



Summary of Survey Results for the Middle Governing Body Commission 2011



Overview

Research Services developed three questionnaires in cooperation with and at the request of the Middle Governing Body Commission:

- A session survey.
- A presbytery and synod leader survey.
- An individual survey.

All three were placed on the PC(USA) website on March 24, and their availability was publicized widely throughout the denomination by the Commission. Responses were accepted through July 8, 2011. Individual Presbyterians were invited to go to either the leader or individual survey, as appropriate. Sessions were invited to download a copy of the survey, come up with one set of responses for the entire group, and then have one representative complete the survey online. The number of respondents for each is:

- Session survey: 754.
- Presbytery and synod leader survey: 978 started the survey, of whom 272 were determined by initial questions not to be presbytery or synod leaders and were referred to the individual survey; of the rest, 643 were solely or primarily presbytery leaders and 63, solely or primarily synod leaders.
- Individual survey: 783 started the survey, of whom 173 were determined by initial questions to be presbytery or synod leaders and were referred to that survey, leaving 610 individual respondents.

Because respondents self-selected, results may not be representative of the larger constituencies of which respondents are a part.

The four survey groups (counting presbytery and synod leaders separately) were asked a variety of questions, but not every question was asked of every group. When particular results are reported for only some of the groups, it is because the other groups were not asked that question.

The analyses that follow show only those responses that express an opinion on an issue, unless otherwise indicated. That is, "no opinion," "don't know," "not sure," and similar responses have been excluded, and the percentages recalculated using the remaining responses. For example, for a question on which 33% "agree," 33% "disagree," and 33% are "not sure," this report would show 50% "agree" and 50% "disagree." The purpose is to emphasize evaluative responses. Readers interested in the full range of responses, including "no opinion," "don't know," "not sure," etc., will find those in three appendices that report percentage responses to each question for each survey: Appendix A, session survey; Appendix B, leader survey; and Appendix C, individual survey.

Verbatim comments to open-ended questions are found in separate appendices: Appendix D, session survey; Appendix E, leader survey; and Appendix F, individual survey.

Who Responded

Sessions

Responding sessions represent a wide range of congregational sizes, though they somewhat underrepresent the smallest congregations and somewhat overrepresent those of intermediate size, especially those with 301 to 800 members. (See Table I.)

Number of Members	Session Survey	Annual Congregational Reports
1-100	40%	52%
101-300	38%	35%
301-800	17%	10%
801-1,500	3%	3%
1,501 or larger	1%	1%

Of responding sessions, 17% indicate that their congregation has increased in membership size over the past five years; 43%, that it has decreased in size; and 40%, that it has stayed the same. Two-thirds of sessions report that their congregation has an installed pastor (67%), while one in four have an interim or supply pastor (23%) and 10%, a commissioned lay pastor. Another 10% have no pastoral leader. (Responses total more than 100% because some congregations have more than one pastoral leader.)

Leaders

Almost five times as many presbytery (n = 682) as synod (n = 124) leaders responded to the survey, including 82 who reported leadership in both. Of the latter, three-fourths indicated their primary leadership role is in the presbytery (74%), one-fourth in the synod (26%). Leaders with roles in both types of middle governing bodies were asked questions about the governing body in which their primary role is found.

Leaders with a sole or primary responsibility in the presbytery (n = 643) represent a variety of leadership roles there. The largest numbers are members of a presbytery council (33%). Only 5% indicate that they are an executive or general presbyter, and only 7%, a stated clerk. Similar shares report being chair of a committee on ministry (5%) or committee on preparation for ministry (3%), while 28% report being the chair of some other presbytery committee. (Note that the same person can and often does wear more than one hat; on average, respondents list 1.4 presbytery roles.)

Nine in ten presbytery leaders report that they were “very involved” (60%) or “involved” (29%) with their presbytery in the past two years. Only two respond “not at all involved.”

Of leaders with a sole or primary synod leadership role (n = 63), the largest percentages are committee chairs (32%), members of synod council (18%), or other staff (12%). Only 5% are synod executives, and 2% are synod stated clerks. A total of 10% are either synod moderators (5%) or vice moderators (5%).

More than eight in ten synod leaders report they have been “very involved” (55%) or “involved” (26%) in their synod during the past year. Only 5% (n = 3) respond, “not at all involved.”

