faith Communities Today (FACT). Like Southern Baptists, other religious groups conducted surveys among their constituent congregations. To facilitate summary and comparison among the differing religious groups, a set of core questions was developed and used by the surveying organizations. When data are compiled and aggregated for the participating religious bodies, it should provide the most complete picture of religious congregations ever developed in the United States. More than 14,000 congregations have participated in the study, and it is estimated that they represent 80 percent of the nation's congregations and 90 percent of all worshipers in the nation.

A total of 710 Southern Baptist churches and church-type missions participated in the study by completing an extensive questionnaire. The 11-page survey instrument contained questions about worship services, location, buildings, programs, ministries, leadership, organizational dynamics, participants, and finances. The following are highlights from the study.

- Sunday morning is the primary time for worship in Southern Baptist congregations—98.5 percent conduct services on Sunday morning. About 1 in 12 (8.1%) conducts two or more worship services on Sunday morning. A small group of large congregations even conduct three or more worship services (1.4%). It appears that most congregations offering multiple Sunday morning services do so because of worship space limitations, parking limitations, or possibly for convenience of participants and not necessarily to appeal to different types of people. However, most congregations only have one worship service with the typical congregation (the median) having 80 in attendance.
- The secondary time for Southern Baptists to hold worship services is Sunday evening. More than three-fourths of all congregations (78.7%) conduct Sunday evening services. For those reporting a Sunday night worship service, the typical church reports 40 in attendance.
- An examination of worship service attendance for the previous five years indicates that 47.1 percent of the congregations are growing, 20.2 percent are plateaued, and 32.7 percent are declining.
- Elements generally found in Southern Baptist worship services are Scripture reading, an invitation to accept Christ, collection of an offering, a printed order of service, prayer for the sick, recognition of visitors, and a time in the service where people greet each other. At the other extreme, elements that are usually considered liturgical such as use of candles or incense, use of creeds or statements of faith, corporate confession of sin, and kneeling by the congregation are rarely found in Southern Baptist worship services.
- Southern Baptists are a singing people. Worship services nearly always include congregational singing. You are likely to find the use of traditional hymns sung using hymnals and accompanied by organ and/or piano. Church choirs are common and the use of prerecorded music is not unusual. Rarely do you find the use of electric guitars, percussion instruments, or an orchestra. Even though there has been emphasis on contemporary worship services in recent years, there is not a preponderance of congregations using praise teams to lead music, nor do many of them project music on a screen.

- Based on the presence of praise teams leading music, words to songs projected on a screen, contemporary music/choruses, electronic keyboard or synthesizer, electric guitar/bass, drums or other percussion instruments in a worship service, 12.8 percent of Southern Baptist congregations can be categorized as mostly contemporary. At the other extreme, it appears that 70.6 percent of Southern Baptist congregations are traditional in their style of worship. The remainder, 16.6 percent, appear to be blended in their style of worship or have multiple services with possibly some being traditional and some contemporary.
- Worship style is highly related to size of the congregation. While contemporary worship is almost nonexistent in very small congregations, 7 of 10 churches with more than 1,000 participants are categorized as contemporary.
- The incorporation of contemporary elements into worship appears to have a positive affect on worship service attendance. Six of 10 contemporary churches are growing and only one-quarter are declining.
- The sermon is an important part of the worship experience in Southern Baptist congregations. The most frequently cited sermon topic is personal commitment or conversion. Six of 10 respondents indicated that sermons always focus on conversion. Other frequent sermon topics are God's love and care, personal spiritual growth, practical advice for living, and living a moral life. At the other end of the spectrum, social justice is the least frequently cited topic. Expository preaching (explanations of Scripture or doctrine) seems to be the primary mode of communication in sermons.
- There is near unanimity among Southern Baptists that the Bible is an absolutely foundational source of authority. Inspiration of the Holy Spirit is also considered absolutely foundational as a source of authority among the overwhelming majority of congregations. When forced to choose the most important source of authority, 93.4 percent of respondents indicated the Bible while the remaining 6.6 percent indicated the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
- Four items in the questionnaire were used to measure spiritual health. These four are "Our congregation is spiritually vital and alive," "Our congregation helps members deepen their relationships with God," "Our congregation has a clear sense of mission and purpose," and "Our congregation's worship services are spiritually uplifting and inspirational." Based on the scale developed from these items, 52.5 percent of the congregations are classified as spiritually healthy, 45.9 percent are somewhat healthy, and only 1.6 percent can be classified as unhealthy.
- Almost three-fourths of congregations classified as contemporary (73.1%) can also be classified as healthy. This compares with 65.0 percent of blended worship congregations and 45.5 percent of traditional congregations.
- The typical (median) congregation responding to the survey was 66 years old.
- The decade of the 1950s stands out as the most fruitful era in the past 50 years for church planting. It appears that church planting waned during the '60s and '70s, but has emerged with renewed emphasis in the past couple of decades.
- Most Southern Baptist congregations are small and are located in small towns and rural areas. Over a third are located in rural or open country. Slightly less than a third are located in small

towns and villages of less than 10,000 population. The remaining third are located in or around cities of more than 10,000 population. Specifically, only 1 in 10 congregations is located around cities of 250,000 or more population.

- Analysis of locations in and around cities shows that congregations in new suburban areas are the most likely to be growing—65.8 percent. The high percentage of growing churches in new suburban areas occurs regardless of size of city. The very highest percentage of growing churches in the study was found in new suburbs around large cities.
- Roughly two-thirds of congregations in medium and large cities are categorized as healthy. In contrast, slightly less than half of the congregation in locations with less than 10,000 population are categorized healthy.
- The median church has worship space for 187 people or space for a little more than double its current worship service attendance. Nine of 10 Southern Baptist congregations have sanctuaries that hold 450 people or less.
- The overwhelming majority of congregations (96.7%) meet for worship in a church building, and in most instances (93.7%) the congregation owns the building. Only 7.4 percent of all congregations indicate they share building space for worship with another congregation.
- The majority of congregations indicated they have enough space for their needs. For those needing more space, the primary needs are for educational space and for fellowship space.
- Like Sunday morning worship services, the Sunday School program is nearly universal in Southern Baptist congregations—98.2 percent have a Sunday School that meets regularly. The typical (median) congregation with a Sunday School has 40 adults attending weekly plus another 22 children and teens.
- The most frequently emphasized home or personal practice among Southern Baptist congregations is personal prayer, Scripture study, or devotions. The majority of congregations also put considerable emphasis on keeping the Lord's Day and abstaining from premarital sex. On the other hand, fasting, displaying religious objects, symbols, etc., and observing dietary restrictions received relatively little emphasis.
- The predominant outreach methods employed by most congregations were pastoral phone calls and visits, stressing to the members the importance of witnessing to others about one's faith, and relying on phone calls or personal visits by laity. Radio or TV, probably because of expense, was the least frequently employed outreach method.
- One of the major purposes of the larger FACT study is to document the contributions that religious congregations make to their communities. Providing cash assistance, food pantries, and clothing closets are the primary ways in which Southern Baptist congregations provide ministry assistance. While the number of people served runs into the thousands for some congregations, the typical Southern Baptist congregation provides ministry to 20 people per month. Using the sample of congregations to infer back to the population of all congregations, nearly 3 million people nationwide are served through the ministries of Southern Baptist congregations during a typical month.
- Nine of 10 Southern Baptist congregations have the services of an ongoing pastor—either regular or interim. Specifically, 83.3 percent of all congregations have a regular call pastor. Another 6.3 percent reported having an interim pastor. Only 3.9 percent report having neither a regular nor interim pastor.

- The typical regular pastor is 48 years old. In contrast, the median age of interim pastors is 70 years old. The majority of Southern Baptist pastors have college degrees and seminary degrees. Only 1 in 10 Southern Baptist pastors has no formal ministerial education. The typical tenure for pastors (excluding interims) is 4 years.
- The typical congregation (median) reported 1 full-time paid ministerial/program person and 1 part-time person. The typical church also has 1 paid part-time support staff—either secretarial or maintenance.
- Most congregations have to deal with conflict at some point in their existence—72.1 percent of responding congregations reported having conflict over some issue in the past 5 years. One of 4 congregations reported having serious problems. The most frequent disagreement experienced by Southern Baptist congregations is over the pastor’s leadership style. Theology was the problem cited least by congregations, and even when cited it tended not to be a very serious problem. Over half the congregations categorized as contemporary experienced conflict over worship.
- Some commentators are touting post-denominationalism in the United States. In contrast to this assertion, most congregations buy their worship, educational, stewardship, and evangelism materials and supplies from denominational sources. Furthermore, in more than 9 of 10 congregations it is important to the members to be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. Plus, 8 of 10 congregational respondents, presumably the pastors, indicate it is important to the stability and vitality of the congregation to be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. Furthermore, two-thirds of the congregations indicate they clearly express their Southern Baptist heritage.
- Only 3.2 percent of the congregations indicated they were dually aligned with another denomination.
- Southern Baptist congregations have fairly clear expectations for their members, but little church discipline is employed in coercing members toward compliance.
- Southern Baptist congregations are typically not large. The median number of participants associated in any way with the life of the congregation, is 125. When participation is limited to those who regularly attend, the typical congregation has 90 participants—60 adults and 30 children and teens. Using these figures from the sample data to infer to the entire population of Southern Baptist congregations, there should be 4.9 million regularly participating adults and another 2.5 million regularly participating children and teens (under age 18).
- The three top descriptors of Southern Baptist adult participants are married, female, and lifelong Southern Baptists. In this survey, it is roughly estimated that 59 percent of adult participants are married and 52 percent are female. Conversely, the three descriptors least likely to describe Southern Baptists are “In households with incomes above \$75,000,” “Not high school graduates,” and “Regularly involved in personal witnessing.” Because of the emphasis on evangelism in Southern Baptist life, it is interesting to note that 16 percent of adult Southern Baptist participants are estimated to be regularly involved in personal witnessing.
- Southern Baptist congregations are predominantly White. Nine of 10 Southern Baptist congregations are racially/ethnically predominantly White, i.e., in 92.1 percent of the congregations, Whites (non-Hispanic) comprise more than half the adult participants. Hispanics are the predominant ethnic group in 2.7 percent of Southern Baptist congregations while Asians are the predominant group in 1.3 percent of congregations. A little over a fourth (27.2%) of Southern Baptist congregations have Hispanic adult participants and almost a fourth (23.3%) have African-American participants. In all, there are an estimated 4.9 million adults that regularly

participate in Southern Baptist congregations. About 4.5 million of these adults are White (non-Hispanic), the remaining 400,000 are non-White. Of these 400,000, about 138,000 are Hispanic, 124,000 are African-American, and 65,000 are Asian.

- Southern Baptists are comprised of theological conservatives. Only 1 of 10 congregations was described as moderate.
- At the turn of the new millennium, most Southern Baptist congregations (3 of 4) are described as being in good or excellent financial shape. Less than 5 percent of Southern Baptist congregations seem to be currently experiencing financial difficulty.
- The median congregation received \$79,000 from all sources during 1999. It spent 38 percent of its income on staff salaries and benefits, 20 percent on congregational operations, 5 percent on program support and materials, and 10 percent on Southern Baptist mission work at the associational, state convention, or national Convention level.
- The primary method for promoting stewardship in Southern Baptist congregations is teaching that a 10 percent tithe belongs to God, is due to God, and should be given to God. The next most common approach was preaching sermons on stewardship. Making a special appeal based on a specific need was the other approach employed by the majority of congregations.

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Introduction

In early 2000, a representative sample of Southern Baptist congregations was asked to participate in a study titled *Southern Baptist Congregations Today: A Survey at the Turn of a New Millennium*. This survey is one of a group of studies of religious congregations known as Faith Communities Today (FACT).¹ Like Southern Baptists, other religious groups conducted surveys among their constituent congregations. To facilitate summary and comparison among the differing religious groups, a set of core questions was developed and used by the surveying organizations. When data are compiled and aggregated for the participating religious bodies, it should provide the most complete picture of religious congregations ever developed in the United States. More than 14,000 congregations have participated in the study and it is estimated that they represent 80 percent of the nation's congregations and 90 percent of all worshipers in the nation. National summaries of the gathered data are scheduled for release in March 2001.²

Participating Southern Baptist churches and church-type missions completed an extensive 11-page questionnaire.³ The survey instrument contained questions about worship services, location, buildings, programs, ministries, leadership, organizational dynamics, participants, and finances. Responses to these questions form the basis of this report. This report can be used to compare and contrast Southern Baptist congregations with those of other religious groups. Also, it provides a point of reference for individual Southern Baptist congregations choosing to compare themselves to the larger denomination. (This report for Southern Baptists can be found online at <http://namb.net/resources/stats>.)

Methodology

A representative sample of Southern Baptist congregations was developed by classifying congregations by region of the country and size of church. Nine classifications (strata) were used. Systematic samples were drawn from each of the strata. Twelve hundred congregations were chosen to represent 44,918 Southern Baptist churches and church-type missions.⁴

Questionnaires were designed to be completed by a key informant in each congregation. It was assumed that this key informant would be the pastor for most congregations; therefore, all correspondence was addressed to the pastor. Pastors were requested to either complete the questionnaire or to forward it to someone on their staff or to a knowledgeable person in their congregation.

¹ The project was initially called the Cooperative Congregational Studies Project. For purposes of communication, the project was renamed Faith Communities Today (FACT). Release of the data in 2001 will be the fruit of 5 years of planning, development, and implementation of the project. About 40 religious groups have cooperated in this endeavor. Carl Dudley and David Roozen of The Hartford Institute for Religion Research at Hartford Seminary have provided administration support. Funding was provided by the Lilly Endowment and by participating religious bodies.

² After March 13, 2001, the national summary of information along with other resources for interpreting the study will be available at the Web site <http://fact.hartsem.edu>. Information for Southern Baptists at the FACT Web site will vary from this report because of the differences in methods of weighting church data. See Appendix C for a discussion of weighting of the sample data.

³ The Southern Baptist questionnaire is included in Appendix A. The outline in this report generally follows the outline and order of questionnaire items.

⁴ The sampling frame for the study was the 1998 Annual Church Profile database compiled by LifeWay Christian Resources.

Questionnaires were mailed in January 2000. Non-respondents were contacted after a month. If there was still no response after this second contact, another congregation (assumed to be a perfect match) was substituted. These new congregations were invited to participate and at least one follow-up contact was made to encourage participation.⁵ A total of 710 Southern Baptist congregations responded to the survey, resulting in an adjusted response rate of 59.2 percent. (See Appendix C for a more detailed explanation of the sampling techniques employed and computation of the adjusted response rate[s].) Responses of the 710 congregations have been weighted by strata to appropriately represent the total population of Southern Baptist churches and church-type missions.

Congregational Identity and Worship

Worship Services and Attendance

Sunday morning is the primary time for worship in Southern Baptist congregations—98.5 percent conduct services on Sunday morning. About 1 in 12 (8.1%) conduct two or more worship services on Sunday morning. A small group of large congregations even conduct three or more worship services (1.4%). However, most congregations only have one worship service with the typical congregation (the median) having 80 in attendance.⁶

Table 1 displays some of the statistics from the distribution of worship service attendees. The 90th percentile represents that point along the distribution where 90 percent of congregations have 300 or fewer in Sunday morning worship. Also it means that only 10 percent have 300 or more in attendance. Likewise, at the 75th percentile, 75 percent of congregations have 150 or fewer in worship and conversely 25 percent have 150 or more. The 50th percentile, also known as the median statistic, is the middle of the distribution and in the case of Sunday morning worship, half of the congregations have a worship attendance of 80 or fewer and half have a worship service attendance of 80 or more. Throughout this report the median church will be referred to as the typical church. The 100th and 0th percentiles represent the minimum and maximum of the distribution based on the sample.⁷ While there are notable exceptions in the denomination, most Southern Baptist congregations are not large.⁸

⁵ Copies of the correspondence inviting congregations to participate are included in Appendix B.

⁶ According to the 1999 Annual Church Profile (ACP), the median Sunday morning worship service attendance for more than 38,000 churches and church-type missions reporting this information was 75 participants. Interestingly, the median worship service attendance of the sample congregations as reported on the 1999 ACP was also 75. Sample congregations reported higher worship service attendance in early 2000 as compared to late 1999. It appears that weighting the sample data allows fairly accurate inference to the population.

⁷ The largest congregation in the sample had 5,500 in worship on Sunday mornings. There are congregations with larger worship service attendance in the Southern Baptist Convention but they were not a part of the sample.

⁸ Note that the distribution of congregations does not represent the distribution of Southern Baptist members. The bulk of Southern Baptist membership is found in larger churches. For example, churches with fewer than 300 members account for 44 percent of all Southern Baptist churches; however, these churches account for only 11 percent of total Southern Baptist membership. (*Analysis of Southern Baptist Churches by Size of Church* by Phillip B. Jones, North American Mission Board, Alpharetta, Ga., November 1998.)

Table 1

What is the total attendance for all services held on Sunday morning on a typical weekend?

<u>Percentile</u>	<u>Participants</u>
100 th (Max.)	5,500
90 th	300
75 th	150
50 th (Median)	80
25 th	45
10 th	27
0 th (Min.)	1

The secondary time for Southern Baptists to hold worship services is Sunday evening. More than three-fourths of all congregations (78.7%) conduct Sunday evening services. For those reporting a Sunday night worship service, the typical church reports 40 in attendance.⁹

The survey queried about other weekend services. It was noted that 1.8 percent of congregations conducted Friday evening worship services and 1.3 percent conducted Saturday services. Typical Friday attendance was 25 while Saturday attendance was 20. This survey also produced evidence of some Southern Baptist congregations meeting less frequently than once a week.

One of the questions on the survey asked about languages used in worship services. Twelve different languages were reported. A study of this type is not designed to reflect the range of all the different languages used in worship in Southern Baptist congregations. Two factors mitigate against this—(1) the small incidence of some of the languages used will not be readily detected by sampling and (2) the questionnaire was in English and may not have been completed by congregations without someone proficient in English and comfortable completing questionnaires. As expected, English was the most frequently cited language with 97.7 percent of Southern Baptist congregations reporting that their worship service is in English. The next most frequently cited language was Spanish—4.0 percent conduct services in Spanish. Korean was the third most frequently cited language (1.7%) and sign language was the fourth most frequently cited (1.2%).¹⁰

For those congregations with multiple weekend worship services, respondents were asked how the services differed in style. The responses are included in Figure 1. Almost half of the congregations with multiple services indicated that their services were very similar in style. Only 1 in 9 congregations conducted services that were very different.

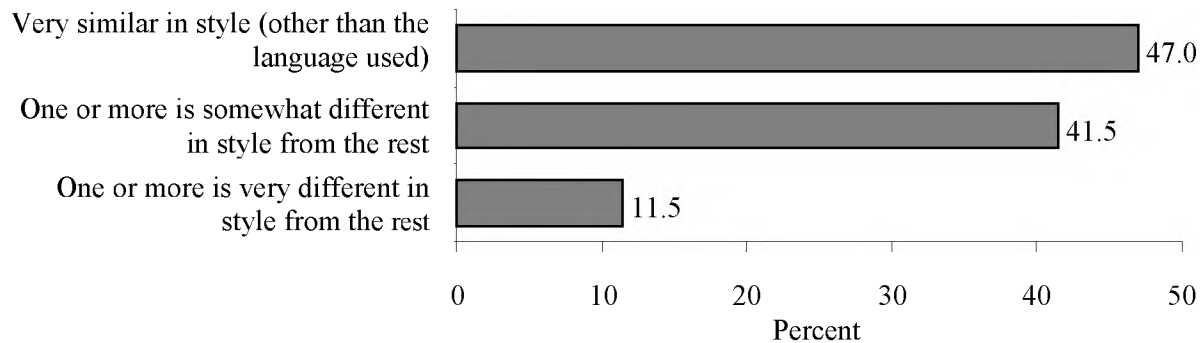
⁹ The distribution of attendance for congregations conducting Sunday evening worship services is as follows:

<u>Percentile</u>	<u>Participants</u>
100 th (Max.)	2,800
90 th	125
75 th	75
50 th (Median)	40
25 th	25
10 th	15
0 th (Min.)	3

¹⁰ Note that some congregations reported conducting services in multiple languages.

Figure 1

If you typically hold more than one service on the weekend, are these services:



When only those congregations conducting multiple Sunday morning services are considered, nearly two-thirds (65.5%) indicated the services were very similar. Thus, it appears that most congregations offering multiple Sunday morning services do so because of worship space limitations, parking limitations, or possibly for convenience of participants and not necessarily to appeal to different types of people. Only 1 in 5 (19.1%) indicated that their Sunday morning worship services were very different in worship style.

For those congregations with both Sunday morning and Sunday evening services, more than half (56%) indicated their services were essentially the same in worship style. Only 1 in 10 indicated they were very different. Of those Southern Baptist congregations that indicated that their morning and evening services were somewhat (but not very) different, the Sunday evening service is probably a more relaxed or casual version of the morning service.

Most (56%) of those congregations conducting either Friday or Saturday services and also conducting Sunday services, indicated that the style of worship was very different in their services. The remainder indicated their services were somewhat different. The implication is that services conducted on Friday or Saturday are intended to appeal to different types of people.

Growth and Decline in Worship Attendance

All Southern Baptist congregations are encouraged to report annual statistics on a denominational survey known as the Annual Church Profile (ACP). One of the reoccurring items reported is Sunday morning worship service attendance.¹¹ Using data from the 1994 and 1999 reports, the rate of growth or decline was calculated for each congregation in the sample and used to infer to the total population. The categorized results of this computation are included in Figure 2.¹² Growing churches are defined as those that grew by 10 percent or more in worship service attendance over that five year period. Plateaued congregations are those that changed less than ± 10 percent. Declining congregations are those that lost 10 percent or more of their worship attendees over this time frame. Thus, 47.1 percent

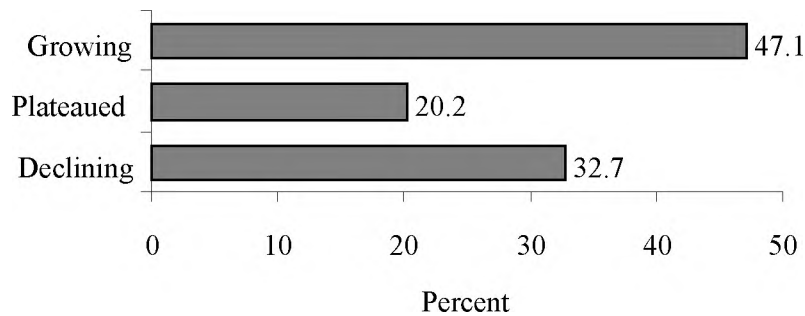
¹¹ The wording for the item on the 1994 ACP is "Number of persons in Sunday morning worship service(s) on last Sunday of associational year." The exact wording for the 1999 item is "Average in Sunday morning (or primary) worship service(s). If not kept, give figure for last Sunday of associational year." Although the wording has been changed, comparison of these items is assumed to provide the best indicator of change in active participation in a congregation.

