



ADULT EDUCATION

MYERS PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WHY WE EXIST

CHANGING COMMITMENTS

Most teenagers in America enter adulthood considering themselves to be Christians and saying they have made a personal commitment to Christ. But within a decade, most of these young people will leave the church. Among non Christians ages 16-29 – that is atheists, agnostics, those undecided about their faith, and individuals affiliated with other faiths – more than four out of every five have gone to a Christian church at some time in their life (82 %); the vast majority of are actually de-churched individuals.

- THE MEDIAN AGE OF MEMBERS AND ELDERS INCREASED FROM 58 TO 60 YEARS OLD BETWEEN 2005 AND 2008. FEWER THAN ONE OUT OF TEN YOUNG ADULTS MENTION FAITH AS THEIR TOP PRIORITY.

OUR CHANGING WORLD

The U.S. population's racial-ethnic diversity is continually increasing. Projections for 2000 to 2014 call for Whites (non-Hispanic) to decrease 20.9 percent; Black/African Americans to increase 11.5 percent; Hispanic/Latino to increase 6.7 percent; and Asians to increase 1.6 percent.

- MOST PRESBYTERIANS ARE WHITE (MEMBERS, 96 PERCENT; ELDERS, 95 PERCENT; PASTORS, 92 PERCENT; SPECIALIZED CLERGY, 89 PERCENT). THE RACIAL-ETHNIC MAKEUP OF PEOPLE IN THE DENOMINATION HAS CHANGED LITTLE IN THE LAST THREE DECADES.

WALKING THE TALK

Among non-Christians ages 16-29, 84 percent say they personally know at least one committed Christian. Yet just 15 percent thought the lifestyles of those Christ followers were significantly different from the norm.

- THREE IN TEN MEMBERS (31%) AND ONE IN TEN ELDERS (9%) REPORT NO PARTICIPATION IN CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES OTHER THAN WORSHIP IN THE PAST MONTH. ONLY ONE-THIRD OF MEMBERS AND HALF OF ELDERS READ THE BIBLE PRIVATELY AT LEAST WEEKLY. PARTICIPATION IN BIBLE STUDY OR PRAYER GROUPS THAT MEET "DAILY/ALMOST DAILY," "SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK," OR "WEEKLY" IS REPORTED BY 24% OF MEMBERS AND 30 % OF ELDERS.

IDENTITY

Nearly one-quarter of non-Christians describe Christians as using special words and phrases no one else can understand, and half of all young outsiders said that Christianity seems like a club only certain people can join.

- UPSCALE OUTSIDERS — THOSE WITH ADVANCED EDUCATIONAL AND FINANCIAL PROFILES — ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY THAN AVERAGE TO EXPRESS RESISTANCE AND SKEPTICISM TOWARD CHRISTIANITY. THEY MAINTAIN THE MOST NEGATIVE VIEWS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.
- ONLY TWO IN FIVE MEMBERS (40%) AND ELDERS (42 %) WERE RAISED IN A PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION.

RELATIONSHIPS

When individuals born in the 60s and 70s were asked to identify the activity, ministry event, or person most directly responsible for their decision to accept Jesus Christ, 71 percent listed an individual – typically their parent, a friend, another relative or a teacher. A majority of those decisions were described as conversations and prayer.

- SIXTY PERCENT OF MEMBERS AND 77 PERCENT OF ELDERS HAVE INVITED PEOPLE TO WORSHIP AT THEIR CONGREGATION IN THE PRIOR YEAR.

SOURCES: PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.) RESEARCH SERVICES, US CENSUS BUREAU, AGS/EXPERION, DECISION INSITE/MISSION INSITE, THE BARN A GROUP.

ADULT EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES — WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE ARE DOING



COMPONENTS EXISTING BEFORE 2009



NEW COMPONENTS BEGINNING 2010



COMPONENTS UNDER DEVELOPMENT

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Plans special combined adult forums, supports existing adult classes and promotes formation of new classes.

New Initiatives: Emphasize and support the role of class contacts by developing a guide, formalizing a teacher/topic database and hosting training workshops.

OFFICER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS/ CONT. EDU.

Manages officer training including photographing nominees, overseeing communication, and assisting with training workshop operations.

New Initiatives: research continuing education for officers after ordination.

SMALL GROUPS

Researches and develops frameworks for the natural development of small groups; and serves as an ongoing resource supplying curriculum options, descriptions of existing small groups, and the how to's of small group sustainability.

EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL

Assists clergy in planning educational tours, rotating the destinations among the Holy Land, Paul's journeys, and our reformation heritage.

New Initiatives: plan 2011 Greece/Turkey and 2012 reformation heritage trips.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Plans and hosts one-time adult education events that may or may not be in collaboration with another ministry.

ACADEMY BOARD

Oversees operations, plans curriculum, publicizes offerings and supervises specialized Foundations of Faith certification.

New Initiatives: develop an outreach mission track and diversify class times, dates and locations.

ACADEMY CERTIFICATION TRACKS

SPEAKER SERIES

Plans and implements an annual speaker series which will debut in fall 2010 with *Focus on the Future*.

BIBLE STUDIES

Facilitates clergy-led Bible studies which vary in time and location; the goal is having all clergy involved in at least one ongoing Bible study.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

Fosters meaningful discussion using diverse books in clergy or lay-led groups. Current groups include *BookIt!* led by Millie Snyder; *The Shack*, led by Bob Breed; and *Remedial Christianity* led by Von Clemans.