Individuals

Almost all individual respondents are white (96%). A majority are male (55%). The median age is 60 years. They occupy a variety of church roles (2.2 per respondent, on average), including:

- More than one-third are ministers of the Word and Sacrament, either in active service (28%) or retired (8%). Of the former, 13% are installed pastors and 4%, interim or supply pastors.
- Another 2% of respondents are commissioned lay pastors.
- A majority are ordained elders (53%), about half of whom are currently on session (25%). An overlapping 12% are clerks of session.
- One in six are ordained deacons, with 2% in active service and 16%, not.

Mission Strategy

A quarter of sessions indicate that they are “very knowledgeable” (4%) or “knowledgeable” (20%) concerning their presbytery’s “strategy for mission.” Another quarter are “not knowledgeable” (24%). The rest are “somewhat knowledgeable” (53%). Individuals are a bit more aware: 13% are “very knowledgeable” and 29%, “knowledgeable.” One in six are “not knowledgeable” (18%), with 40%, “somewhat knowledgeable.” (See Table 2.)

Table 2. Knowledge of Mission Strategy*				
	Presbytery Mission Strategy		Synod Mission Strategy	
	Sessions	Individuals	Sessions	Individuals
Very knowledgeable	4%	13%	1%	3%
Knowledgeable	20%	29%	3%	12%
Somewhat knowledgeable	53%	40%	14%	23%
Not knowledgeable	24%	18%	82%	62%
Total	101%	100%	100%	100%

*Responses may not total 100% because of rounding.

Both sessions and individuals report much less awareness of their synod’s as compared to their presbytery’s mission strategy. Majorities in both survey groups are “not knowledgeable” (sessions, 82%; individuals, 62%), and only 4% and 15%, respectively, are either “very knowledgeable” or “knowledgeable.”

Presbytery leaders were asked a slightly different question—about their familiarity with presbytery mission. Eight in ten are either “very familiar” (45%) or “familiar” (37%). Only 2% respond “not familiar.” Synod leaders were not asked about their familiarity with synod mission.

Presbytery leaders were also asked about the clarity of their presbytery’s strategy for mission. Six in ten respond either “very clear” (14%) or “clear” (46%). Only 11% respond “not clear.”

Presbytery and Synod Connections

Sessions

Sessions report a variety of contacts between their congregation and their presbytery in the past two years. From a list of 13 types of contact, sessions report an average of 4.5, including:

- Review of session minutes and records by the presbytery, 92%.
- Request for/completion of annual reports, changes in terms of call, etc., 73%.
- Congregational participation in a presbytery program or ministry, 45%.
- Support in calling a pastor or other change in pastoral leadership, 43%.
- A triennial review or other routine visit with session by presbytery representatives, 43%.
- Use of the presbytery’s camp or conference center, 38%.
- Assistance with the vision and future of the congregation, 32%.
- Contact related to the congregation’s property or facilities, 24%.
- An inquirer or candidate for ministry from the congregation is under care of presbytery, 21%.
- A grant from the presbytery, 20%.
- Help in dealing with conflict in the congregation, 12%.
- Congregational involvement in a Presbyterian judicial process, 3%.
- Congregational involvement in civil litigation, 1%.

In addition, 86% of sessions report that in the past two years at least one congregational representative has served on a “committee, board, commission, task force, ministry team, or other entity” of their presbytery, and 97% report that at least one elder commissioner from the congregation has attended a presbytery meeting. Most of these sessions further report that an elder commissioner has attended “every meeting” of the presbytery (46%) or “most meetings” (39%) over the same period.

Only one in three sessions report any form of contact between their congregation and their synod in the past two years. The most frequent types of contact indicated are:

- Participated in a training or education program of the synod (14%).
- Attended a synod event or visited the synod offices (14%).
- One or more elders or pastors were commissioners to a synod meeting (11%).

In presbyteries with a mission partnership in another country (61% of sessions report such a partnership), six in ten sessions (62%) indicate that their congregation participates in this partnership.

Four in ten sessions report that their congregation “has a strong connection” with their presbytery (40%). Of the rest, most respond “has neither a strong nor a weak connection” (47% overall). Only 12% of sessions report a “weak connection.” Similarly, few sessions (8%) report that their congregation’s connection with their presbytery has “grown weaker” over the past two years, while 31% respond “grown stronger” and 60%, “stayed about the same.”

Leaders

For leaders’ involvement in presbyteries and synods, see the previous section, “Who Responded.”

Individuals

In the past two years, majorities or large minorities of individual respondents have been actively involved with their presbytery in various ways:

- 73% have received a presbytery newsletter.
- 72% have visited the presbytery’s website.
- 52% have attended a presbytery meeting as a commissioner.
- 46% have attended an event sponsored by the presbytery (other than a presbytery meeting).
- 42% have served on a presbytery committee or task force.
- 31% have visited the presbytery resource center.