¹² Figure 2 does not include data for an inferred 23.3 percent of the total population because of missing data. Only 3 to 4 percent of the missing data are due to new congregations being started since 1994, most are due to non-reporting on the ACP.

of the congregations are growing in worship service attendance, 20.2 percent are plateaued, and 32.7 percent are declining.¹³ This categorization of growing, plateaued, and declining will be used throughout the report in analysis of other variables.

Figure 2

Categorization of congregations based on percent change in Sunday morning worship service attendance, 1994–1999



Elements of Worship

A number of questions focused on how congregations conduct worship. Nineteen potential elements of a worship service were listed and respondents were asked how often each was included in the worship services of their congregations. The response categories for each item ranged from “always” to “never.” Responses are included in Table 2.

¹³ These figures vary from other statistics published and quoted on growing, plateaued, and declining Southern Baptist churches because others are often based on change in total membership over a five year time frame. For this study, it was assumed that Sunday morning worship attendance is a better indicator of active participation than membership because members sometimes become inactive.

Table 2

How often are the following included as part of your congregation's worship service(s)?

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Score</u>
Scripture reading	93.2%	4.3%	1.9%	0.4%	0.3%	110.6
Invitation to accept Christ	88.3	6.8	3.5	1.2	0.2	118.2
Collection of offering	85.8	12.2	0.2	0.8	1.0	119.0
Printed order of worship	75.5	7.4	3.2	4.3	9.5	164.6
Prayer for the sick	51.6	32.7	12.2	3.4	0.1	167.7
Recognition of visitors	67.4	12.2	6.2	7.1	7.1	174.3
People greet each other	55.1	19.2	13.0	7.5	5.2	188.5
Silent prayer/meditation	13.3	19.7	42.8	19.8	4.4	282.3
Members testify about their faith	8.5	21.5	47.9	20.4	1.7	285.3
Lay participation in leading worship	14.2	18.8	39.0	23.2	4.8	285.6
Children's sermon	30.1	11.0	13.0	16.7	29.1	303.4
Use of visual projection equipment	10.4	6.3	27.1	33.3	22.9	352.0
Kneeling by the congregation	4.9	9.7	21.9	27.5	36.0	380.0
Corporate confession of sin	2.5	8.4	23.9	33.6	31.6	383.4
Drama/skits	0.0	1.9	32.0	40.1	26.0	390.2
Creeds or statements of faith	2.5	3.7	18.2	38.9	36.8	404.1
Candles	2.3	1.1	13.3	47.3	36.0	413.6
Dance	0.2	0.3	2.3	6.4	90.8	487.3
Incense	0.0	0.3	0.5	1.6	97.6	496.5

Scripture reading is nearly universal in worship services—93.2 percent of respondents indicated Scripture is always a part of the service. Following Scripture reading, an invitation to accept Christ is something that you will find in most Southern Baptist worship services. At the other end of the spectrum, dance or use of incense are rarely included in a worship service.

The ordering of elements in Table 2 is facilitated by the computation of a composite score included in the last column. The score is calculated by assigning a value of 1 to the “always” response, a value of 2 to the “often” response, 3 to “sometimes,” 4 to “seldom,” and 5 to “never.” The percentage of congregations indicating each response is multiplied by the corresponding assigned value, then the products are added together for the composite score. The score can range from a value of 100 indicating all congregations “always” include something in their worship services to a value of 500 indicating that all congregations “never” include a specific element in their worship services. Thus, low scores are derived for elements frequently found in Southern Baptist worship services while high scores result for things rarely found in Southern Baptist services. Elements generally found in Southern Baptist worship services are Scripture reading, an invitation to accept Christ, collection of an offering, a printed order of service, prayer for the sick, recognition of visitors, and a time in the service where people greet each other. At the other extreme, elements that are usually considered liturgical such as use of candles or incense, use of creeds or statements of faith, corporate confession of sin, and kneeling by the congregation are rarely found in Southern Baptist worship services. Of the items that tend to group in the middle of the scale, it is interesting that children's sermons seems to be a bipolar worship element. Three in 10 congregations always include a children's sermon while an equal 3 in 10 never include it.¹⁴

¹⁴ It was thought that possibly this was a function of congregational size—that large congregations tend to have children's sermons while small congregations do not. However, an examination of number of persons in Sunday morning worship by the frequency of children's sermons did not support this assumption.

A series of items relating to the music in worship services is included in Table 3. Like the previous table, a composite score has been calculated for each item—the score has been calculated in the same manner—and the items are ordered by the composite score.

Table 3

How often are the following included as part of your congregation's regular worship service(s)?

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Score</u>
Congregational singing	97.1%	1.8%	0.6%	0.5%	0.0%	104.5
Traditional hymns (use of hymnals)	80.2	11.7	4.2	2.1	1.8	133.6
Organ and/or piano	81.7	8.0	1.5	2.7	6.1	143.5
Choir	46.0	22.3	7.8	8.4	15.4	224.6
Recorded music (tapes, etc.)	9.0	45.6	28.0	10.0	7.4	261.2
Contemporary music/choruses	19.1	24.0	25.5	16.7	14.7	283.9
Electronic keyboard or synthesizer	13.4	7.0	16.4	19.8	43.4	372.8
Non-electronic string/wind instruments	7.0	6.0	24.5	26.0	36.6	379.5
Praise teams leading music	11.7	6.9	14.7	22.3	44.3	380.3
Songs projected on screen	12.2	7.7	10.1	13.7	56.2	393.7
Electric guitar/bass	7.1	5.4	11.0	20.4	56.2	413.5
Drums or other percussion	6.4	5.2	7.4	18.7	62.3	425.3
Orchestra	2.9	2.5	3.9	6.5	84.2	466.6

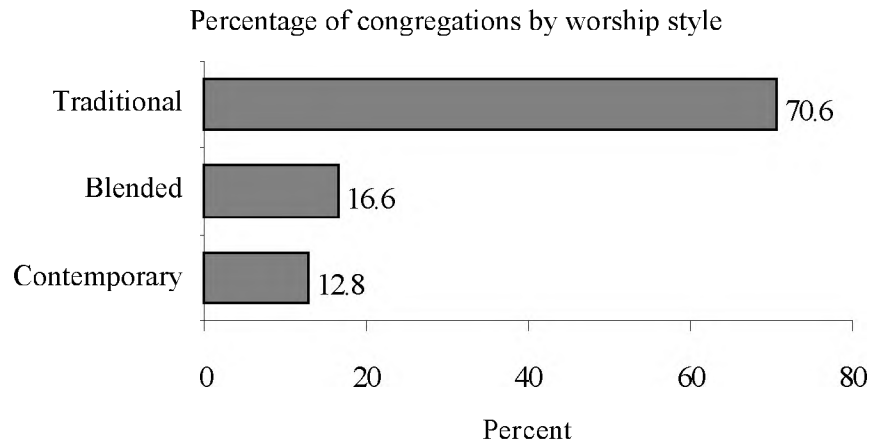
Southern Baptists are a singing people. Worship services nearly always include congregational singing. You are likely to find traditional hymns sung using hymnals and accompanied by organ and/or piano. Church choirs are common and the use of prerecorded music is not unusual. Rarely do you find the use of electric guitars, percussion instruments, or an orchestra. Even though there has been emphasis on contemporary worship services in recent years, there is not a preponderance of congregations using praise teams to lead music, nor do many of them project music on a screen.

Contemporary Worship Services

Several of these variables are moderately highly correlated—praise teams leading music, words to songs projected on a screen, contemporary music/choruses, electronic keyboard or synthesizer, electric guitar/bass, drums or other percussion instruments. Using the presence of these items in a worship service, a scale of contemporary worship was developed. Based on the presence of these elements in a worship service, 12.8 percent of Southern Baptist congregations can be categorized as mostly contemporary. At the other extreme, it appears that 70.6 percent of Southern Baptist congregations are traditional in their style of worship. The remainder, 16.6 percent, appear to be blended in their style of worship or have multiple services with possibly some being traditional and some contemporary.¹⁵ See Figure 3.

¹⁵ The index is computed by assigning a value of 1 to those congregations who report always having an element in their worship services, a value of 2 to those congregations who report often having a element in worship, 3 for a response of sometimes, 4 for seldom, and 5 for never. Since there are six items in the scale, a congregation could score from a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 30. Those congregations with low scores are characterized as contemporary and whose with high scores are characterized as traditional. For purposes of labeling congregations according to style of worship, a congregation scoring 15 or less was categorized as contemporary, and congregations scoring 21 or more were categorized as traditional. All others were categorized as having a blended style of worship.

Figure 3



Worship style is highly related to size of the congregation. The incidence of contemporary worship services increases as size of the congregation increases. Figure 4 illustrates this relationship. While contemporary worship is almost nonexistent in very small congregations, 7 of 10 churches with more than 1,000 participants are categorized as contemporary. Figure 5 shows the reverse of Figure 4. Eighty-five percent of very small congregations conduct traditional worship services. The percentage for “traditional” decreases as size increases. Only 7.5 percent of congregations with more than 1,000 participants employ mostly traditional services.

Figure 4

Percentage of congregations with contemporary worship services by size of congregation

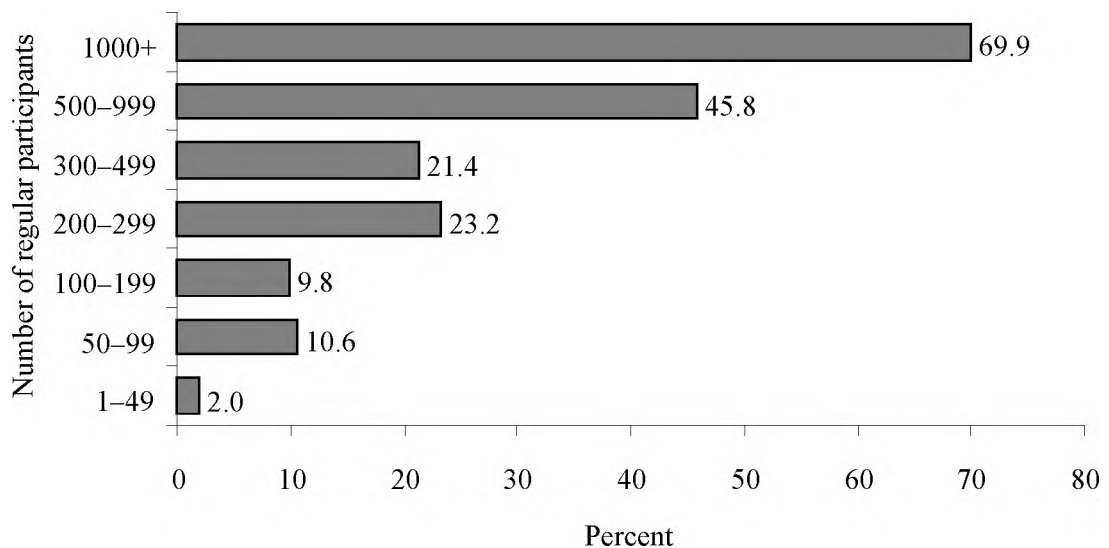
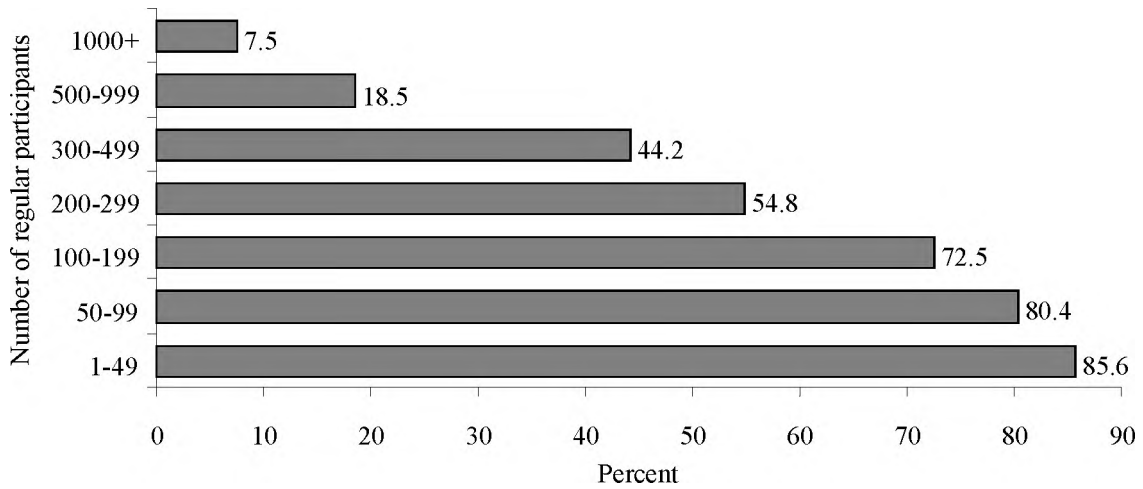


Figure 5

Percentage of congregations with traditional worship services by size of congregation



The style of worship service was compared with change in the Sunday morning worship service attendance from 1994 to 1999. The incorporation of contemporary elements into worship appears to have a positive affect on worship service attendance. Six of 10 contemporary churches are growing and only one-quarter are declining. However, the margin of difference is not so great as to suggest that all churches should become contemporary in worship style. Note that 44.8 percent of the traditional churches are also classified as growing. See Table 4.

Table 4

Style of worship service by change in worship service attendance

<u>Style of Worship</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>
Contemporary	59.7%	16.2%	24.1%
Blended	46.4	20.6	33.0
Traditional	44.8	20.9	34.3

Sermon Content and Presentation

The sermon is an important part of the worship services in Southern Baptist congregations. A couple of questions delved into the content of sermons. Table 5 lists the frequency that certain topics are discussed in sermons. A composite score, similar to those above, has been calculated to aid in the ordering of topics.

Table 5

How often does the sermon in your worship focus on:

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Score</u>
Personal commitment/ conversion	61.9%	33.4%	3.9%	0.8%	0.1%	144.1
God's love and care	43.9	47.1	8.9	0.1	0.0	165.2
Personal spiritual growth	32.9	56.1	10.4	0.6	0.0	178.7
Practical advice for living	24.5	56.7	16.6	2.2	0.0	196.5
Living a moral life	24.0	56.5	17.0	2.3	0.1	197.7
Struggling with faith and belief	9.7	45.9	40.8	3.0	0.6	238.9
Mystery of God	6.6	25.5	49.2	15.8	2.9	282.9
Stewardship of time and money	4.3	26.7	48.9	18.5	1.7	286.9
End-time/Second Coming	5.5	23.3	44.4	24.6	2.1	294.2
Social justice/action	1.4	14.9	53.6	26.8	3.4	316.2

Although all of the topics receive some attention in Southern Baptist pulpits, the most frequently cited topic is personal commitment or conversion. Six of 10 respondents indicated that sermons always focus on conversion. Other frequent sermon topics are God's love and care, personal spiritual growth, practical advice for living, and living a moral life. At the other end of the scale, social justice is the least frequently cited of the 10 topics listed. Even here, more than half of the respondents indicate that sermons occasionally deal with this subject. Stewardship and the second coming are also topics that are dealt with occasionally but not as frequently as some of the other topics.

The second question pertaining to sermons deals more with style of presentation. Responses are included in Table 6. Expository preaching (explanations of Scripture or doctrine) seems to be the primary mode of communication, although the other three are at least sometimes employed by most preachers.

Table 6

How often does the sermon include a lot of:

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Score</u>
Explanations of Scripture or doctrine	41.6%	45.4%	10.8%	2.2%	0.0%	173.6
Personal stories/experiences	11.3	50.0	33.2	5.5	0.0	232.9
Illustrations from contemporary media	6.5	38.1	40.6	13.7	1.0	264.3
Literary or scholarly references	3.9	25.3	47.7	22.7	0.4	290.4

Sources of Authority

Respondents were asked about the sources of authority for worship and teaching. Five possible sources were listed and respondents were instructed to indicate on a response scale ranging from "Absolutely Foundational" to "Little or No Importance" the importance of each as a source of authority for their congregation. Table 7 contains the responses by order of importance to Southern Baptist congregations. As with preceding questions, a scale was calculated for each response. A 1 was assigned to "Absolutely Foundational," 2 was assigned to "Very Important," 3 to "Somewhat Important," and 4 to "Little or No Importance." The range of the composite score for this series of responses is 100 to 400.

Table 7

How important are the following sources of authority in the worship and teaching of your congregation?

	Absolutely Foundational	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Little or No Importance	Score
The Bible	97.5%	2.1%	0.5%	0.0%	103.2
Inspiration of the Holy Spirit	81.1	15.8	3.0	0.1	122.1
Personal experience	11.7	35.8	43.2	9.3	250.1
Historic creeds, doctrines, and traditions	5.1	39.9	37.6	17.3	266.9
Human reasoning and understanding	6.3	26.9	45.5	21.2	281.4

Southern Baptists are a people of the Book. There is near unanimity among Southern Baptists that the Bible is an absolutely foundational source of authority. Inspiration of the Holy Spirit is also considered absolutely foundational as a source of authority among the overwhelming majority of congregations. While few respondents indicate that any of the sources listed are of little or no importance, the bottom three listed do not command the importance of the Bible and inspiration of the Holy Spirit for Southern Baptists as sources of authority.

The issue was forced in the survey, in that respondents were asked to indicate “the one source of authority that is most important in your congregation’s worship and teaching, as difficult a choice as this may be.” Only two responses were made by Southern Baptists—the Bible and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. When forced to choose, 93.4 percent of respondents indicated the Bible as the one source of authority while the remaining 6.6 percent indicated the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This finding is interesting in light of recent discussions in Southern Baptist life concerning the adoption of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message. As expressed by one Southern Baptist theologian, “The Holy Spirit moves in absolute accordance with God’s revealed Word. . . . There is no higher authority than Scripture. You can’t claim the Holy Spirit is a higher authority than Scripture. The Holy Spirit inspired the Scripture.”¹⁶ While these statements do not directly imply that Scripture should be elevated above the Holy Spirit, pragmatically, congregations see Scripture as their primary source of authority. This may have more to do with the perception that inspiration of the Holy Spirit is more subjective than interpretation of Scripture. Historically, Southern Baptists have moved in this direction by reaction to excesses they view in Pentecostal movements and to what they view as liberal interpretation of Scripture.

Identity and Vitality

Respondents were given a series of congregational descriptions and asked to indicate how well each description fits their congregation. The descriptions and responses follow in Table 8. As with previous variables, a composite score was developed for each description with 1 assigned to “Very Well” and so forth. The potential range of scores is from 100 to 500.

¹⁶ Al Mohler as quoted by Michael Foust in “Mohler: Question should be over faith in Baptist message, not simply BF&M,” *Baptist Press*, October 13, 2000.

Table 8

How well does each of the following statements describe your congregation?

	Very <u>Well</u>	Quite <u>Well</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Slightly</u>	Not At <u>All</u>	<u>Score</u>
Feels like a close-knit family	48.7%	35.4%	14.0%	1.8%	0.1%	169.2
Worship services are uplifting and inspirational	33.4	47.8	16.4	2.4	0.0	187.8
Excited about the future of congregation	32.5	37.1	20.6	8.2	1.6	209.3
Programs and activities strengthen relationships	20.1	50.9	24.6	3.5	0.9	214.2
Helps members deepen relationship with God	21.6	46.4	28.2	3.2	0.6	214.8
New people easily incorporated	23.5	45.8	23.6	5.1	1.9	215.8
Expresses its Southern Baptist heritage	28.3	39.1	22.6	7.8	2.2	216.5
Moral beacon in community	22.0	43.3	29.6	4.5	0.7	218.9
Spiritually vital and alive	17.3	45.4	31.2	5.3	0.9	227.4
Clear sense of mission and purpose	24.7	35.2	27.6	11.2	1.2	228.7
Programs and activities well organized	13.3	49.0	31.8	4.4	1.5	231.8
Deals openly with disagreements/ conflict	10.4	39.9	31.2	14.8	3.7	261.5
Welcomes innovation and change	10.5	27.3	40.5	17.2	4.5	277.9
Trying to increase racial/ethnic diversity	7.6	15.4	30.9	25.5	20.6	336.1
Working for social justice	1.7	11.5	32.0	37.0	17.8	357.7
Strong racial/ethnic heritage trying to preserve	4.4	5.9	16.5	21.8	51.4	409.9

“Our congregation feels like a close-knit family” was the most characteristic description. “Our congregation’s worship services are spiritually uplifting and inspirational” was the second most characteristic statement. Several other statements relating to members being excited about the future of the congregation, the programs and activities strengthening personal relationships, and members deepening their relationship with God were characteristic of the majority of congregations.

At the other extreme, “Our congregation has a strong racial/ethnic or national heritage that it is trying to preserve” was the most uncharacteristic description of Southern Baptist congregations. It is interesting that while Southern Baptist congregations are not working hard to preserve the status quo, most are not working hard to change it as evidenced in lower scoring statements such as “Our congregation is trying to increase its racial/ethnic diversity,” and “Our congregation is working for social justice.” Even the statement “Our congregation welcomes innovation and change,” does not score high compared to some of the other statements.

