

Cutting Edge Governance Survey Analysis - April, 2003

Background: In an effort to understand congregational governance systems in strong, growing Disciples of Christ congregations, I sent a survey to the top 15 congregations in total membership additions in four size categories. The purpose of the survey is to provide preliminary observations to see if there is any connection between the type of governance structure and the growth of congregations.

Survey Return Rate:

Size (participating members)	Surveys Sent	Surveys Returned	% of return
51-100	15	6	40%
101-250	15	9	60%
251-500	15	8	53%
501-1000	<u>15</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>53%</u>
TOTALS	60	31	52%

Question Summary:

1. What is the size of the primary governing body of your church? (“/” marks separation between church size as indicated above).

5, 13, 10, 17, 5, 24, / 15, 8, 40, 9, 71*, 25, 14, 28, 37, / 9, 70, 18, 40, 24, 55, 12, 55, / 18, 10, 30, n/a, 18, 75, 80, 26. * indicated that size of board being trimmed this year

Size (participating members)	Avg. size of governing board
51-100	12
101-250	26
251-500	35
501-1000	<u>37</u>
Average of all sizes	29

2. What is the primary governing body called and how often do they meet?

Name: Leadership Team, Church Executive Board, Board, Vision Team, Board, n/a, / Council, Leadership Team, General Board, Administrative Board, Board, Church Conference, Leadership Circle, Church Board, Board, / Stability Triangle Team, n/a, Executive Board, Board, General Board, Board, Board, Board, / Board, Board, Board, n/a, Official Board, Board, Board, Administrative Council.

Meeting Cadence: monthly, n/a, monthly, quarterly, monthly, monthly, / monthly, monthly, quarterly, monthly, monthly, n/a, 5yr., monthly, monthly, / monthly, 6yr., 6yr., monthly, 6yr., monthly, quarterly, monthly, / quarterly, monthly, monthly, n/a, monthly, 6yr., n/a, 6yr.

“Congregation eagerly accepts all peoples from all walks with open, loving arms. Members of the congregation are spiritually strong and nurturing. Congregation has the willingness to accept and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.”

“Refocus on ‘church’ as someone you know not as something you do. Refocus on vision. Vision drives the ministry. It is our point of accountability with each other. Refocus on empowering people for ministry. Creating a space where people can not only meet Jesus but can dream. Refocus on experiencing God not just talking about God or studying God.”

“The bi-lingual – the love and caring of each member and visitors.”

“We are a seniors church located in a 55 plus gated community. Being a seniors church we have more than normal health problems. Therefore, our people shepherd one another. When anyone in our community is hurting, our members respond immediately and care for the whole family. We put up handrails and ramps in the home when needed. Our outward love is obvious to the community. And we have grown from 12 to 80 in three years because of this outreach. Our mission statement – ‘Bring others to have an encounter with Christ.’”

101-250 participating members

“Support from Region (new church start) – foresight, planning, finances, prayer. A rapidly growing community, strong leadership. Diversity of congregation, community involvement, caring, ministry teams, excellent ministry.”

“Streamlined leadership, recognized expectations of members, welcoming atmosphere, Biblical purposes.”

“Relocation of church, addition of a contemporary service, hiring a minister to help us offer high-quality kids’ ministries.”

“Discipleship with emphasis on Bible Study/prayer. Strong relationship between Sr. Pastor and the congregation. Strong evangelism and mission program. Clear vision and mission. Effective and deep preaching. Cell groups. Home visits.”

“A long range plan which is focused on the spiritual growth of the congregation. Energy of Sr. Minister and cohesiveness of staff. The congregation’s willingness to adapt to new staff and new programs. The financial backing/ability of the congregation to support a multitude of programs to undergird the long range plan and outreach programs.”

“The friendly, loving nature of the church. The large number of youth in the church. Lively worship styles – high level of acceptance.

“Dynamic, intimate, vibrant worship. Genuinely warm, welcoming lay members. Church growth is primary (and growing) emphasis for Sr. Pastor. Consistently adding new programming for children, youth, adults.”

“The worship service. Welcoming and happy congregation. Services to the community beyond the church.”

“Openness in leadership: FCC offers positions on committees to anyone who is interested and we actively assist new members so they can find a leadership position in the church. Openness in the community: everyone is welcome at FCC. The table is open, leadership is open, we truly live and work together as a family. Focused support: Through our mission statement and long range planning committee we have focused church attention to vital areas. Conflict is kept to a minimum and those who receive the focus have stated it was a big influence on their decision to join.”