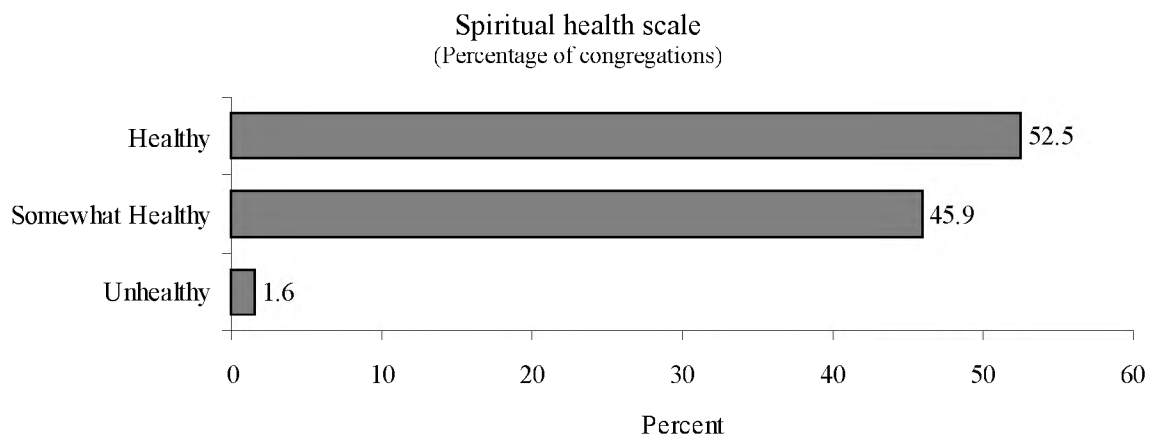
It is interesting to note that 67.4 percent of respondents indicated that “Our congregation clearly expresses its Southern Baptist heritage” either very well or quite well. Less than 1 of 10 respondents indicated either slightly or not at all. This seems to be a high level of support for denominational identity and runs counter to the belief that denominationalism is waning. While this doesn’t speak directly to whether Baptist or Southern Baptist is included in the name of the congregation, it does indicate the tie is important. Congregations that are classified as contemporary in worship style express their Southern Baptist heritage to a lesser degree than blended or traditional worship service congregations.

Most of the items in Table 8 are statistically correlated to some degree. Three statements are not correlated with the rest and do not seem to fit the mix. “Our congregation is working for social justice,” “Our congregation clearly expresses its Southern Baptist heritage,” and “Our congregation has a strong racial/ethnic or national heritage that it is trying to preserve” seem to be measuring identity rather than vitality.

Church Health

Four variables in Table 8 are highly correlated and at face value seem to measure spiritual health. These four are “Our congregation is spiritually vital and alive,” “Our congregation helps members deepen their relationships with God,” “Our congregation has a clear sense of mission and purpose,” and “Our congregation’s worship services are spiritually uplifting and inspirational.”¹⁷ These four items are used to develop a spiritual health scale. Those congregations that consistently indicate that these statements describe their congregation quite well or very well are categorized as healthy, while those that consistently indicate that these statements describe them only slightly or not at all are classified as unhealthy. The remainder are the “muddled middle” and are classified as somewhat healthy. Based on this classification scheme, 52.5 percent of the congregations are classified as spiritually healthy while at the other extreme only 1.6 percent can be classified as unhealthy. The remaining 45.9 percent are somewhat healthy. See Figure 6.

Figure 6



There is some relationship between spiritual health and church growth. Over half of the congregations classified as spiritually healthy (56.5%) are also classified as growing. Likewise, 20.5 percent are plateaued and 23.0 percent are declining. In contrast, 39.3 percent of somewhat healthy congregations are growing, 20.6 percent are plateaued, and 40.1 percent declining. Most all of the unhealthy congregations are declining. While this positive relationship between health and growth exists, note that spiritual health is also found in congregations that are plateaued and declining, e.g., a third of declining churches show evidence of spiritual health. Congregations may find themselves in situations where numerical growth does not occur, yet they demonstrate a vibrant congregational life. Conversely, not all growing congregations experience the highest level of spiritual health.

The relationship is stronger between health and style of worship service. Almost three-fourths of congregations classified as contemporary (73.1%) can also be classified as healthy. This compares with 65.0 percent of blended worship congregations and 45.5 percent of traditional congregations. The exuberance of contemporary worship may lead to feelings of excitement and enjoyment that may affect the perception of health as measured by at least two of the items in the scale.

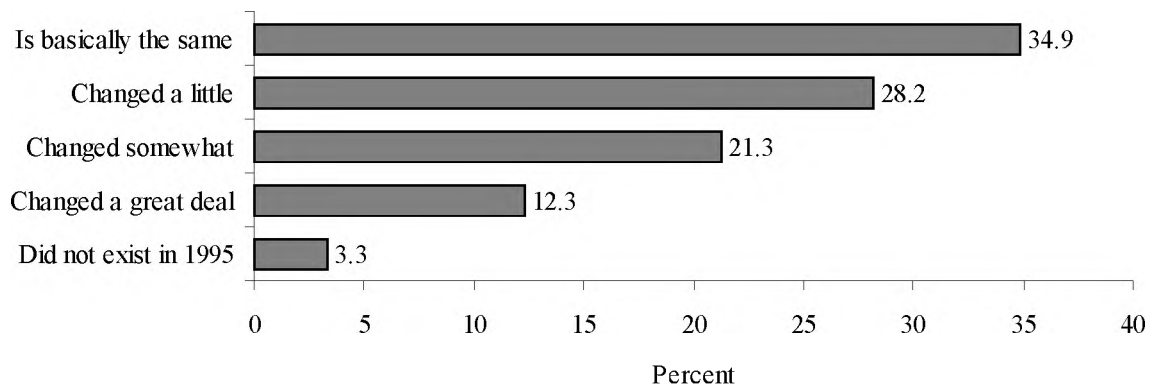
¹⁷ Pearson’s correlation coefficient of .6 or greater.

Change in Worship Style

A single question deals with change in worship style during the past five years. See Figure 7. In almost two-thirds of the congregations, the worship style has stayed about the same or changed just a little. Only about 1 in 8 congregations has changed substantially. It comes as no surprise that contemporary congregations are the most likely group to indicate they have changed a great deal in the past five years—42.4 percent. One in 5 congregations categorized as blended changed substantially over this time frame and only 1 of 20 traditional congregations. Congregations that are classified as having a contemporary worship style account for 44 percent of those indicating they have changed a great deal in their primary worship service over the past 5 years—even though they represent only about 13 percent of the total population.

Figure 7

In comparison to the style of your congregation's primary worship service 5 years ago, would you say the style of your current primary service:



History, Location, and Building

Age of Congregation

The typical (median) congregation responding to the survey was constituted as a church in 1934, making the typical congregation 66 years old. Constitution dates ranged from the late eighteenth century through the new millennium.¹⁸ One of 10 congregations was constituted or started within the past 10 years. Forty percent were constituted in the past 50 years. Table 9 shows the date of organization of congregations by decade. Note that the decade of the 1950s stands out as the most fruitful era in the past 50 years for church planting, even given the fact that many congregations started in the 1950s are no longer in existence. It appears that church planting waned during the '60s and '70s, but has emerged with renewed emphasis in the past couple of decades.

¹⁸ The specific wording of the questions was “In approximately what year was this congregation officially constituted as a church (or started, if still a church-type mission)?”

Table 9

Date of constitution (or date of starting) by decade

Pre 1950s	59.0%
'50s	10.5
'60s	6.3
'70s	6.2
'80s	8.2
'90s ¹⁹	9.9

The age of congregations was examined by growth and decline. Congregations started during the 1990s were more likely to be classified as growing than those started earlier, but not substantially more likely. Sixty percent of new congregations were classified as growing, but this also means that 40 percent of those started in the past decade are already plateaued or declining. Congregations started prior to 1950 were a little less likely to be growing and a little more likely to be declining. There were no substantial differences in growth and decline among congregations started in the other time periods. The comparisons of age of church and growth/decline are included in Table 10.

Table 10

Age of congregations by classification of growth and decline

	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>
Pre 1950s	43.4%	20.9%	35.7%
'50s	48.5	21.3	30.2
'60s	52.0	23.2	24.8
'70s	52.5	23.8	23.7
'80s	49.9	19.0	31.1
'90s	60.1	9.6	30.3

In a separate question, congregations were asked when they moved to their current location. The typical congregation moved to its current site in 1953. Fourteen percent of congregations moved to their current location within the past 10 years. An additional 9 percent moved to their current location during the 1980s.

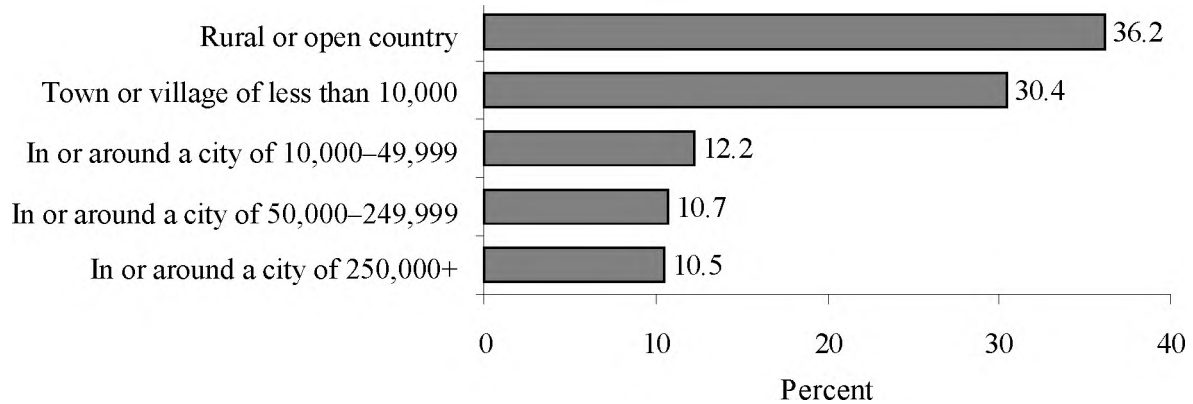
Location

Respondents were asked to describe the physical location of where they meet for worship. Over a third indicated they were located in rural or open country. Slightly less than a third were located in small towns and villages of less than 10,000 population. The remaining third were located in or around cities of more than 10,000 population. Specifically, only 1 in 10 congregations were located around cities of 250,000 or more population. Most Southern Baptist congregations are located in small towns and rural areas. See Figure 8.

¹⁹ A few churches were actually constituted in early 2000 and are included with the 1990s count.

Figure 8

How would you describe the place where your congregation's primary worship building is located?



Congregations in cities of greater than 10,000 population were further queried about their specific locations. Figures 9 and 10 contain the follow-up information. Few Southern Baptist congregations are located in the central or downtown areas of cities. The majority are located in the suburbs and describe their location as residential or mixed residential and commercial areas.

Figure 9

If in or around a city, is your building located:

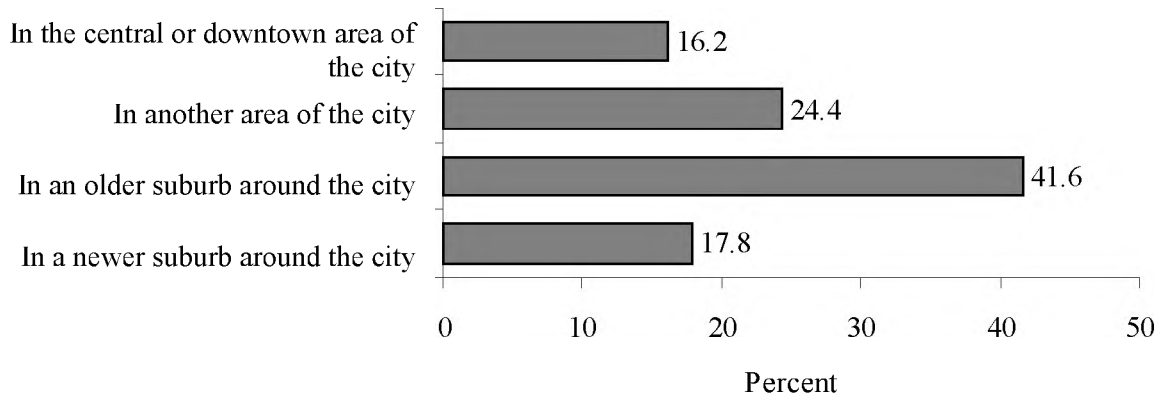
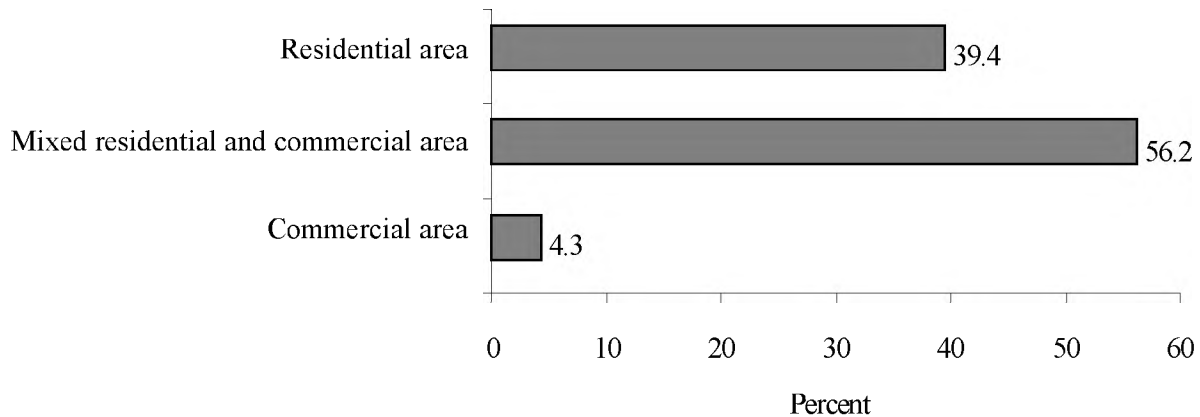


Figure 10

If in or around a city, is your congregation's location in a



When the growth and decline of congregations is analyzed by location, differences emerge. High growth is found for congregations in cities of 50,000 to 249,999 population—60 percent of those situated in these medium-size cities are growing. Conversely half of the congregations in large cities of more than 250,000 population are declining. Location is no guarantee of growth or decline. At least 40 percent of congregations in each of the locations specified were classified growing and at least 25 percent were classified as declining. Detailed tabulations are found in Table 11.

Table 11

Location of congregations by growth and decline

	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>	<u>Total</u>
Rural or open country	45.3%	21.6%	33.1%	100.0%
Town or village of less than 10,000	48.9	24.3	26.9	100.0
City, 10,000 to 49,999	40.5	17.8	41.6	100.0
City, 50,000 to 249,000	60.3	12.9	26.8	100.0
City, 250,000+	39.7	11.1	49.2	100.0

Further analysis of locations in and around cities shows that congregations in new suburban and residential areas are the most likely to be growing—65.8 percent and 62.5 percent respectively. The high percentage of growing churches in new suburban areas occurs regardless of size of city. The highest percentage of growing churches in the study was found in new suburbs around large cities. In medium-size cities, a high percentage of growth occurs in downtown areas as well as both older and newer suburbs.

Congregational health is also related to location. Roughly two-thirds of congregations in medium and large cities are categorized as healthy. In contrast, slightly less than half of the congregations in each of the locations with less than 10,000 population are categorized healthy.

Building

It has already been noted that the median church in the Convention has 80 people in worship service on Sunday morning. An inquiry of worship service space shows that the median church has worship space for 187 people. The distribution of size of worship space is included in Table 12. Note that 9 of 10 Southern Baptist congregations have sanctuaries that hold 450 people or less. The typical Southern Baptist congregation has worship space for a little more than double its current worship service attendance.²⁰

Table 12

What is the maximum number of people your worship space (or your largest, regularly used worship space) is designed to hold?

<u>Percentile</u>	<u>People</u>
100 th (Max.)	3,400
90 th	450
75 th	285
50 th (Median)	187
25 th	125
10 th	100
0 th (Min.)	8

²⁰ The median congregation with only one worship service on Sunday morning has worship service space equal to 225 percent of its reported worship service attendance.

The overwhelming majority of congregations (96.7%) meet for worship in a church building. In most instances (93.7%) the building is owned by the congregation. See Figures 11 and 12. Only 7.4 percent of all congregations indicate they share building space for worship with another congregation.

Figure 11

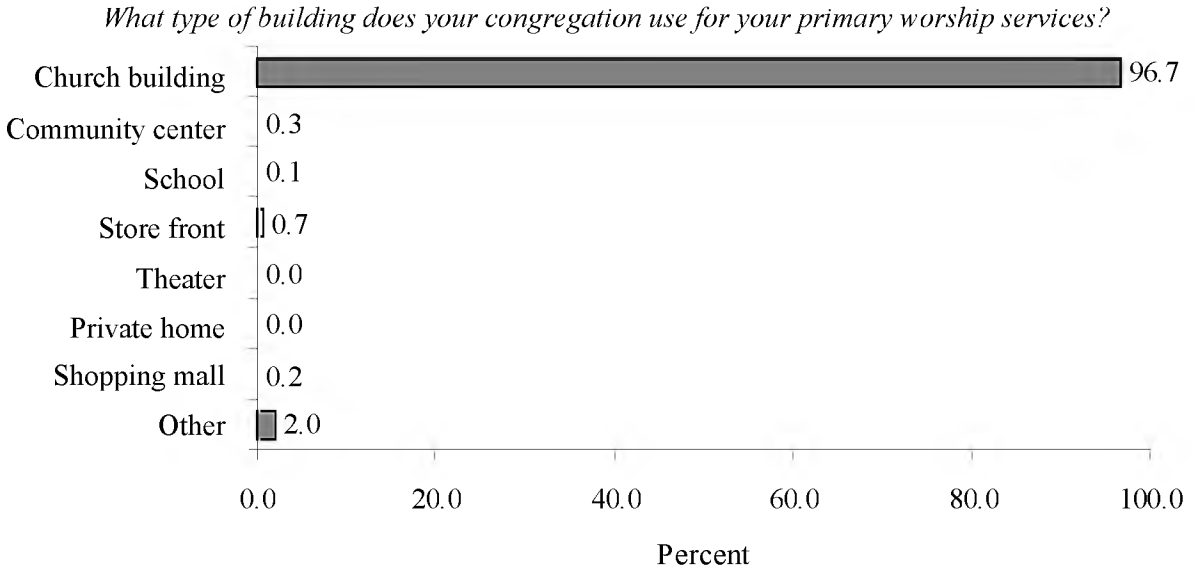
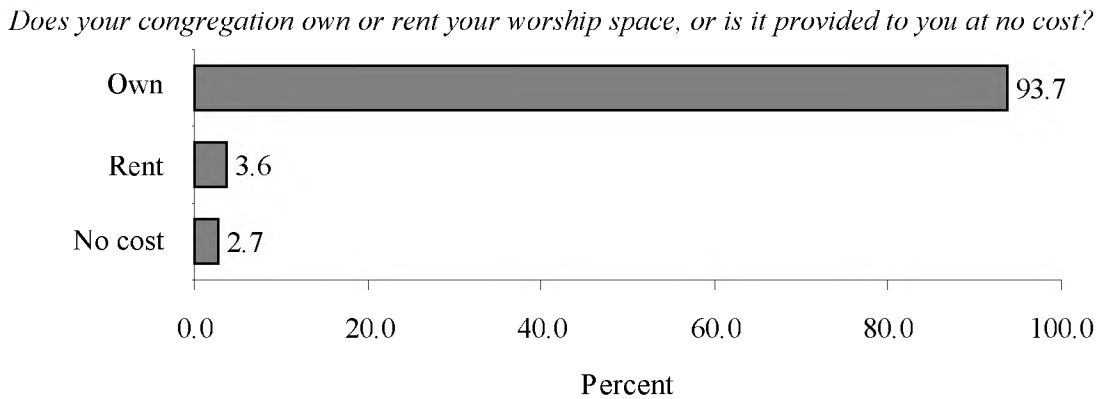


Figure 12



Respondents were asked to describe the space they have available for worship, education, fellowship, and parking relative to what they need. The majority of congregations indicated they have enough space for their needs. For those requiring more space, the primary requirements are for educational space and for fellowship space. Close to half need more educational space and fellowship space. About a third of all congregations indicated they require more parking space. About 1 in 5 need more worship space. Summary of this information is included in Table 13.

Table 13

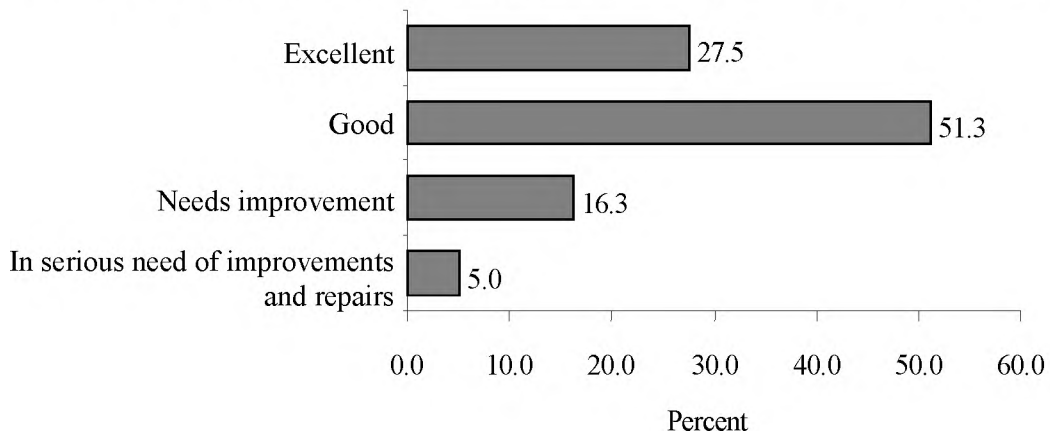
How would you describe the size of the following, relative to the current needs of your congregation?

	<u>Much More than We Need</u>	<u>Slightly More than We Need</u>	<u>Just About Right</u>	<u>Slightly Less than We Need</u>	<u>Much Less than We Need</u>
Worship space	14.8%	23.0%	40.0%	13.1%	9.1%
Educational space	7.5	15.1	29.1	29.1	19.2
Fellowship space	4.1	7.6	43.5	23.4	21.4
Space for parking	7.8	14.4	42.3	22.8	12.7

Respondents were asked to give a subjective evaluation of the building facilities. Almost 4 of 5 buildings were described as good or excellent. Only 1 in 20 congregations indicated their facilities were in need of serious improvements or repairs. Detailed responses are included in Figure 13.

Figure 13

How would you describe the overall physical condition of your congregation's building(s)?



Congregational Programs

Sunday School

Like Sunday morning worship services, the Sunday School program is nearly universal in Southern Baptist congregations—98.2 percent have a Sunday School that meets regularly. The typical (median) congregation with a Sunday School has 40 adults attending weekly plus another 22 children and teens. Half of the congregations range from 20 to 70 adults in attendance and from 12 to 40 children and teens (see Table 14).²¹

Table 14

What is the typical, total, weekly attendance of adults (18 and over) and children and teens (17 and under)?

<u>Percentile</u>	<u>Adult Participants</u>	<u>Children/Teen Participants</u>
100 th (Max.)	3,400	1,400
90 th	140	80
75 th	70	40
50 th (Median)	40	22
25 th	20	12
10 th	14	6
0 th (Min.)	2	1

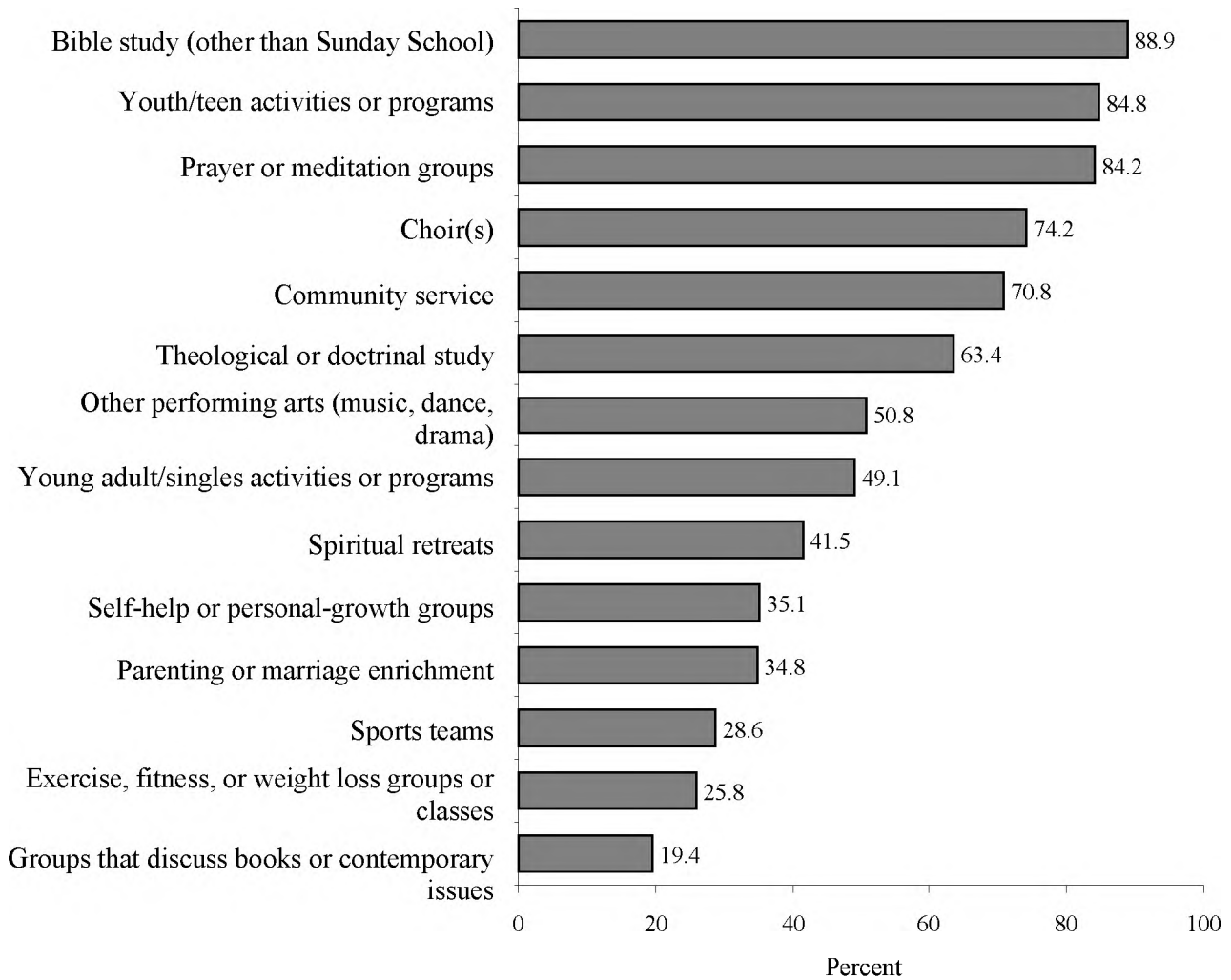
²¹ These ranges are based on the 25th and 75th percentiles. Note that the median congregation has 60 in weekly attendance, combined adults and children and teens. This median is calculated by first adding attendance for these two groups and then finding the middle of this new distribution.

Other Programs

A list of 14 programs or activities (other than Sunday School) was presented to respondents and they were asked to indicate whether their congregations conducted any of the programs or sponsored the activities in the past twelve months. If they did, they were asked to further indicate whether these were short-term activities or ongoing activities. The list of programs and activities and the percentage of congregations participating or sponsoring them are included in Figure 14.

Figure 14

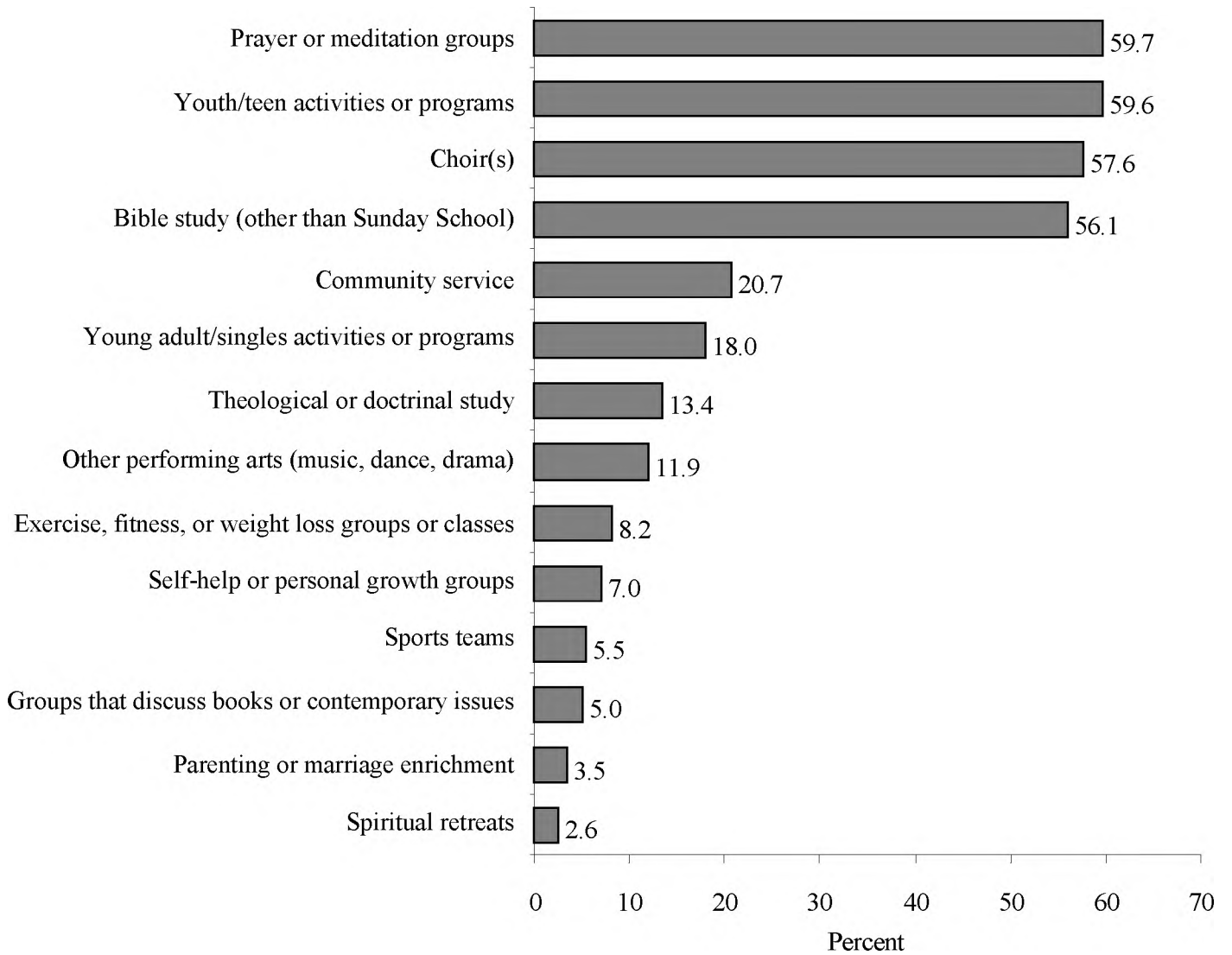
During the past 12 months, did your congregation have any of the following programs or activities in addition to your regular Sunday School?



While Figure 14 contains the percentage of congregations that conducted the programs or activities sometime within the year, Figure 15 contains the percentage of congregations that maintain a program or activity throughout the year. Prayer or meditation groups, youth/teen activities or programs, choirs, and Bible studies are maintained on a year-round basis by over half of the congregations. The remainder is comprised of activities or programs that are mostly conducted only on a short-term or seasonal basis.

Figure 15

Percentage of congregations having the following programs that are ongoing throughout the year



Personal Practices

A list of 8 home or personal practices were given and respondents were asked how much they were emphasized. Possible responses ranged from “A Great Deal” to “Not At All.” The practices are found in Table 15 along with frequency of response. As with some earlier questions, a composite score has been created where a 1 is assigned to “A Great Deal,” and so forth. The resulting composite score ranges from 100 to 500 and the practices are sorted in order of frequency of emphasis.

Table 15

How much does your congregation, in its worship and education, emphasize the following home or personal practices?

	<u>A Great Deal</u>	<u>Quite a Bit</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Not At All</u>	<u>Score</u>
Personal prayer, Scripture study, devotions	60.3%	29.4%	8.2%	2.0%	0.1%	152.2
Keeping the Lord’s Day	49.9	26.9	17.1	4.2	1.8	180.8
Abstaining from premarital sex	41.4	31.5	20.8	3.8	2.5	194.5
Family devotions	31.0	28.9	31.6	6.6	1.9	219.5
Abstinence from alcohol	35.7	23.6	23.1	11.9	5.6	227.8
Fasting	1.3	3.7	25.1	31.4	38.6	402.6
Displaying religious objects, symbols, etc.	2.4	3.7	11.7	12.8	69.5	443.6
Observing dietary restrictions	1.0	1.9	6.4	17.0	73.6	460.0

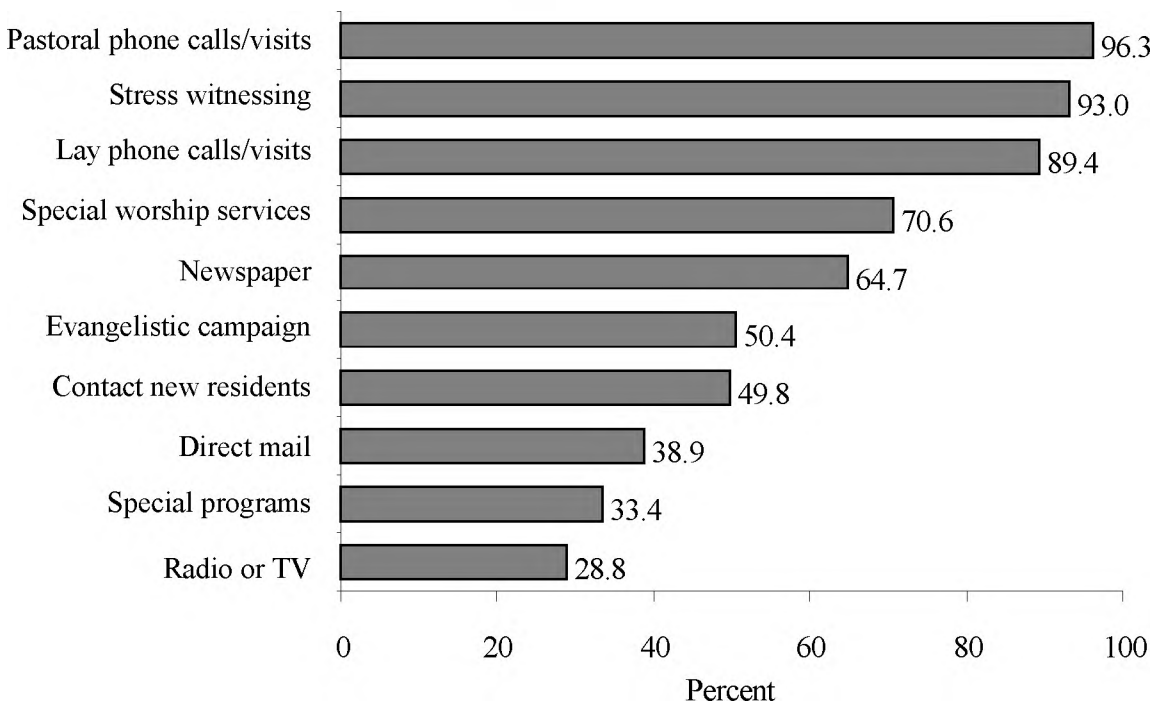
The most frequently emphasized home or personal practice among Southern Baptist congregations is personal prayer, Scripture study, or devotions—9 of 10 congregations place significant emphasis in this area. The majority of congregations also put at least “Quite a Bit” of emphasis on keeping the Lord’s Day and abstaining from premarital sex. On the other end of the spectrum, fasting, displaying religious objects, symbols, etc., and observing dietary restrictions received relatively little emphasis.

Outreach

In an effort to understand some of the outreach techniques used by congregations, 10 outreach methods were listed and respondents were asked to indicate whether their congregation had engaged in a specific activity. Figure 16 displays the percentage of congregations employing an activity during the previous year.

Figure 16

In addition to the outreach activities of your denomination, did your congregation do any of the following during the past 12 months to reach out to new or inactive participants, or to make your congregation better known in your community?

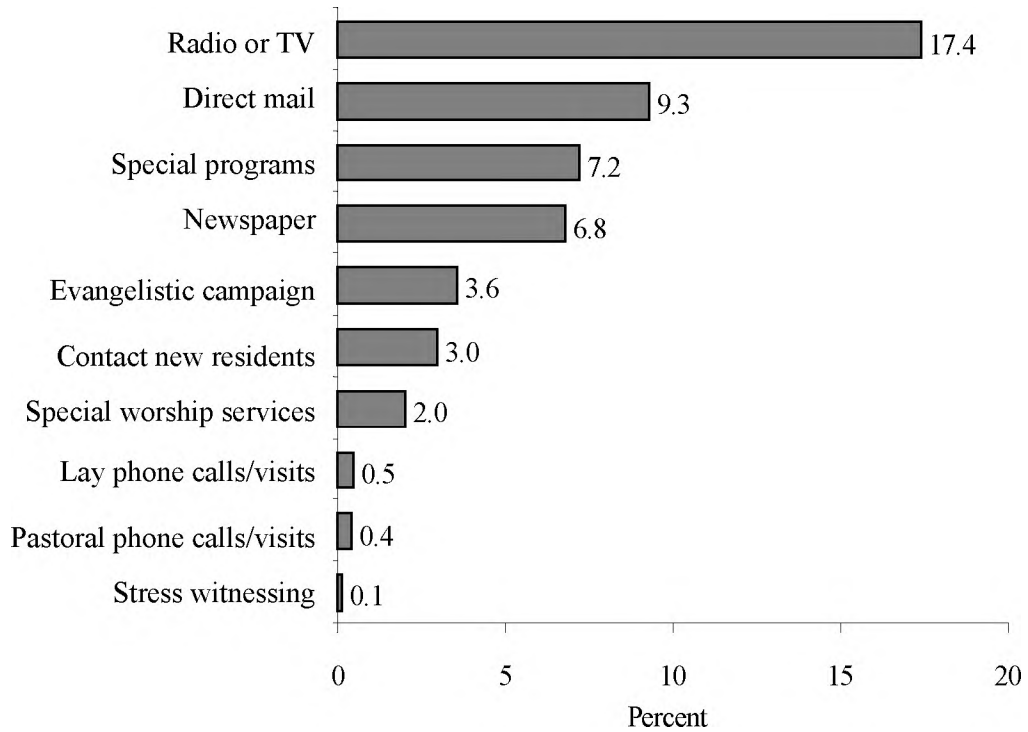


Most congregations, at least 9 of 10, employed phone calls or personal visits by the pastor, stressed the importance of witnessing to others about one's faith, and relied on phone calls or personal visits by laity. All of the activities listed were cited by sizeable portions of Southern Baptist congregations. However, probably because of expense, radio or TV was the least frequently used of the activities listed.

The response set for this question was designed to differentiate between those congregations that simply did not employ an outreach activity and those whose members were believed to be opposed to an outreach activity. This information is included in Figure 17. In general, there was little opposition to most of the outreach methods listed. The highest opposition recorded was for radio or television advertisements and stories—1 of 6 congregations had informants that indicated the members would be opposed to this outreach activity. While the opposition was noted, the underlying cause for the opposition was not determined. For example, the congregation might be philosophically opposed to this type of outreach, or it might be pragmatically opposed because of the expense involved. Beyond radio and TV advertising, about 1 in 10 congregations do not appear supportive of direct mail promotions to area residents.

Figure 17

Percentage of congregations that have not conducted a specific outreach activity and whose members would not support the activity



Ministries

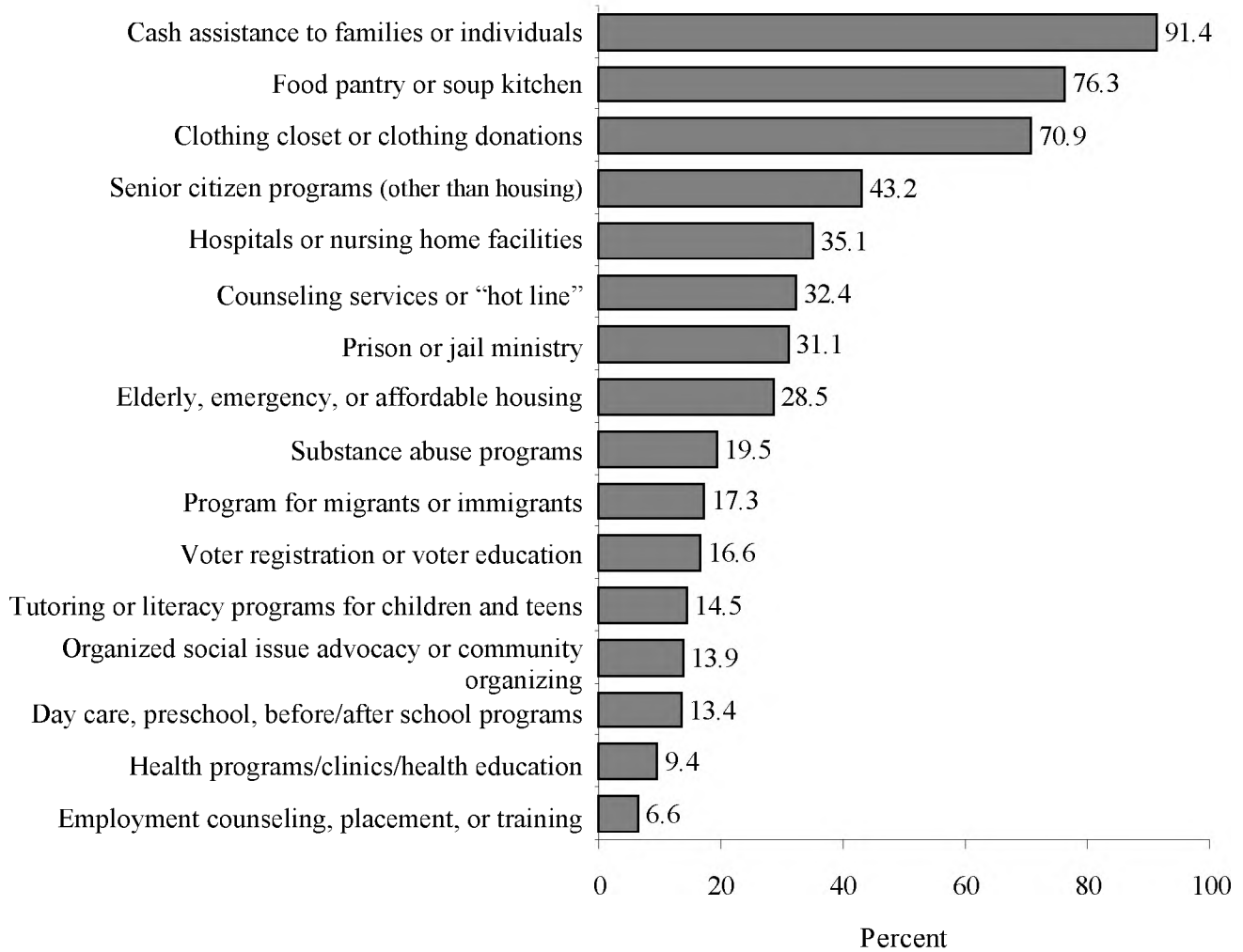
One of the major purposes of the overall study is to document the contributions that religious congregations make to their communities. In doing so, a list of 16 social ministries was presented and respondents were asked whether their congregations directly provided the ministry or provided it in cooperation with another congregation, agency, or organization. The percentage of congregations participating in a ministry, either directly or indirectly, is included in Figure 18. Providing cash assistance, food pantries, and clothing closets are the primary ways in which Southern Baptist congregations provide ministry assistance. At the other end of the spectrum, less than 1 of 10 Southern Baptist congregations is involved in health care ministries or employment ministries.

Figure 18

In the past 12 months, did your congregation directly provide or cooperate in providing any of the following services for your congregational members, or for people in the community?

“Cooperation” includes financial contributions, volunteer time by congregational members, space in your building, material donations, and so forth.