251-500 participating members

“Strong spiritual leadership with a vision and enthusiasm for carrying out the vision. Caring and strong administrative leadership (staff and leader infrastructure). Dynamic worship services.”

“Openness of the congregation to new people. The pastor committing major amount of time. An active evangelism committee.”

“Change from traditional to more blended worship style. The minister of music incorporates more praise music into the service, has added additional musicians and focuses on bringing the congregation into a deep spiritual focus before the communion. He also has produced a large 2 hour Christmas music/drama program for the last 8 years in a nearby high school, incorporating nearly all of our members. Provided free to the community, the presentation reaches over 4,000 attendees per year. We have developed a strong multi-cultural congregation. A retired Disciples pastor from Puerto Rico oversees a growing Hispanic ministry. Our youth program attracts many new families.”

“Meaningful worship with a choice of time and style of worship. Warm and nurturing congregation, most feel loved and cared for. Relevant Bible teaching that seems to meet needs.”

“Location, meaningful worship.”

“Began celebration service and strong pastoral leadership based on relationship theology. Bread ministry – sharing loaves of bread each Sunday with first time guests helps. Also, doing weddings and funerals for families outside of the membership. More contemporary music and good follow-up on prospects. Marriage enrichment, parenting classes.”

“A deepening spirituality of leadership and higher expectation. Excitement about our worship, ministries and small groups. Restructuring how we do business and ministry. We did ‘Taking the Name Jesus’ growth strategy and it changed everything. Since then growth has been a natural thing.”

“Growth of surrounding area. New vision, vitality for evangelism. Members are now ‘proud’ of their church and its ministry. Our board structure has, in my opinion, inhibited us from growing even more than we already have. I have tried, unsuccessfully, to shrink the size of our governing body and focus more on vision, less on details. We are slowly seeing that change.”

501-1000 participating members

“Momentum/size – big gets bigger. Quality worship, programming, expectation of growth.”

“Biblical teaching, worship, ministries & fellowship, music, Sunday School and other Bible study classes.”

“Ability of the church to risk and to think outside conventional ministry paradigms. We are in the process of a major by-law revision giving staff members and elders greater authority. Deacons and Deaconesses will no longer be part of the Board, but will head up ministry teams. Risk, Commitment to organized, intentional prayer about growth every Saturday night. A theology that impacts present culture.”

“Committed lay leadership. Strong worship. Caring ministries.”

“Location on Atlantic oceanfront. Caring and fellowship of shepherding groups. Music program. Strong lay leadership and friendliness of people.”

“Worship with integrity and thought. Hospitality. Sense of vision and identity.”

“Sunday School. Meaningful worship. Multiple opportunities for ‘doing’ ministry – active participation is expected.”

“Passion for sharing the Gospel. More significant advertising budget. More diversified music program.”

Responders:

51-100 participating members

Aledo, TX – Community CC

Mayfield, KY – Second CC

Lubbock, TX – Community CC

Venice, FL – First CC

Enterprise, FL – Iglesia Cristiana de Deltona (Discipulos de Cristo)

Wildwood, FL – Continental CC

101-250 participating members

Fort Collins, CO – Heart of the Rockies CC

Hays, KS – Celebration Community Church

Rowlett, TX – First CC

Forest Park, GA – Iglesia El Aposento Alto

Houston, TX – Memorial Drive CC

Freemont, NC – St. James Church of Christ (Disciples)

Olathe, KS – St. Andrew CC

Cherry Log, GA – Cherry Log CC

Farmville, NC – First CC

251-500 participating members

Memphis, TN – New Direction CC

Oklahoma City, OK – Crown Heights CC

Davie, FL – Parkway CC

Springfield, OR – Northwood CC

Arlington, TX – Rush Creek CC

Guthrie, OK – First CC

Harrison, OH – First CC

Bentonville, AR – First CC

501-1000 participating members

Indianapolis, IN – Geist CC

Wilton Manors, FL – First CC

Decatur, IL – First CC

Oklahoma City, OK – New Covenant CC

Neptune Beach, FL – First Christian Church of the Beaches

Norman, OK – First CC

Columbia, MO – Broadway CC

Kansas City, MO – Community CC