(Percentage indicating “Yes”)



While the number of people served runs into the thousands for some congregations, the typical Southern Baptist congregation provided ministry to 20 people per month. Using the sample of congregations to infer back to the population of all congregations, nearly 3 million people nationwide are served through the ministries of Southern Baptist congregations during a typical month.

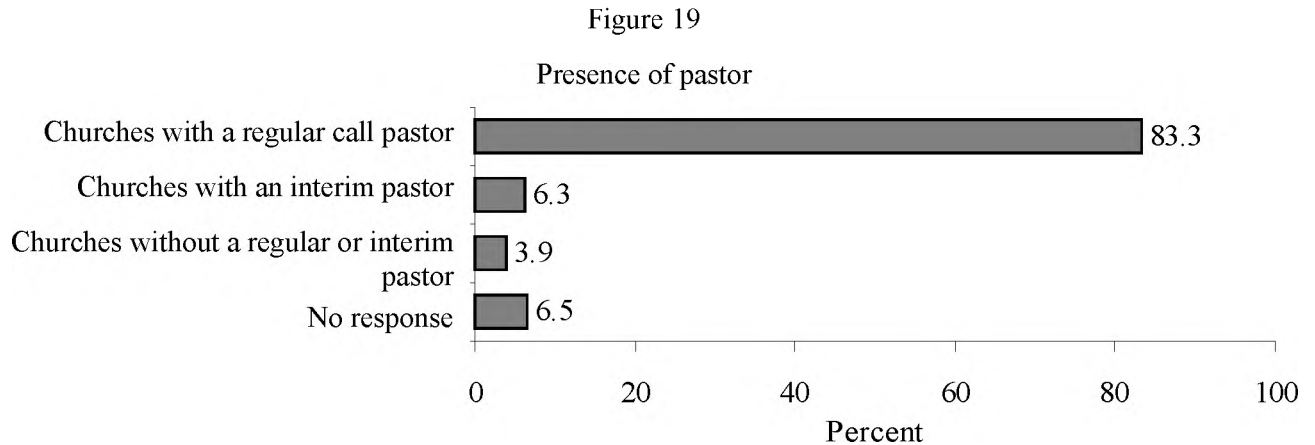
Schools

A separate set of questions inquired whether congregations conduct five-day-a-week Christian elementary schools and secondary schools. Only 1 percent of Southern Baptist congregations sponsors such institutions.

Leadership and Organizational Dynamics

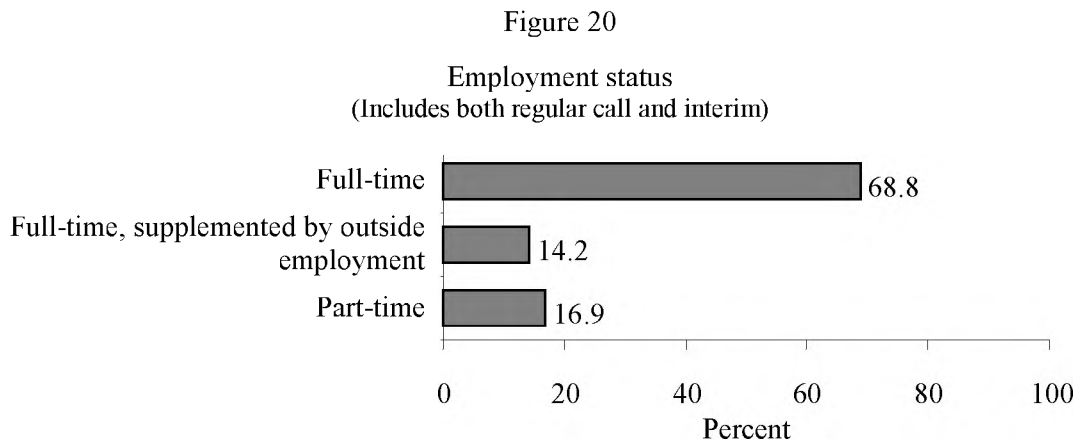
Pastoral Leadership

An extensive set of questions was asked concerning the pastoral leadership of Southern Baptist congregations. Nine of 10 Southern Baptist congregations have the services of an ongoing pastor—either regular or interim. Specifically, 83.3 percent of all congregations have a regular call pastor. Another 6.3 percent reported having an interim pastor. Only 3.9 percent reported having neither a regular nor interim pastor. See Figure 19. Those congregations without a pastor have typically been without one for four months.



Of those congregations with a pastor—either regular call or interim—96.7 percent of the pastors are paid and 3.3 percent are volunteer. These percentages remain the same when cross classified by whether the pastor is interim or regular call.

Employment status is further examined by full-time and part-time categories in Figure 20. Most pastors (7 of 10) are employed full-time by the church. However, this does vary by interim/regular status. Only 40.2 percent of interim pastors are employed full-time by their congregations, while 71.0 percent of regular call pastors are employed full-time. One in 7 pastors working full-time at their church choose to supplement their income with outside employment.



Almost all Southern Baptist pastors are male, still there are a few rare congregations where women are pastors. When survey respondents are weighted to reflect the entire distribution of Southern Baptist congregations, the result is that 99.9 percent of pastors are male.²²

The typical regular pastor is 48 years old. In contrast, the median age of interim pastors is 70 years old.

The majority of Southern Baptist pastors have college degrees and seminary degrees. Figure 21 details the secular education of pastors. Over two-thirds (69.0%) have college degrees—one-fourth have masters degrees or higher. Only 8.9 percent have a high school diploma or less.

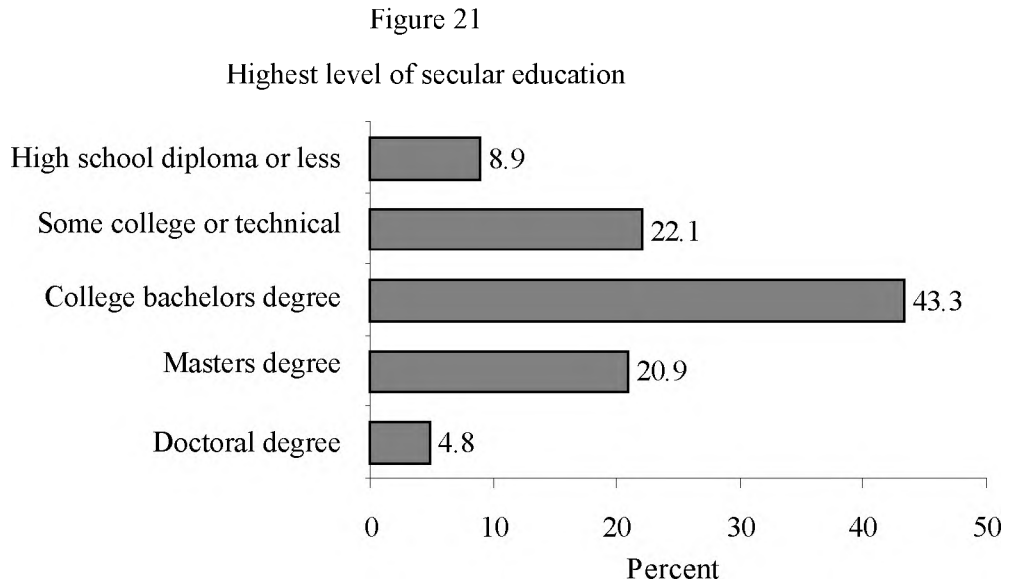
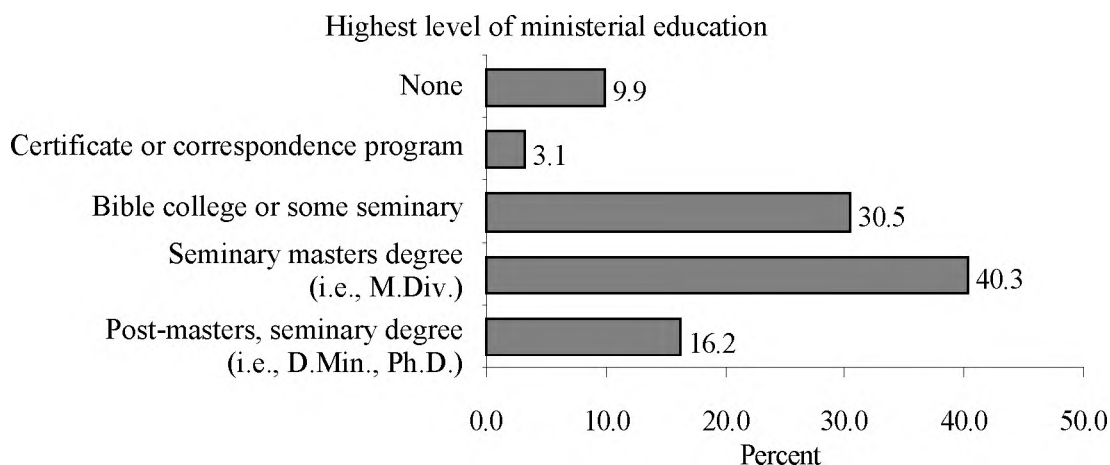


Figure 22 details the ministerial training of pastors. Over half, 56.6 percent are seminary graduates. Another 30.5 percent have some seminary or they have Bible college training. Only 1 in 10 Southern Baptist pastors indicated they had no formal ministerial education.

²² This percentage maybe slightly inaccurate because of nonresponse bias, sampling error, and research design. Congregations with female pastors might be less inclined to participate in the survey because of the Southern Baptist Convention's bias against women pastors. Also, the sample size is not large enough to accurately reflect this very small segment of the population. Furthermore, the survey is designed to represent the senior pastor or only one co-pastor; thus, it is possible that a woman pastor in the congregations surveyed may have been missed.

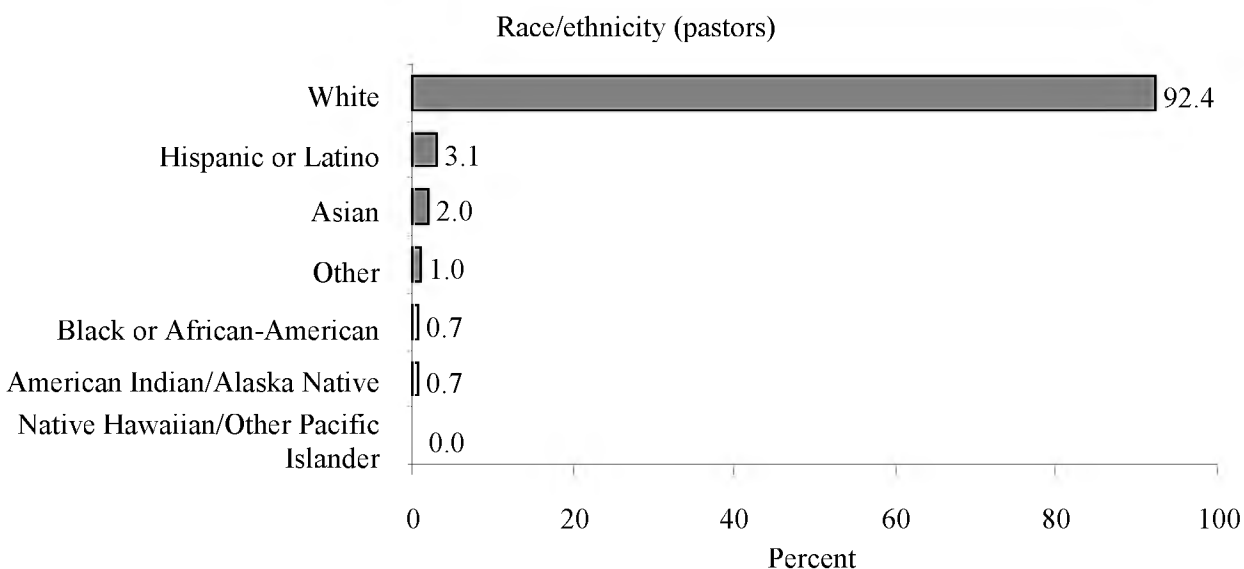
Figure 22



There is some relationship between whether a person pastors full-time or part-time and the amount of education he has. Three-fourths (76.3%) of full-time pastors (without outside employment) have a college degree. This compares to 66.7 percent of part-time pastors and 48.7 percent of full-time pastors (with outside employment). Full-time pastors (no outside employment) are much more likely to have a seminary degree—68.8 percent versus 46.0 percent for part-time pastors and 28.2 percent for full-time pastors (with outside employment). Overall, full-time pastors who supplement their salary with outside employment tend to have the least formal training. Part-time pastors have only slightly less formal education than full-time pastors (no outside employment).

The primary racial/ethnic classification of Southern Baptist pastors is included in Figure 23. White (non-Hispanic) is the primary classification of over 9 of 10 Southern Baptist pastors. Conversely, less than 1 of 10 is of another primary racial/ethnic origin.

Figure 23



For those congregations that have a regular (not interim) pastor, the typical pastor has been at the church for four years. This tenure varies by full-time or part-time status. Full-time pastors with no outside employment have been at their congregations for four years, full-time pastors with

supplemental outside employment have a tenure of five years, while part-time pastors have a tenure of three years.

The tenure reported above is for ministers still in the midst of their pastorate. In order to determine the complete tenure of pastors, respondents were asked how long the previous pastor served at the congregation. Interestingly, the typical congregation indicated that the tenure of the previous pastor was also four years. The typical congregation with a part-time pastor also indicated that the tenure of the prior pastor was also three years, while the tenure for congregations with full-time pastors was four years. In separate questions, the typical congregation with a full-time pastor, indicated they have had two pastors, including their current one, during the past 10 years. Likewise, the typical congregation with a part-time pastor indicated they have had three pastors, including the current one, in the past 10 years. While there is variation, it appears that typically Southern Baptist pastors stay at their congregations for four years unless they are part-time, then their tenure is three years.

Other Staff

Congregations were asked how many paid ministerial and program staff they have. The numbers ranged from zero to a hundred for one megachurch in the survey. The typical congregation (median) reported one full-time paid and one part-time paid ministerial/program person. Congregations were further queried about paid support staff—either secretarial or maintenance. The typical church has one paid part-time support staff.

Relationships with Other Religious Groups

Table 16 indicates the extent that Southern Baptists cooperate with other congregations in selected activities. Out of the four areas listed, nearly half of Southern Baptist congregations have not jointly participated with other congregations during the past year. Interestingly, in these four areas there is about the same level of cooperation demonstrated with other Christian groups as with other Southern Baptists. In these four areas, little cooperation with non-Christian groups is found.

Table 16

During the past 12 months, has your congregation been involved in any of the following types of inter-congregational, ecumenical, or interfaith activities?

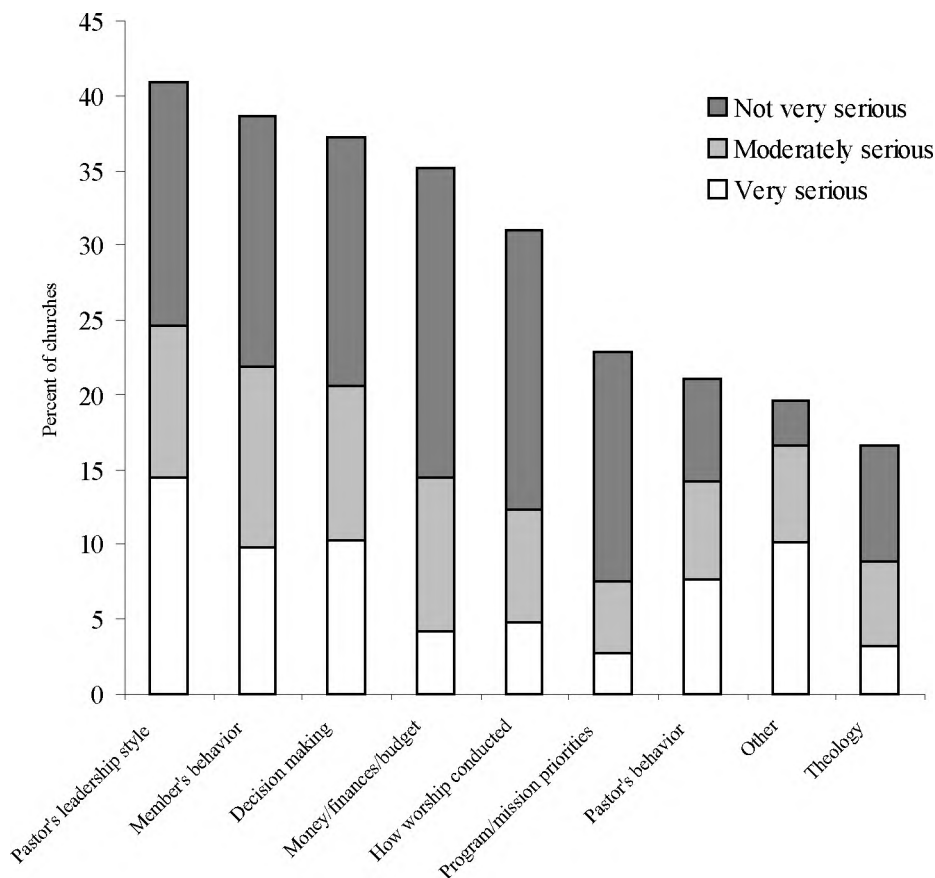
	No	From Our Denomination	From Other Christian Denominations	From Other Faith Traditions
Joint worship services	45.8	27.1	32.4	1.1
Joint celebrations or programs other than worship	48.7	29.7	25.7	1.1
Joint social outreach or service projects	62.6	21.1	18.5	1.1
Councils of churches or ministerial associations	55.9	25.6	21.6	1.1

Conflict

A series of eight issues was presented and informants were asked to indicate whether the congregation had experienced disagreement in this area, and if so, to indicate the severity of the conflict. Most congregations have to deal with conflict at some point in their existence—72.1 percent of responding congregations reported having friction over at least one of the issues in the past 5 years. One of 4 congregations (26.1%) reported having serious conflict in the previous five years. Figure 24 shows the percentage of congregations experiencing disagreement in specific areas.

Figure 24

During the past 5 years has your congregation experienced any disagreements or conflicts in the following areas?



The most frequent conflict or disagreement experienced by Southern Baptist congregations is over the pastor's leadership style with over 40.9 percent of congregations experiencing this type of conflict during the past 5 years. This is an interesting finding given that pastors are probably the most frequent informant for congregations in this survey. It might be expected that pastors would downplay pastoral leadership style as a source of strife. Furthermore, 1 in 7 indicated that this disagreement over the pastor's leadership style was very serious. At the other end of the spectrum, theology was the problem cited least by congregations and even when cited, it tended not to be a very serious problem.

One specific type of conflict—contention over how worship is conducted—was compared to style of worship. Congregations classified as contemporary in worship style most often experienced friction. Over half the contemporary congregations, 53.5 percent experienced strife over worship. This compares with 35.1 percent of congregations with a blended worship style and 25.8 percent of those with traditional worship. About 1 of 3 contemporary congregations (28.9%) indicated their contention was at the moderately or very serious level. Apparently the move to a contemporary worship service comes with a cost.

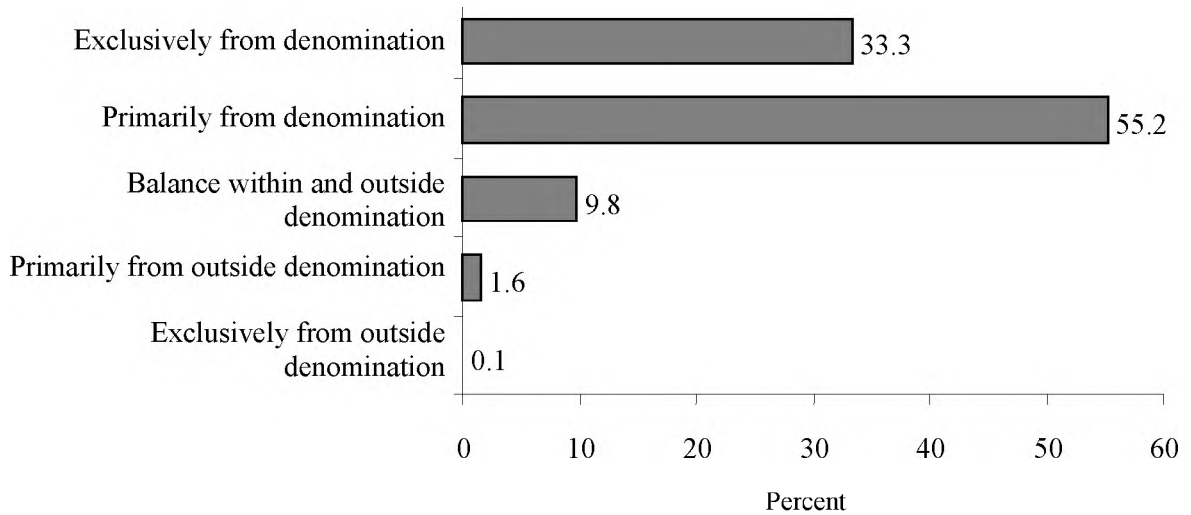
Denominational Loyalty

Congregations were asked where they purchase their worship and ministry supplies. Almost 9 of 10 congregations purchase their materials from denominational sources, while 1 of 10 congregations

balances its purchases from inside and outside the denomination. Few congregations primarily look outside the denomination for resources. Figure 25 shows the response to this question.

Figure 25

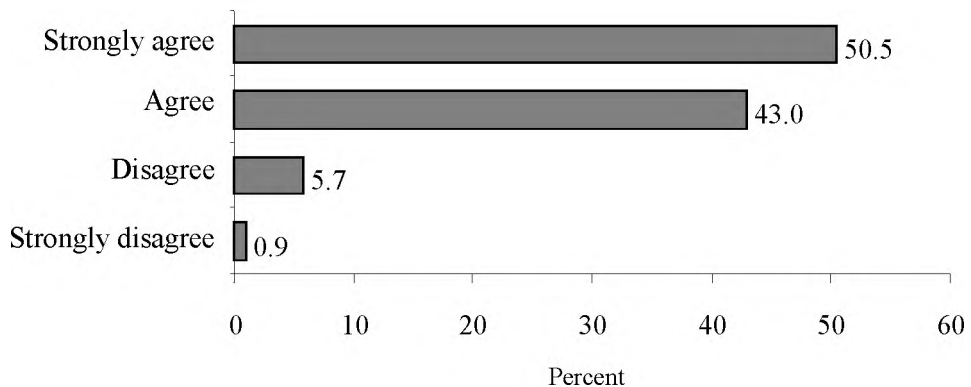
When your congregation purchases worship, educational, stewardship, evangelism, etc., materials or supplies, does it purchase them:



Some commentators are touting post-denominationalism in the United States. Two questions explored this issue by inquiring about the relationship of congregations to the Southern Baptist Convention. The first question asked if the affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention is important to the members in the congregation. Response is included in Figure 26.

Figure 26

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following: It is important to our members that our congregation is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention



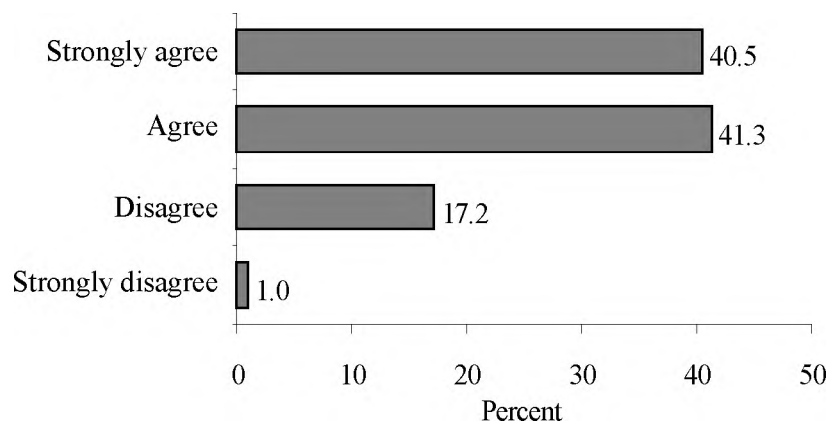
According to respondents, in nearly 93.5 percent of congregations it is important to their members to be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. Conversely, the affiliation is not important to members in 6.6 percent of the congregations. Exactly what is being expressed in congregations that disagree with the statement is unclear. It is uncertain whether this is a statement of apathy or ignorance of members about the denomination, or whether it is a statement of dissatisfaction with the political/theological direction of the national body. Still, the key finding is that members in the

overwhelming majority of congregations feel the tie with the Southern Baptist Convention is important—at least as interpreted by respondents to the survey.

A slightly different question asked whether it is important to the stability and vitality of the congregation that it is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. This is a question not so much about members' perceptions, but the informant's perception about the contribution of denominational affiliation to the health and well-being of the congregation. Here the affirmation of the Convention was lower. Still, more than 8 of 10 informants (81.8%) indicated that it is important to be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. Conversely 18.2 percent of respondents disagree. As with the previous question, it is impossible to determine the motivation for the negative response. It could be a statement of dissatisfaction with the national body or an assessment that the national body has little impact on the local congregation. Again, the key finding is that denominational affiliation is important to the large majority of congregations. See Figure 27.

Figure 27

To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following: It is important for the stability and vitality of our congregation that it is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.



Responses to the preceding two items call into question the pronouncements concerning post-denominationalism. Southern Baptist congregations' propensity to form themselves into associations, state conventions, fellowships, and other affinity groups also argues for denominationalism. Even on the larger religious landscape, rather than denominations becoming passe, possibly it's just that existing denominations and structures are changing and new ones are emerging.

Follow-up analysis on the preceding two questions reveals that contemporary congregations' ties to the denomination are a little looser than for traditional congregations or those with blended worship styles. Still the majority response of contemporary congregations for both questions is that affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention is important.

The last question that dealt with denominational affiliation was whether a congregation was formally aligned with any denomination other than the Southern Baptist Convention. Only 3.2 percent of the congregations indicated they were dually aligned with another denomination. At least eight other denominations were listed where congregations were dually aligned. Some of the other denominations listed were American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. and the predominantly Black national Baptist conventions. Even a couple of non-Baptist denominational affiliations were listed. Also listed by some congregations was their affiliation with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship; however, for this study it was not considered a separate denominational affiliation.

Expectation for Members

Respondents were asked about congregational expectations for members and whether they are strictly enforced. The exact wording for this question and response is included in Table 17. It seems fairly clear from the chart that Southern Baptist congregations have fairly clear expectations for their members but little church discipline is employed in coercing members toward compliance.

Table 17

Which one of the following three statements best describes your congregation?

Our congregation has definite expectations for members that are strictly enforced.	10.7%
Our congregation has fairly clear expectations for members, but the enforcement of these expectations is not very strict.	67.6
Our congregation has only vague expectations for members, that are seldom, if ever, enforced.	21.7

Participants

Because the Cooperative Congregational Studies Project was designed to encompass many different denominational groups, and there is no uniform definition of membership, a decision was made to concentrate on participation of people in congregational life and activities. In Southern Baptist life, membership rolls can get inflated and contain members who no longer participate or associate with the congregation. Conversely, many children participate but are not members.

The questionnaire began with a broad question about affiliation that asked how many people are associated *in any way* with the religious life of the congregation. Congregations were instructed to include adults and children, regular and irregular participants, and registered members and participating non-members. A summary of the distribution of total participants in Southern Baptist congregations is included in Table 18. Southern Baptist congregations are typically not large. The median number of participants reported was 125.²³ While there was a wide range in number of participants—from 5 to 15,000 in the survey, 75 percent of the congregations had 250 or fewer people participating *in any way* with its religious life.

Table 18

Approximately how many persons would you say are associated in any way with the religious life of your congregation—counting both adults and children, counting both regular and irregular participants, counting both official or registered members and also participating nonmembers?

<u>Percentile</u>	<u>Participants</u>
100 th (Max.)	15,000
90 th	500
75 th	250
50 th (Median)	125
25 th	68
10 th	35
0 th (Min.)	5

²³ It is interesting that the median resident membership reported by Southern Baptist congregations on the 1999 ACP is 132. It may be that even though membership rolls are inflated, resident membership may be a good approximation of the participation of congregations because the nonparticipation of members on the roll may be offset by the participation of adult non-members and children.

Survey respondents were instructed to further classify participants into the categories of adults (age 18 and older) and children and teens (under age 18). Here respondents were instructed to consider only *regular* participants, therefore, these figures are not as inclusive as previously defined. The typical (median) congregation has 60 adults regularly participating plus 30 children and teens. Combined, the typical Southern Baptist congregation has 90 regular participants.²⁴ The number of adult participants and children/teen participants ranged greatly. The number of adult participants ranged from 2 adults to 5,500 among the congregations surveyed. At the same time, regular children/teen participants ranged from 0 to 2,000. Using these figures from the sample data to infer to the entire population of Southern Baptist congregations, there should be 4.9 million regularly participating adults and another 2.5 million regularly participating children and teens (under age 18.). Table 19 shows the distribution of regular adult and children/teen participants based on the survey.

Table 19

Number of regularly participating adults (18 and over) and number of regularly participating children and teens (17 and under)

<u>Percentile</u>	<u>Adult Participants</u>	<u>Children/Teen Participants</u>
100 th (Max.)	5,500	2,000
90 th	225	125
75 th	125	60
50 th (Median)	60	30
25 th	30	15
10 th	20	6
0 th (Min.)	2	0

The relationship between size of the congregation and church growth is complicated. Generally, for congregations with at least 50 participants but fewer than 1,000, there is no relationship. About half of the congregations are growing in this wide size range. For very small congregations, those with fewer than 50 participants, only a third are growing. In contrast, two-thirds of the congregations with more than 1,000 participants are growing.

Size is also related to spiritual health, where the differentiating size seems to be 500 participants. Under 500 participants, about 50 percent of churches are rated healthy. For congregations with more than 500 participants the rate is about 75 percent. A plausible explanation is that size of the congregation affects the quality of the worship service which in turn effects some of the items on the church health scale. As already noted, the presence of contemporary worship services (which is positively related to health) is a function of size, specifically worship service attendance.

Congregations were asked whether the number of regularly participating adults has been increasing or decreasing over the past five years. Less than a third, 31.7 percent, indicated that the number of regularly participating adults has increased 10 percent or more over the past five years. Conversely, 11.5 percent indicated that adult participation has declined 10 percent or more. Over half, 54.1 percent, have plateaued (stayed within ± 10 percent. A more detailed response to this question is included in Table 20.

²⁴ This statistic is properly derived by combining the adult participants and the children and teen participants for each congregation, thereby creating a new variable of total regular participation. The median of 90 is derived from the distribution for this new variable and not just the sum of the medians from the two separate distributions for adults and for children and teens.

Table 20

Since 1995, has the above number of regularly participating adults:

Increased 10% or more	31.7%
Increased 5% to 9%	15.9
Stayed about the same ($\pm 4\%$)	28.2
Decreased 5% to 9%	10.0
Decreased 10% or more	11.5
Our congregation did not exist in 1995	2.7

Informants were not asked to provide actual participant figures over time, thus response is probably based on perception of the change that has occurred. Informants may not have an accurate view of their growth or decline over the prior five years. When these perceptions of growth/decline are compared to objective measures—such as the percentage change in resident membership or change in worship service attendance—there seems to be slippage in the numbers. For example, 10 percent of those stating they grew 10 percent or more during the past five years actually show a 10 percent decline in worship service attendance from the end of 1994 to the end of 1999. Change in worship service attendance and change in resident membership are not perfect substitutes for percentage change in regular participating adults. Furthermore, the time frames for the measures do not exactly mesh. However, there is evidence to suggest that informants are not highly accurate with their perceptions.

Characteristics of Regularly Participating Adults

Church informants were given a list of 15 demographic and social characteristics and were asked to estimate the percentage of regularly participating adults in their congregations with these characteristics. Rather than precise estimates, seven categories of percentages were given as possible responses. The response set and results for this exercise are included in Table 21. In order to simplify interpretation of this information, an average percentage, based on the midpoint of each categorical range, was computed for each characteristic. The characteristics in the table are sorted by the average estimated percentage. Ideally, the extent that each of these characteristics is displayed in the population of participants in Southern Baptist congregations should be determined by a survey of participants rather than an informant making an educated guess about the congregation. However, the limitations of the design of this study result in rough approximations of what Southern Baptist participants are like. Though not precise, the estimates provide a helpful description.

Table 21

Of the total number of regularly participating adults, what percent would you estimate are:

	None	Hardly Any 1-10%	Few 11-20%	Some 21-40%	Many 41-60%	Most 61-80%	Nearly All 81-100%	Average Estimated Percentage
	Married	0.0%	1.3%	2.0%	12.2%	32.1%	42.5%	9.9%
Female	0.0	0.2	1.1	10.5	69.9	15.3	3.1	52
Life long Southern Baptists	0.9	6.4	8.7	16.5	21.8	31.8	13.8	52
Living in immediate area around church	1.8	12.3	14.3	18.1	18.6	22.4	12.4	44
Over 60 years old	0.8	9.5	21.7	32.5	21.3	11.6	2.8	34
Holding volunteer leadership roles	1.1	9.1	20.8	33.1	22.7	10.3	2.9	34
Age 35 or younger	2.5	7.0	23.7	41.0	18.3	6.4	1.1	30
Households with children <18 present	1.9	15.1	27.2	36.3	15.6	3.5	0.3	25
New to congregation in last 5 years	2.9	19.7	29.5	27.4	10.3	5.4	4.7	25
At least college graduates	2.4	21.4	31.3	30.4	10.4	3.2	0.9	22
Commuting more than 15 minutes	5.5	32.3	26.2	20.1	8.5	5.9	1.5	20
Households with incomes <\$20,000	3.7	35.1	31.5	17.1	6.4	3.3	2.8	18
Regularly involved in personal witnessing	1.1	39.4	32.6	17.8	6.6	0.8	1.7	16
Not high school graduates	7.9	47.3	21.6	10.6	4.1	5.3	3.2	16
Household with incomes >\$75,000	20.0	44.7	20.4	11.4	2.9	0.6	0.1	10

The three top descriptors of Southern Baptist adult participants are married, female, and lifelong Southern Baptists. In this survey, it is roughly estimated that 59 percent of adult participants are married and 52 percent are female. These two percentages are probably low estimates of the true population percentages. Based on "The 1990 Southern Baptist Constituency Study,"²⁵ 64 percent of Southern Baptist adults were married and 55 percent were female. Using these two characteristics as examples, the estimates in Table 21 may be as much as 5 or 6 percentage points off, but nonetheless provide reasonable, "ball park" estimates. Conversely, the three descriptors least likely to describe Southern Baptists are "In households with incomes above \$75,000," "Not high school graduates," and "Regularly involved in personal witnessing." Because of the emphasis on evangelism in Southern Baptist life, it is interesting to note that only 16 percent of adult Southern Baptist participants are estimated to be regularly involved in personal witnessing.

²⁵ Dean Anderson, "The 1990 Southern Baptist Constituency Study," *Research Information Report, Series 7, Number 3, April, 1991*

Out of the above items, the only one to show much correlation with church growth is the estimated percentage of households of participating adults with children under age 18 present. This item is even more highly correlated with size of congregation as measured by regular participants. The highest correlation found was between size and the presence of households of participating adults with incomes above \$75,000. A third variable positively correlated with size is the percentage of college graduates. There is a small correlation between size of congregation and the percentage of adults age 35 or younger. Large congregations, those with 500 or more participants, are found in geographic areas with the population to sustain them, i.e., cities. These correlated items suggest that large churches are more likely to be found in upscale areas of cities.

Respondents were also asked to estimate the percentage of regularly participating adults falling into seven different racial/ethnic categories. Unlike the categorical responses above, respondents were asked to give precise percentages (even though these, too, can only be assumed to be educated guesses). Table 22, the column labeled sample, shows the percentage of congregations categorized by predominant racial/ethnic type in the survey. Fifty percent or more of adult participants being from a racial/ethnic group determines the predominant type. Nine of 10 Southern Baptist congregations are racially/ethnically predominantly White, i.e., in 92.1 percent of the congregations, Whites (non-Hispanic) comprise more than half the adult participants. Hispanics are the predominant ethnic group in 2.7 percent of Southern Baptist congregations while Asians are the predominant group in 1.3 percent of congregations.

Table 22

Percentage of churches predominantly...
(i.e., more than 50% regularly participating adults)

	<u>Sample</u>	<u>Population</u>
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.8%	0.7%
Asian	1.3	2.6
Black or African-American	0.7	4.2
Hispanic or Latino	2.7	4.4
Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.0	0.0
White	92.1	86.5
Other	0.9	1.6

The percentages in Table 22 contain some error, which can be attributed to sampling error and to nonresponse bias. Population data are available for predominant racial/ethnic type from the Annual Church Profile (ACP), a yearly survey of Southern Baptist congregations, and can be used as a corrective. Information from the ACP is included under the column labeled "Population." The survey has overestimated Anglo congregations, i.e., predominantly White, non-Hispanic congregations, and underestimated all the other racial/ethnic groups. Although not exact, the survey does provide reasonable estimates of the population given the understanding that non-White groups are underrepresented.

While Table 22 shows the categorization of congregations by the major ethnic group of adults in the congregation, it does not indicate the extent of diversity within Southern Baptist congregations. Based on the survey, a little over a fourth (27.2%) of Southern Baptist congregations have Hispanic adult participants and almost a fourth (23.3%) have African-American participants. Given that the denomination was birthed in the segregated South and that segregation was the norm until the 1960s, there has been change in the racial/ethnic composition of congregations in the past 40 years.

Southern Baptists do not collect information on individual members or participants of congregations, so there are no population counts available by racial and ethnic group. Even though the survey underestimates the predominantly non-White congregations, the survey information is still the best

available source to estimate the number and percentage of adult participants in each of the racial/ethnic groups. Table 23 contains estimates of the population based on the survey data collected. The estimates are calculated by multiplying the proportion of people in different racial/ethnic groups in each congregation times regular adult participants. Estimates for the individual congregations are used to infer for the entire population. In all, there are an estimated 4.9 million adults who regularly participate in Southern Baptist congregations. About 4.5 million of these adults are White (non-Hispanic), the remaining 400,000 are non-White. Of these 400,000, about 138,000 are Hispanic, 124,000 are African-American, and 65,000 are Asian.

Table 23

Estimated number and percentage of regular adult participants in Southern Baptist congregations by racial/ethnic group

American Indians/Alaska Natives	26,000	0.5%
Asians	65,000	1.3
Blacks or African-Americans	124,000	2.5
Hispanics or Latinos	138,000	2.8
Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders	7,000	0.1
Whites	4,520,000	91.8
Other	<u>43,000</u>	<u>0.9</u>
Total Participants	4,922,000	100.0%

Participant Involvement

Additional questions asked about the involvement of adult participants in various religious activities. Three questions inquired about recruiting new members, participating in activities that strengthen faith, and expressing faith through helping others. Responses have been included in Table 24. Based on assessments of the congregational informants, it appears that most Southern Baptist participants are not very involved in faith development or sharing their faith. In the parlance of the North American Mission Board, probably most Southern Baptists are not “on-mission Christians.”

Table 24

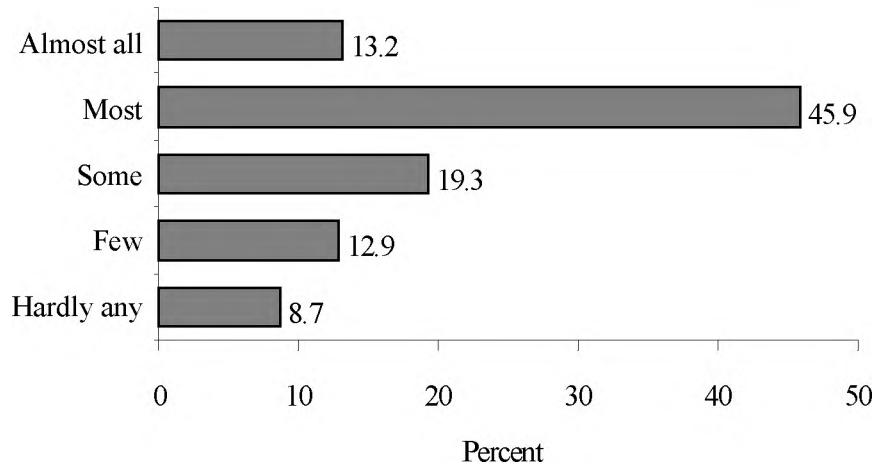
Of the total number of adult participants, how many would you estimate are involved in:

	Almost					
	<u>All</u>	<u>Most</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Few</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Score</u>
Expressing faith through helping others	4.5%	25.6%	56.2%	13.5%	0.1%	278.8
Recruiting new members	2.9	15.3	45.7	35.5	0.7	316.1
Activities outside of worship that strengthen their faith	1.5	13.1	54.2	30.0	1.3	316.8

One area where Southern Baptists generally appear to do a good job is in passing their faith on to their children. One measure of this is a question concerning the participation of high school age children of adult participants. See Figure 28. In the majority of Southern Baptist congregations, most or almost all of the teenage children of adult participants are involved in the life of the congregation.

Figure 28

How many of the high school age children of your adult participants would you estimate are involved in the religious life and activities of your congregation?

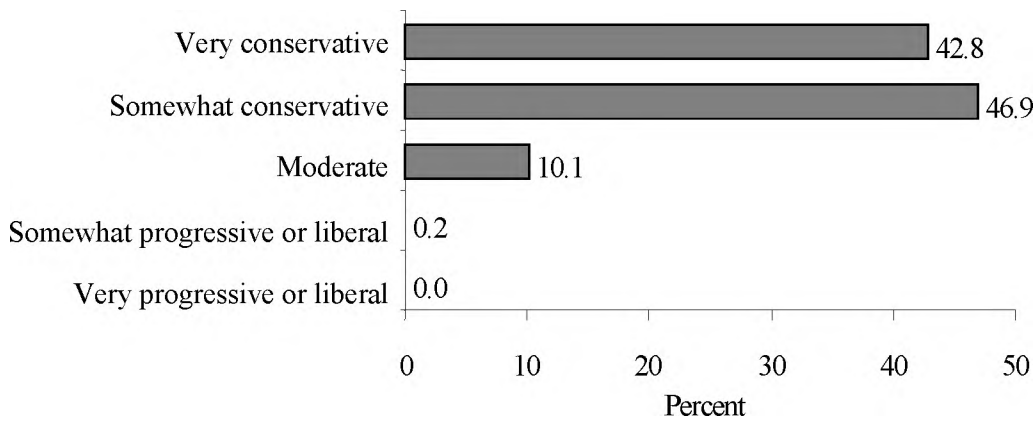


Theological Scale

One last question concerned the theological outlook of the majority of the regular participating adults in the congregation. Using this as a gauge of conservatism, it comes as no surprise that Southern Baptists are comprised of theological conservatives. See Figure 29. Only 1 of 10 congregations was classified as moderate. It appears that the term “liberal Southern Baptist” is an oxymoron.

Figure 29

How would you describe the basic theological outlook of the majority of your regularly participating adults?



Finances

At the turn of the new millennium, most Southern Baptist congregations (3 of 4) are described as being in good or excellent financial shape. Table 25 contains a summary of the perception of financial health of congregations at the time of the survey and 5 years earlier. Generally, informants report modest improvement in the financial health of congregations over time. Less than 5 percent of Southern Baptist congregations seem to be currently experiencing financial difficulty.

Table 25

How would you describe your congregation's financial health currently and 5 years ago?

	<u>Currently</u>	<u>In 1995</u>
Excellent	37.7%	15.6%
Good	37.1	44.0
Tight, but manageable	20.7	25.1
In some difficulty	4.0	8.2
In serious difficulty	0.6	3.3
Our Congregation did not exist 5 years ago	3.8	...

Receipts

Congregations were asked how much income they received during 1999 from all sources. The median congregation received \$79,000 in total income.²⁶ See Table 26. Seventy-five percent of Southern Baptist congregations received \$175,000 or less during the year, while a fourth of the congregations received \$38,000 or less.

Table 26

Approximately how much income did your congregation receive last year from all sources (i.e., tithes and offerings, pledges, membership dues, bequests, endowment income, etc.)?

<u>Percentile</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
100 th (Max.)	\$9,000,000
90 th	360,000
75 th	175,000
50 th (Median)	79,000
25 th	38,000
10 th	18,400
0 th (Min.)	970

Congregations were not requested to itemize the source of their funds, however, the survey did ask what percentage of their funds came from endowments or investments. Twenty-three percent of all congregations indicated they received some income from these sources. However, the typical church (median) indicated no income was received from them.

Expenses

Congregations were requested to detail their expenses during 1999. This proved to be a difficult question for respondents, resulting in a higher item non-response than for any other questions. Either the information was not readily available for the categories requested or respondents chose not to

²⁶ The median total receipts for all congregations reporting this item on the 1999 Annual Church Profile is \$74,197.50.

share what they may have considered private information. For reporting congregations, expenses frequently did not equal income because of capital improvement expenditures that presumably required borrowing money or expenditure of invested funds.

The typical congregation (median) spent 38 percent of its income for 1999 on staff salaries and benefits. This percentage reported ranged from 0 to 100 percent. The middle half of Southern Baptist congregations spent from 30 to 46 percent of their income in this area.²⁷

The typical congregation spent 20 percent of its income on congregational operations. Examples of this type of expenditure included spending on the building, property, grounds, utilities, mortgage, insurance, maintenance, and equipment. The middle half of all congregations spent from 12 percent to 27 percent of their income on operations.

The typical congregation spent about 5 percent of its income on program support and materials. Purchase of Sunday School materials would be a significant part of these expenditures for Southern Baptist congregations. Half of all congregations spent from 3 to 8 percent of income in this area.

One of the primary purposes for founding the Southern Baptist Convention was to promote and support missions. Almost three-quarters of the national Convention budget are spent on national and international missions. In 1999 the median congregation spent 10 percent of its income on Southern Baptist mission work either at the associational, state convention, or the national Convention level. This ranged from 7 percent to 14 percent for the middle half of all congregations in the distribution.

In contrast to funding missions through the denomination, the typical Southern Baptist congregation did not report spending on national and international missions work and programs through non-denominational channels. Still, over a fourth of the congregations did report such nondenominational missions spending. The typical church did report spending 1 percent of its income on local mission work other than through denominational channels. Presumably, these funds were spent on missions work undertaken by the congregation.²⁸

Stewardship Promotion

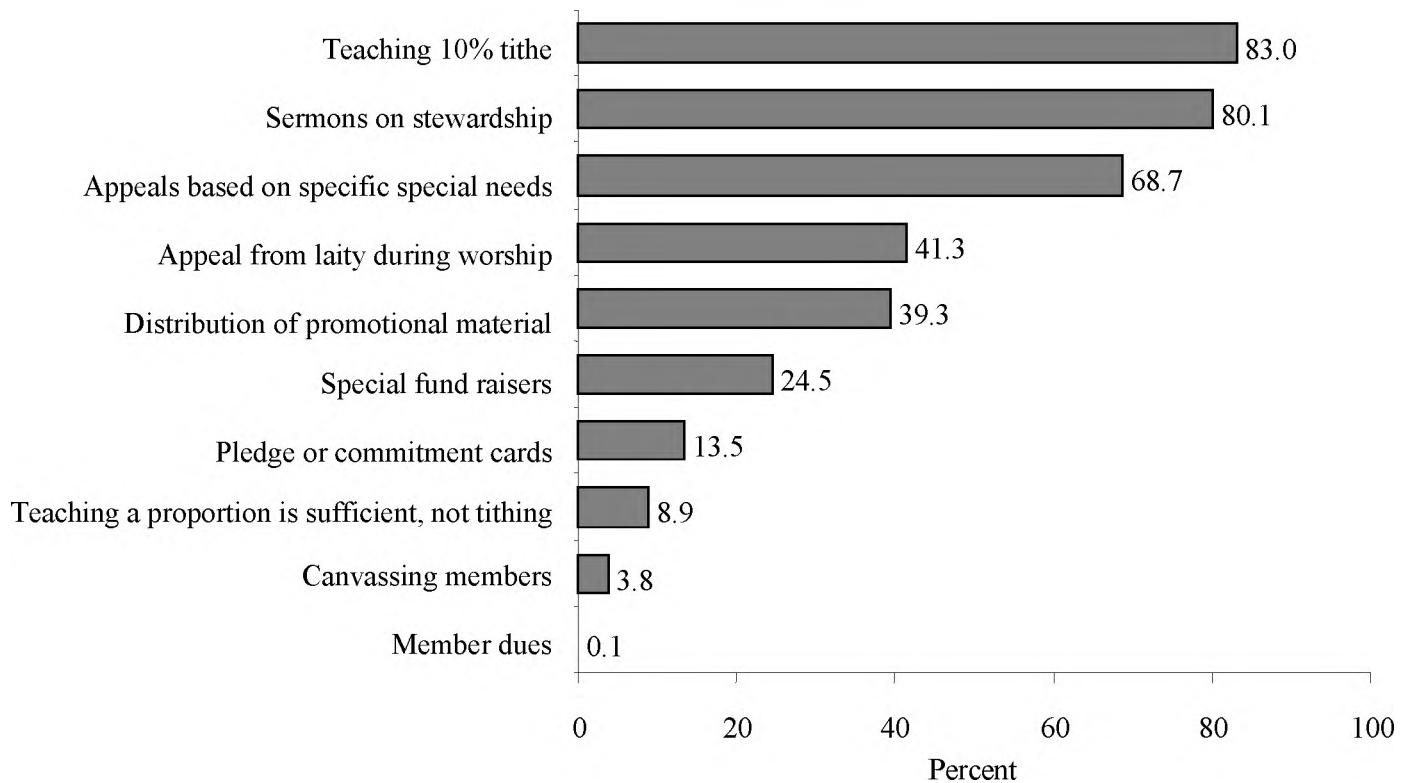
A final question was about the methods used by congregations to promote financial giving among their members. A list of potential methods of promotion and the frequency by which they are employed among Southern Baptist congregations is included in Figure 30. The most frequently cited response is the teaching that a 10 percent tithe belongs to God, is due to God, and should be given to God. Eighty-three percent of congregations surveyed indicated they promoted giving in this fashion. The next most common approach to encourage giving was to preach sermons on the topic of stewardship. Though coercion is not employed, both methods indicate that tithing is considered an obligation for a Christian. Making a special appeal based on a specific need was the other approach used by the majority of the congregations. While other approaches were used less frequently, it is interesting to note that special fund raisers such as fairs, bake sales, etc., are used by a fourth of Southern Baptist congregations. This is a method that was, and possibly still is, not considered appropriate among some Southern Baptist congregations.

²⁷ These numbers correspond to the 25th and 75th percentiles, respectively.

²⁸ Due to the mathematical nature of median statistics, other categories of expenditures not reported, and prevalence of selectively missing information, the above median statistics do not equal to 100 percent of income.

Figure 30

During the past 12 months, what methods did your congregation use to encourage financial giving among members?



Conclusion

Many of the findings confirm information found in other studies about Southern Baptist congregations or document common knowledge. Since the North American Mission Board's purpose, as well as the purpose of other Southern Baptist Convention agencies is to serve Southern Baptist congregations, it is important to be reminded of the characteristics of Southern Baptist congregations. The study serves as reminder that while Southern Baptist congregations are now scattered throughout the country, the bulk of the congregations are located in the South. That while churches and missions come in all sizes, and indeed the better known ones are large, even megachurch size, most congregations are relatively small. While congregations are located in all kinds of areas, the bulk are located in town and country areas. This does not mean that the most Southern Baptist members and participants are located in small congregations in rural and small urban areas; in fact, other studies indicate that the majority of the membership and participation is in larger churches. However, when the congregation is the primary focus of attention, smaller churches rather than larger move center stage. When resources or programs are developed for congregations, it is helpful to know that 75 percent of them have fewer than 250 people associated in any way with the life of the congregation, and that 75 percent will have 150 attendees or less in worship on Sunday morning. Indeed, smaller and medium size congregations may need the resources of the denomination more than mega churches. Also, when new congregations are started, relatively few will grow to become large churches. The few that do will most likely be located in newly developed growing suburban areas with favorable demographic characteristics.

Furthermore, the study is important in that it provides a snapshot of Southern Baptist congregations that can be used to compare and contrast the denomination with other groups on the religious scene in

North America. While there are unique characteristics of Southern Baptists, they share substantial commonality with other Protestant Christian groups. Like Southern Baptists, other Protestant congregations, as will be documented in the FACT study, tend to be mostly comprised of small congregations located in town and country areas. Many of the other Protestant congregations located in rapidly growing suburban areas are also rapidly growing. A clearer picture of Southern Baptists uniqueness and their contribution to the American religious landscape will also emerge as information from other religious traditions becomes available.

The composite picture of Southern Baptist congregations is particularly valuable for the individual Southern Baptist congregation. By comparison with norms in the denomination, a local congregation is able to realistically appraise and evaluate its ministry. Some comparisons with denominational norms may provide correction while others may provide affirmation. It is hoped that small struggling congregations will be affirmed in their ministry and in their contribution to Southern Baptist life. While not as successful in outward measures such as large growing memberships, huge budgets, and impressive facilities, they can nonetheless be vital and healthy congregations in their own contexts.

APPENDIX A

I. Congregational Identity and Worship

1. **Worship Services.** (Note: if your congregation holds worship services less than once a week, please check here and answer for a typical weekend on which you do hold services.)

	Friday	Saturday	Sunday AM	Sunday PM
A. How many worship services does your congregation have on each of the following days/times on a <i>typical</i> weekend?	_____	_____	_____	_____
	[1-2]	[3-4]	[5-6]	[7-8]
B. What is the total attendance for all services held on this day/time on a <i>typical</i> weekend?	_____	_____	_____	_____
	[9-13]	[14-18]	[19-23]	[24-28]
C. If you typically hold more than one service on the weekend, are these services: (✓one)				
<input type="checkbox"/> ₁ Very similar in style (other than the language used)				
<input type="checkbox"/> ₂ One or more is <i>somewhat different</i> in style from the rest	[29]			
<input type="checkbox"/> ₃ One or more is <i>very different</i> in style from the rest				
D. Please list all the languages in which your congregation conducts worship services on a typical weekend:				

[30-39]

2. How often does the sermon in your worship focus on: (✓one on each line)

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>	
A. God's love and care	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[40]
B. Practical advice for daily living	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[41]
C. Personal spiritual growth	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[42]
D. Social justice or social action	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[43]
E. The mystery of God	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[44]
F. Personal commitment and/or conversion	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[45]
G. Struggling with faith and belief	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[46]
H. Living a moral life	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[47]
I. Stewardship of time and money	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[48]
J. End-time and/or the second coming	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[49]

3. How often does the sermon include **a lot of**: (✓one on each line)

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>	
A. Personal stories or first-hand experiences	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[50]
B. Literary or scholarly references	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[51]
C. Illustrations from contemporary media (e.g., magazines, newspapers, television, movies, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[52]
D. Detailed explanations of scripture or doctrine	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[53]

4. How often are the following included as part of your congregation's worship service(s)? (✓one on each line)

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>	
A. Reading/recitation of creeds or statements of faith	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[54]
B. A time for members to testify about their faith	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[55]
C. A time during worship for people to greet each other	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[56]
D. The use of visual projection equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[57]
E. The use of incense	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[58]
F. The use of candles	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[59]
G. Drama/skits	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[60]
H. Dance	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[61]
I. Kneeling by the congregation	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[62]
J. Silent prayer/meditation	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[63]
K. Corporate confession of sin	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[64]
L. Lay participation in leading worship (e.g., reading scripture, preaching)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[65]
M. Prayer for the sick	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[66]
N. Children's sermon	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[67]
O. Recognition of visitors	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[68]
P. Printed order of worship	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[69]
Q. Invitation to accept Christ/altar call	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[70]
R. Scripture reading	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[71]
S. Collection of an offering	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[72]

5. How often are the following included as part of your congregation's regular worship service(s)? (✓one on each line)

	<u>Always</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>	
A. Choir	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[73]
B. Orchestra	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[74]
C. Organ and/or piano	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[75]
D. Electronic keyboard or synthesizer	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[76]
E. Electric guitar/bass	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[77]
F. Non-electronic string or wind instruments (e.g., harp, violin, guitar, flute, brass, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[78]
G. Drums or other percussion instruments	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[79]
H. Recorded music (tapes, CDs, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[80]
I. Praise teams leading music	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[81]
J. Congregational singing	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[82]
K. Traditional hymns (use of hymnals)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[83]
L. Words to songs projected on screens	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[84]
M. Contemporary music/choruses	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[85]

6. In comparison to the style of your congregation's primary worship service 5 years ago, would you say the style of your current primary worship service:

- ₁ Is basically the same
 ₂ Changed a little
 ₃ Changed somewhat
₄ Changed a great deal
 ₅ Our congregation did not exist in 1995 [86]

7. How important are the following sources of authority in the worship and teaching of your congregation?

(✓one on each line)	<i>Absolutely Foundational</i>	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Little or No Importance</i>	
A. The Bible	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	[87]
B. Historic creeds, doctrines, and traditions	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	[88]
C. Inspiration of the Holy Spirit	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	[89]
D. Human reason and understanding	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	[90]
E. Personal experience	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	[91]
F. In this box, please write the letter of the <i>one</i> source of authority that is <i>most important</i> in your congregation's worship and teaching, as difficult a choice as this may be				<input style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>	[92]

8. How well does each of the following statements describe your congregation? (✓ one on each line)

	<i>Very Well</i>	<i>Quite Well</i>	<i>Some- what</i>	<i>Slightly</i>	<i>Not At All</i>	
A. Our congregation feels like a close-knit family.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[93]
B. Our congregation is spiritually vital and alive.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[94]
C. Our congregation is working for social justice.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[95]
D. Our congregation helps members deepen their relationships with God.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[96]
E. Our congregation is trying to increase its racial/ethnic diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[97]
F. Our congregation clearly expresses its Southern Baptist heritage.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[98]
G. Our congregation is a moral beacon in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[99]
H. Our congregation welcomes innovation and change.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[100]
I. Our congregation deals openly with disagreements and conflicts.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[101]
J. Our congregation has a strong racial/ethnic or national heritage that it is trying to preserve.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[102]
K. Members are excited about the future of our congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[103]
L. New people are easily incorporated into the life of our congregation.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[104]
M. Our congregation has a clear sense of mission and purpose.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[105]
N. Our congregation's worship services are spiritually uplifting and inspirational	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[106]
O. Our congregation's programs and activities are well organized.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[107]
P. Our congregation's programs and activities strengthen personal relationships among our members.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[108]

II. History, Location, and Building

1. In approximately what year was this congregation officially constituted as a church (or started, if still a church-type mission)? _____ [109-112]

2. Please list the address where the congregation's primary worship building is **physically located** (please **do not** use P.O. Box or mailing address if different from actual location of building).

Street (or road or rural route) _____

[113-152]

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

[153-182]

[183-184]

[185-189]

3. In approximately what year did this congregation begin worshipping at its current location? _____ [190-193]

4. How would you describe the place where your congregation's primary worship building is located?

- ₁ Rural or open country
- ₂ Town or village of less than 10,000
- ₃ In or around a **city** of 10,000–49,999 [194]
- ₄ In or around a **city** of 50,000–249,999
- ₅ In or around a **city** of 250,000+

If in or around a city, is your building located:

- ₁ In the central or downtown area of the city
- ₂ In another area of the city
- ₃ In an older suburb around the city [195]
- ₄ In a newer suburb around the city

If in or around a city, is your congregation's location in a

- ₁ Residential area
- ₂ Mixed residential and commercial area [196]
- ₃ Commercial area

5. What is the maximum number of people your worship space (or your largest, regularly used worship space) is designed to hold? _____ people [197–201]

6. What type of building does your congregation use for your primary worship services?

- ₁ Church building
- ₂ Community center
- ₃ School
- ₄ Store front [202]
- ₅ Theater
- ₆ Private home
- ₇ Shopping mall
- ₈ Other (please specify) _____

7. Does your congregation own or rent your worship space, or is it provided to you at no cost?

- ₁ Own
- ₂ Rent [203]
- ₃ It is provided to us at no cost.

8. How would you describe the *size* of the following, relative to the current needs of your congregation? (✓one on each line)

	<i>Much More than We Need</i>	<i>Slightly More than We Need</i>	<i>Just About Right</i>	<i>Slightly Less than We Need</i>	<i>Much Less than We Need</i>	
A. Worship space	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[204]
B. Educational space	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[205]
C. Fellowship space	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[206]
D. Space for parking	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[207]

9. How would you describe the overall physical condition of your congregation's building(s)? (✓one)

- ₁ Excellent
- ₂ Good
- ₃ Needs Improvement
- ₄ In Serious Need of Improvements and Repairs [208]

10. Do any other congregations use your building space for worship? ₁ Yes ₂ No [209]

III. Congregational Programs

1. Does your congregation have a Sunday School that meets regularly? ₁ Yes ₂ No [210]

IF YES: A. What is the typical, total, weekly attendance of **adults** (18 and over)? _____ [211–215]

B. What is the typical, total, weekly attendance of **children and teens** (17 and under)? _____ [216–220]

2. During the past 12 months, did your congregation have any of the following programs or activities in addition to your regular Sunday School?

IF YES: • One-time, short-term or occasional event?
 • On-going during a particular season?
 • On-going throughout the year?

	<u>YES</u>			
	(✓ all that apply)			
	<u>No</u>	<u>One-time, Short-term, Occasional</u>	<u>On-going During a Season</u>	<u>On-going Through Year</u>
A. Bible study (other than Sunday School)	<input type="checkbox"/> [221]	<input type="checkbox"/> [222]	<input type="checkbox"/> [223]	<input type="checkbox"/> [224]
B. Theological or doctrinal study	<input type="checkbox"/> [225]	<input type="checkbox"/> [226]	<input type="checkbox"/> [227]	<input type="checkbox"/> [228]
C. Prayer or meditation groups	<input type="checkbox"/> [229]	<input type="checkbox"/> [230]	<input type="checkbox"/> [231]	<input type="checkbox"/> [232]
D. Spiritual retreats	<input type="checkbox"/> [233]	<input type="checkbox"/> [234]	<input type="checkbox"/> [235]	<input type="checkbox"/> [236]
E. Community service	<input type="checkbox"/> [237]	<input type="checkbox"/> [238]	<input type="checkbox"/> [239]	<input type="checkbox"/> [240]
F. Parenting or marriage enrichment	<input type="checkbox"/> [241]	<input type="checkbox"/> [242]	<input type="checkbox"/> [243]	<input type="checkbox"/> [244]
G. Choir(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> [245]	<input type="checkbox"/> [246]	<input type="checkbox"/> [247]	<input type="checkbox"/> [248]
H. Other performing arts (e.g., music, dance, drama)	<input type="checkbox"/> [249]	<input type="checkbox"/> [250]	<input type="checkbox"/> [251]	<input type="checkbox"/> [252]
I. Groups that discuss books or contemporary issues	<input type="checkbox"/> [253]	<input type="checkbox"/> [254]	<input type="checkbox"/> [255]	<input type="checkbox"/> [256]
J. Self-help or personal-growth groups	<input type="checkbox"/> [257]	<input type="checkbox"/> [258]	<input type="checkbox"/> [259]	<input type="checkbox"/> [260]
K. Exercise, fitness, or weight loss groups or classes	<input type="checkbox"/> [261]	<input type="checkbox"/> [262]	<input type="checkbox"/> [263]	<input type="checkbox"/> [264]
L. Sports teams	<input type="checkbox"/> [265]	<input type="checkbox"/> [266]	<input type="checkbox"/> [267]	<input type="checkbox"/> [268]
M. Youth/teen activities or programs	<input type="checkbox"/> [269]	<input type="checkbox"/> [270]	<input type="checkbox"/> [271]	<input type="checkbox"/> [272]
N. Young adult/singles activities or programs	<input type="checkbox"/> [273]	<input type="checkbox"/> [274]	<input type="checkbox"/> [275]	<input type="checkbox"/> [276]

3. How much does your congregation, in its worship and education, emphasize the following *home or personal practices*? (✓ one on each line)

	<u>A Great Deal</u>	<u>Quite a Bit</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Not at All</u>	
A. Personal prayer, scripture study or devotions	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[277]
B. Family devotions	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[278]
C. Fasting	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[279]
D. Observing dietary restrictions	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[280]
E. Abstinence from alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[281]
F. Keeping the Lord's Day	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[282]
G. Displaying religious objects, symbols, statuary, icons or pictures in the home	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[283]
H. Abstaining from premarital sex	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[284]

4. In addition to the outreach activities of your denomination, **did your congregation** do any of the following *during the past 12 months* to reach out to new or inactive participants, or to make your congregation better known in your community? (✓ one on each line)

	————— <i>NO, BUT MEMBERS</i> —————			
	<i>YES; Done in Past 12 Months</i>	<i>Would Support This Activity</i>	<i>Would Not Support This Activity</i>	
A. Newspaper advertisements and stories	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	[285]
B. Radio or television advertisements and stories	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	[286]
C. Direct mail promotions to area residents	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	[287]
D. A growth or evangelistic campaign/program	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	[288]
E. Focused efforts to identify and contact people who have recently moved into your congregation's area	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	[289]
F. Stressing in your congregation's preaching and teaching the importance of witnessing to others about one's faith	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	[290]
G. Special worship services intended to attract the unchurched (e.g., "bring a friend" services, seeker services, revivals, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	[291]
H. Special programs (e.g., parenting classes, young-singles nights, art festivals, street ministries) especially intended to attract unchurched persons in your community.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	[292]
I. Phone calls or personal visits by your pastor(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	[293]
J. Phone calls or personal visits by laity	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	[294]

5. In the past 12 months, did your congregation directly provide or cooperate in providing any of the following services for your own members or for people in the community. "Cooperation" includes financial contributions, volunteer time by congregational members, space in your building, material donations, etc.

	————— <i>YES</i> —————			
	(✓ all that apply)			
	<i>No</i>	<i>Provided Directly by Our Congregation</i>	<i>Cooperated with Another Congregation, Agency, or Organization</i>	
A. Food pantry or soup kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/> [295]	<input type="checkbox"/> [296]	<input type="checkbox"/> [297]	
B. Cash assistance to families or individuals	<input type="checkbox"/> [298]	<input type="checkbox"/> [299]	<input type="checkbox"/> [300]	
C. Clothing closet or clothing donations	<input type="checkbox"/> [301]	<input type="checkbox"/> [302]	<input type="checkbox"/> [303]	
D. Elderly, emergency, or affordable housing	<input type="checkbox"/> [304]	<input type="checkbox"/> [305]	<input type="checkbox"/> [306]	
E. Counseling services or "hot line"	<input type="checkbox"/> [307]	<input type="checkbox"/> [308]	<input type="checkbox"/> [309]	
F. Substance abuse programs	<input type="checkbox"/> [310]	<input type="checkbox"/> [311]	<input type="checkbox"/> [312]	
G. Day care, pre-school, before/after-school programs	<input type="checkbox"/> [313]	<input type="checkbox"/> [314]	<input type="checkbox"/> [315]	
H. Tutoring or literacy programs for children and teens	<input type="checkbox"/> [316]	<input type="checkbox"/> [317]	<input type="checkbox"/> [318]	
I. Voter registration or voter education	<input type="checkbox"/> [319]	<input type="checkbox"/> [320]	<input type="checkbox"/> [321]	
J. Organized social issue advocacy or community organizing	<input type="checkbox"/> [322]	<input type="checkbox"/> [323]	<input type="checkbox"/> [324]	
K. Employment counseling, placement, or training	<input type="checkbox"/> [325]	<input type="checkbox"/> [326]	<input type="checkbox"/> [327]	
L. Health programs/clinics/health education	<input type="checkbox"/> [328]	<input type="checkbox"/> [329]	<input type="checkbox"/> [330]	
M. Hospitals or nursing home facilities	<input type="checkbox"/> [331]	<input type="checkbox"/> [332]	<input type="checkbox"/> [333]	
N. Senior citizen programs (other than housing)	<input type="checkbox"/> [334]	<input type="checkbox"/> [335]	<input type="checkbox"/> [336]	
O. Program for migrants or immigrants	<input type="checkbox"/> [337]	<input type="checkbox"/> [338]	<input type="checkbox"/> [339]	
P. Prison or jail ministry	<input type="checkbox"/> [340]	<input type="checkbox"/> [341]	<input type="checkbox"/> [342]	

6. In a typical month, about how many people *do you estimate* are served through the services your congregation **directly** provides? Estimated number of people served _____ [343–347]

7. Does your congregation have a:

Christian (five day a week) elementary school ₁ Yes ₂ No [348]

Christian (five day a week) secondary school ₁ Yes ₂ No [349]

IV. Leadership and Organizational Dynamics

1. Which of the following best describes the situation in your congregation? (✓one)

- ₁ We do *not* have any problem getting people to accept volunteer leadership roles. [350]
- ₂ Recruiting volunteer leaders is a continual challenge, but we eventually find enough willing people.
- ₃ We cannot find enough people who are willing to serve.

2. Please describe the current pastor (or senior pastor) by checking all of the boxes that apply or filling in the requested information.

If you do not currently have a regular or interim pastor, please check here ₁ [351] and indicate how long you have been without a pastor. _____ months [352-353] If no pastor, skip to question 3.

If you have co-pastors, please check here ₁[354] and answer the following for the older of your co-pastors.

A. Age? _____ years old [355-356]

B. ₁ Paid ₂ Volunteer [357]

C. ₁ Full time ₂ Full time, supplemented by outside employment ₃ Part time [358]

IF PART TIME, does pastor also:

1) Serve another congregation? ₁ Yes ₂ No [359]

2) Work a secular job? ₁ Yes ₂ No [360]

D. ₁ Male ₂ Female [361]

E. ₁ Regular call ₂ Temporary/interim [362]

F. Highest level of secular education (✓one)

- ₁ High school diploma or less
- ₂ Some college or technical
- ₃ College bachelors degree [363]
- ₄ Masters degree
- ₅ Doctoral degree

G. Highest level of ministerial education (✓one)

- ₁ None
- ₂ Certificate or correspondence program
- ₃ Bible college or some seminary [364]
- ₄ Seminary masters degree (e.g., M.Div.)
- ₅ Post-masters, seminary degree (e.g. D.Min., Ph.D., Th.D.)

H. Race/ethnicity (✓one)

- ₁ American Indian/Alaska Native
- ₂ Asian
- ₃ Black or African-American
- ₄ Hispanic or Latino
- ₅ Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- ₆ White [365]
- ₇ Other _____

I. This person became your senior/sole pastor in what year? _____ [366-369]

3. How many pastors (or senior pastors) including the current one, have served your congregation during the past 10 years? _____ [370-371]

4. How long was the previous pastor (senior pastor) employed by your congregation? _____ years [372-373]

5. How many paid ministerial and program staff does your congregation have?

A. Number Full time, paid _____ [374-375] B. Number Part time, paid _____ [376-377]

6. How many paid support staff (secretarial, maintenance, etc.) does this congregation have?

A. Number Full time, paid _____ [378-379] B. Number Part time, paid _____ [380-381]

7. During the past 12 months, has your congregation been involved in any of the following types of inter-congregational, ecumenical, or interfaith activities?

—Yes, with other congregations or persons—
(✓ all that apply)

	<u>No</u>	<u>From Our Denomination</u>	<u>From Other Christian Denominations</u>	<u>From Other Faith Traditions</u>
A. Joint worship services	<input type="checkbox"/> [382]	<input type="checkbox"/> [383]	<input type="checkbox"/> [384]	<input type="checkbox"/> [385]
B. Joint celebrations or programs other than worship	<input type="checkbox"/> [386]	<input type="checkbox"/> [387]	<input type="checkbox"/> [388]	<input type="checkbox"/> [389]
C. Joint social outreach or service projects	<input type="checkbox"/> [390]	<input type="checkbox"/> [391]	<input type="checkbox"/> [392]	<input type="checkbox"/> [393]
D. Councils of churches or ministerial associations	<input type="checkbox"/> [394]	<input type="checkbox"/> [395]	<input type="checkbox"/> [396]	<input type="checkbox"/> [397]

8. During the past *five years* has your congregation experienced any disagreements or conflicts in the following areas?
(✓one on each line)

—Yes, and it was—

	<u>No</u>	<u>Very Serious</u>	<u>Moderately Serious</u>	<u>Not Very Serious</u>
A. Theology	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ [398]
B. Money/finances/budget	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ [399]
C. How worship is conducted	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ [400]
D. Program/mission priorities or emphases	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ [401]
E. Who should make a decision	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ [402]
F. Pastor's leadership style	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ [403]
G. Pastor's personal behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ [404]
H. Member's/participant's personal behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ [405]
I. Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄ [406]

9. When your congregation purchases worship, educational, stewardship, evangelism, etc., materials or supplies, does it purchase them: (✓one)

- ₁ Exclusively from within your denomination ₃ Primarily from outside your denomination [407]
₂ Primarily from within your denomination ₄ Exclusively from outside your denomination
₅ From a pretty even balance inside and outside the denomination

10. Which *one* of the following three statements best describes your congregation? (✓one)

- ₁ Our congregation has definite expectations for members that are strictly enforced. [408]
₂ Our congregation has fairly clear expectations for members, but the enforcement of these expectations is not very strict.
₃ Our congregation has only vague expectations for members, that are seldom, if ever, enforced.

11. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following: (✓one)

It is important to our members that our congregation is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention

- ₁ Strongly Agree ₂ Agree ₃ Disagree ₄ Strongly Disagree [409]

It is important for the stability and vitality of our congregation that it is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention

- ₁ Strongly Agree, ₂ Agree ₃ Disagree ₄ Strongly Disagree [410]

12. Is your congregation formally affiliated with any denomination(s) other than the Southern Baptist Convention?

- ₁ No ₂ Yes (Please specify) _____

V. Participants: [We know you may have to estimate or guess at the answers to several questions in this section and the next section. That is O.K.] [411]

1. Approximately how many persons would you say are associated *in any way* with the religious life of your congregation—counting both adults and children, counting both regular and irregular participants, counting both official or registered members and also participating nonmembers.

Number _____ [412-416]

2. Approximately how many persons—both adults and children—would you say *regularly participate* in the religious life of your congregation—*whether or not* they are officially members of your congregation?

A. Number of **regularly participating** adults (18 and over) _____ [417–422]

B. Number of **regularly participating** children and teens (17 and under) _____ [423–427]

3. Since 1995, has the above number of **regularly participating adults**: (✓one)

- ₁ Increased 10% or more
 ₂ Increased 5% to 9%
 ₃ Stayed about the same (± 4%)
 ₄ Decreased 5% to 9%
 ₅ Decreased 10% or more
 ₆ Our congregation did not exist in 1995 [428]

4. Of the total number of **regularly participating adults**, what percent would you estimate are: (✓one on each line)

	<i>None</i>	<i>Hardly Any</i> <u>1–10%</u>	<i>Few</i> <u>11–20%</u>	<i>Some</i> <u>21–40%</u>	<i>Many</i> <u>41–60%</u>	<i>Most</i> <u>61–80%</u>	<i>All or Nearly All</i> <u>81–100%</u>	
A. Female	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[429]
B. Not high school graduates	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[430]
C. At least college graduates	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[431]
D. Age 35 or younger	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[432]
E. Over 60 years old	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[433]
F. Married	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[434]
G. Life long Southern Baptists	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[435]
H. New to your congregation in the past five years	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[436]
I. Living in the immediate area around your church building	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[437]
J. Commuting more than 15 minutes to get to your worship services	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[438]
K. Currently holding <i>volunteer leadership roles</i> in your congregation, like serving on administrative committees, teaching Sunday School, running outreach programs, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[439]
L. In households with incomes below \$20,000	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[440]
M. In households with children under age 18 present	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[441]
N. In households with incomes above \$75,000	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[442]
O. Regularly involved in personal witnessing	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	<input type="checkbox"/> ₆	<input type="checkbox"/> ₇	[443]

5. Of your total number of **regularly participating adults**, what percent would you estimate are:

American Indian/Alaska Native	_____ %	[444–446]	Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	_____ %	[456–458]
Asian	_____ %	[447–449]	White	_____ %	[459–461]
Black or African-American	_____ %	[450–452]	Other	_____ %	[462–464]
Hispanic or Latino	_____ %	[453–455]	Total	<u>100</u> %	

Within these racial/ethnic groups, are there any significant national sub-groups (e.g. German, Korean, Irish, Mexican, Caribbean, etc.)? ₁ Yes ₂ No [465] **IF YES**, please list the sub-groups _____

[466–475]

6. Of the total number of adult participants, how many would you estimate are involved in: (✓one on each line)

	<i>Almost All</i>	<i>Most</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Few</i>	<i>None</i>	
A. Recruiting new members	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[476]
B. Activities outside of worship that strengthen their faith	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[477]
C. Expressing their faith through helping others	<input type="checkbox"/> ₁	<input type="checkbox"/> ₂	<input type="checkbox"/> ₃	<input type="checkbox"/> ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> ₅	[478]

7. How many of the high school age children of your adult participants would you estimate are involved in the religious life and activities of your congregation?
₁ Almost all ₂ Most ₃ Some ₄ Few ₅ Hardly any [479]
8. How would you describe the basic theological outlook of the majority of your regularly participating adults?
₁ Very conservative ₂ Somewhat conservative ₃ Moderate [480]
₄ Somewhat progressive or liberal ₅ Very progressive or liberal

VI. Finances

1. How would you describe your congregation's financial health currently and 5 years ago (1995)?
 A. **Currently:** ₁ Excellent ₂ Good ₃ Tight, but manageable ₄ In some difficulty ₅ In serious difficulty [481]
 B. **In 1995:** ₁ Excellent ₂ Good ₃ Tight, but manageable ₄ In some difficulty ₅ In serious difficulty [482]
₆ Our congregation did not exist in 1995
2. Approximately how much income did your congregation receive last year from all sources (e.g., tithes and offerings, pledges, membership dues, bequests, endowment income, etc.)?
 Total Income \$ _____ [483-491]
3. Approximately what percentage of your church's total income last year was from endowments or investments?
 _____% [492-494] (✓here if none)
4. Approximately how much money did your congregation spend in the following areas last year?
- | | | |
|--|----------|-----------|
| A. All staff salaries and benefits | \$ _____ | [495-503] |
| B. Congregation operations (including building, property, grounds, utilities, mortgage, insurance, maintenance, equipment, etc.) | \$ _____ | [504-512] |
| C. Capital improvements | \$ _____ | [513-521] |
| D. Program support and materials | \$ _____ | [522-530] |
| E. Southern Baptist mission work (Association, State Convention and SBC) | \$ _____ | [531-539] |
| F. Local mission work (other than through denomination) | \$ _____ | [540-548] |
| G. National and international missions work and programs (other than through denomination) | \$ _____ | [549-557] |
| H. Subsidies to school, day care, or before/after school program | \$ _____ | [558-566] |
| I. Money put into reserve/endowments/investments | \$ _____ | [567-575] |
| J. Other _____ | \$ _____ | [576-584] |
| Total Expenditures | \$ _____ | [585-593] |

5. During the past 12 months, what methods did your congregation use to encourage financial giving among members? (✓all that apply)

- Sermons on stewardship [594]
- Appeals or testimonies from lay participants during worship services [595]
- Special fund raisers (fairs, bake sales, etc.) [596]
- Appeals based on specific, concrete, and special needs [597]
- Distribution of promotional material [598]
- Canvassing members by phone or in person [599]
- Pledge or commitment cards [600]
- Member dues [601]
- Teaching that a 10% tithe belongs to God, is due God, and should be given to God [602]
- Teaching that giving a proportion of one's income, not tithing per se, is sufficient [603]

For office use only _____ [604-607]
[608]

Thank you for participating!

Please return completed questionnaire to:
Strategic Planning Support
North American Mission Board
4200 North Point Parkway
Alpharetta, Georgia 30022

APPENDIX B

January 3, 2000

Dear Pastor:

As we enter a new millennium, a major effort is underway to study Southern Baptist congregations. We are seeking to describe the many different aspects of congregational life such as:

- ✧ how often congregations gather to worship
- ✧ descriptions of worship services including styles of music and preaching
- ✧ descriptions of worship facilities
- ✧ emphasis on home or personal religious practices
- ✧ congregational programs
- ✧ outreach methods
- ✧ ministries to members and the surrounding communities
- ✧ staffing and pastoral leadership
- ✧ characteristics of congregational participants such as educational level, age structure, and racial/ethnic composition

While this study about Southern Baptists is being conducted by Southern Baptists, other major denominations are engaged in similar studies. The entire effort is being coordinated by the Cooperative Congregational Studies Project. As a result of the study, not only will we be able to compare and contrast Southern Baptist congregations with those of other religious bodies, but also we will be able to talk about the positive contribution that religious congregations make individually in their communities and collectively in the nation. You will hear more about the results of this national research effort in the religious and popular press in the fall of 2000.

In order to complete a study of this magnitude, we need your help! Lots were cast (Biblically speaking) and your congregation was among those chosen to participate in this project. The collective responses from participating congregations will scientifically represent all Southern Baptist churches and missions. In about three weeks you will receive a copy of the questionnaire titled *Southern Baptist Congregations Today: A Survey at the Turn of the New Millennium*. We estimate that it will take about 45 minutes to complete the survey. We ask that you, someone on your staff, or a knowledgeable person in the congregation complete the survey and mail it back to us. In appreciation for your help, we will send you a copy of the report we produce from the survey results profiling Southern Baptist congregations. Using this report you will be able to compare your congregation with other Southern Baptist churches and missions.

Please be on the look out for the forthcoming questionnaire, and please see that your congregation is represented in the study. If you have any questions about this study, you can contact me at my email address or phone number listed below.

Thank you in advance for your help, and God bless you and your congregation.

Sincerely,



Phillip B. Jones

January 21, 2000

Dear Pastor:

A couple of weeks ago I sent you a letter informing you of the major study entitled *Southern Baptist Congregations Today: A Survey at the Turn of the New Millennium*. Enclosed is the questionnaire for your congregation. We estimate that it will take about 45 minutes to complete the survey. We ask that you, someone on your staff or a knowledgeable person in the congregation complete the survey and mail it back in the enclosed postpaid business reply envelope.

In appreciation for your help, we will send you a copy of the report we produce from the survey results profiling Southern Baptist congregations. This report will enable you to compare your congregation with other Southern Baptist churches and missions. Anticipated release date for this report is fall 2000.

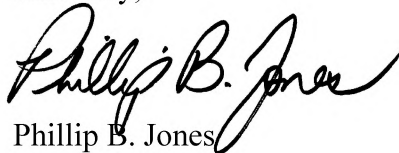
As I mentioned in my earlier letter, other major denominations are engaged in similar studies. Eventually, we want to compare Southern Baptist congregations with those of other denominations as well as document the contribution that congregations make in the United States. You will hear more about the results of this national research effort in the religious and popular press in the fall of this year.

This is an exciting and important research project that is being timed to coincide with the 2000 Census, the turn of the century, and the turn of the millennium. Your congregation is part of a scientifically selected sample chosen to represent Southern Baptists—and I hope you will participate in this historic event.

If you have any questions about the study or the questionnaire, please contact me at my email address or phone number listed below.

Thank you for being a part of this study.

Sincerely,



Phillip B. Jones

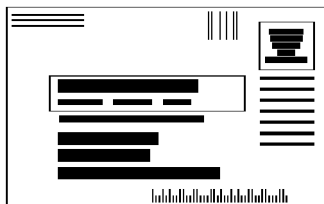
Note: If your church does not have a pastor at this time, please see that someone on the church staff or an informed person in the congregation completes the enclosed questionnaire and returns it in the postpaid envelope.

We need your help!

Your participation is needed to get an accurate picture of Southern Baptist churches.



If your church does not have a pastor at this time, we ask that you or another informed person in the congregation complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the postpaid envelope.



Thank you!

I haven't heard from you!!!

A few weeks ago I mailed you a copy of the survey questionnaire, *Southern Baptist Congregations Today: A Survey at the Turn of the New Millennium*. If you have not already done so, please complete the questionnaire or have someone on your staff or a knowledgeable person in the congregation complete the survey and mail it back to me at the North American Mission Board. You are part of a small sample selected to represent all Southern



Baptist churches, therefore your participation is vital and insures a more accurate picture of Southern Baptists.

If you have any questions concerning the survey or need another copy, please contact me.

Thank you for your help.

Phil Jones

Director, Research

North American Mission Board

4200 North Point Parkway

Alpharetta GA 30022

770-410-6578 pjones@namb.net

APPENDIX C

Sampling Methodology

The target population for this study is all Southern Baptist congregations—both churches and church-type missions. The sampling frame is the 44,918 churches and church-type missions enumerated on the 1998 Annual Church Profile, a yearly survey of Southern Baptist congregations.

Congregations were stratified by region and size to ensure that the sample was representative of all regions of the country and of all sizes of congregations. Nine strata were developed for selecting the sample and are listed in Table C-1.

Table C-1

Sampling strata

<u>Region</u>	<u>Resident Membership Size Categories</u>		
Northeast	<75	75+	
Midwest	<160	160+	
South	<150	150-499	500+
West	<110	110+	

The number of congregations in the sampling frame for each of these strata are listed in Table C-2. Note that the South was the only region with enough large congregations to warrant creation of a stratum specifically for large churches.

Table C-2

Number of congregations in the population by stratum

<u>Region</u>	<u>Resident Membership Categories</u>			<u>Totals</u>
Northeast	563	280		843
Midwest	3,322	1,685		5,007
South	17,463	12,908	4,705	35,076
West	2,663	1,329		<u>3,992</u>
Total				44,918

A sample of 1,200 congregations was selected for the survey. The sample selected from each stratum is listed in Table C-3.

Table C-3

Sampled congregations by stratum

<u>Region</u>	<u>Resident Membership Categories</u>			<u>Totals</u>
Northeast	25	25		50
Midwest	150	150		300
South	200	200	200	600
West	125	125		<u>250</u>
Total				1,200

All congregations in the population were sorted by size within each stratum, and then a quota sample was systematically selected from each stratum.

Based on past experience surveying Southern Baptist congregations, it was anticipated that response rates for pastors of congregations would be around 30 percent. For this project the goal for overall response rate was 50 percent or 600 participating congregations. In order to enhance response, a shadow sample was selected so that each church in the original sample would have a substitute if it did not respond. The alternate was chosen from the same stratum and selected so that it would be very similar in size. Based on these two criteria, it was assumed that this alternate would be a good match for its originally sampled counterpart. (The two churches together are referred to as a “matched-pair.”) Of the 1,200 churches in the shadow sample, 767 were eventually contacted for participation. In total, 710 congregations participated in the survey. A sample size of 710 with this design should provide estimates with a $\pm 4\%$ sampling error. The number of respondents in each stratum is included below.

Table C-4

Number of responding congregations by stratum

<u>Region</u>	<u>Resident Membership Categories</u>		<u>Totals</u>
Northeast	10	10	20
Midwest	83	102	185
South	84	110	152
West	71	88	<u>159</u>
Total			710

Assuming that the alternate congregations were indeed a “perfect match” for the originally sampled congregations, it would not matter which church responded to the survey. With this assumption, the resulting response rates for each stratum are included in Table 5. Note that the overall response rate for the study is 59.2 percent.

Table C-5

Response rate by stratum

<u>Region</u>	<u>Resident Membership Categories</u>		<u>Totals</u>
Northeast	40.0	40.0	40.0
Midwest	55.3	68.0	61.7
South	42.0	55.0	76.0
West	56.8	70.4	<u>63.6</u>
Total			59.2

The above response rates hold only with the assumption that the shadow sample provides a perfect match for the original sample. In reality the sample might not be a perfect match. There is no guarantee that two congregations of the same size in the same region will be alike in all of the characteristics measured in the survey. In particular, sameness would not be expected if the two differed by race or ethnicity. Overall, the methodology does provide a reasonable attempt to enhance participation and ensure that congregations of all size are adequately represented in the sample.

A second approach used to make the sample representative of the population was to weight responses of the 710 congregations participating to represent the 44,918 congregations in the population. Each congregation was assigned a weight calculated by dividing the number of congregations in each stratum by the number of respondents.

Statistics reported in this paper for Southern Baptists will differ from the statistics reported on the FACT website. This is due to differing weighting techniques. At the FACT website, all Southern Baptist congregations are weighted equally; here, region of the country and size of congregation are employed to weight sample data. Thus, this study takes advantage of stratification to provide more accurate estimates.