Only 13% of individuals report no contact over the two-year period.

In contrast to sessions (see above), more than six in ten individuals describe the connection between their congregation and their presbytery as “strong” (63%). All the rest respond “neither strong nor weak.” A majority of individuals indicate that the connection between their congregation and their presbytery has “stayed about the same” over the past two years (58%), with twice as many reporting that it has “grown stronger” (29%) than “grown weaker” (14%).

Presbytery Effectiveness

Asked to evaluate how effectively their presbytery has been carrying out 32 aspects of its mission, majorities of sessions and leaders respond “very effectively” or “effectively” regarding 21 and 22 of these, respectively. Majorities of individuals so respond to only 12 aspects. However, the pattern of response is very similar in all three groups, with the same eight aspects seen as being carried out “very effectively” or “effectively” by the most respondents in each of the three surveys. (See Table 3.)

Table 3. Responsibilities That Presbyteries Are Rated as Carrying Out Most Effectively

	Sessions	Presbytery Leaders	Individuals
Presbytery Responsibility	% responding "very effectively" or "effectively"*		
Review session minutes and records at least once a year	90%	90%	78%
Ordain, install, and receive ministers	88%	88%	78%
Establish minimum compensation & benefit requirements for pastors	87%	85%	77%
Elect commissioners to the synod and the General Assembly	86%	87%	76%
Establish a nominating committee	82%	77%	72%
Establish and oversee the presbytery council	81%	81%	65%
Work with inquirers and candidates for ministry	80%	83%	68%
Consider & act on requests from congregations about real property	77%	80%	63%
Assist congregations with the search process for pastoral leadership	74%	74%	57%
Provide grants to congregations	72%	59%	55%
Implement principles of participation, inclusiveness, & affirmative action	69%	67%	59%
Train, examine, and commission lay pastors	70%	63%	57%

*Shading indicates the ten highest rated for each group.

At the other extreme, the ten responsibilities with the lowest total "very effectively" and "effectively" responses are also similar across the three groups, and of similar magnitude, with a few exceptions (see Table 4):

- Around a third of sessions (35%) and individuals (32%) believe presbyteries are "very effectively" or "effectively" carrying out their responsibility to "visit with sessions on a regular basis," but half of presbytery leaders so respond (51%).
- Four in ten presbytery leaders (40%) and individuals (41%) believe presbyteries are "very effectively" or "effectively" carrying out their responsibility to "provide encouragement, guidance, and resources to congregations in areas such as personnel policies, equitable compensation, and fair employment practices," but a clear majority of sessions so respond (56%).
- Around a quarter of presbytery leaders (26%) and individuals (27%) believe presbyteries are "very effectively" or "effectively" carrying out their responsibility to "organize or receive new congregations," while almost four in ten sessions do so (38%).

Table 4. Responsibilities That Presbyteries Are Rated as Carrying Out Least Effectively

	Sessions	Presbytery Leaders	Individuals
Presbytery Responsibility	% responding "very effectively" or "effectively"*		
Serve as a catalyst for interdenominational/interfaith activity in your area	29%	31%	26%
Initiate new mission in keeping with synod and GA strategy	29%	24%	34%
Provide a strong vision for area Presbyterians	29%	37%	32%
Initiate new programs for congregations to participate in	33%	36%	33%
Visit with sessions on a regular basis	35%	51%	32%
Counsel congregations where specific groups are not represented on session	38%	30%	32%
Organize or receive new congregations	38%	26%	27%
Arrange mission partnership opportunities	41%	46%	44%
Provide encouragement, guidance, & resources on worship, nurture, etc.	44%	42%	39%
Help congregations learn about/receive resources from GA offices	47%	42%	37%
Provide encouragement, guidance, & resources on personnel issues	56%	40%	41%

*Shading indicates the ten lowest rated for each group.

Support from Presbyteries and Synods

For Congregations

Only a minority of sessions and individuals rate their presbyteries as “very supportive” or “supportive” of their congregation in five of seven areas, with responses lowest for “helping congregations with evangelism” (sessions, 31%; individuals, 33%). Majorities of both groups, however, respond “very supportive” or “supportive” for “helping congregations with conflict” (60%; 54%), and a majority of sessions (54%), but not individuals (46%), for “helping congregations with church redevelopment or transformation.” (See Table 5.)

	Sessions	Individuals
	% responding “very supportive” or “supportive”	
Helping congregations with evangelism	31%	33%
Helping congregations establish relationships with ethnic and immigrant fellowships	35%	43%
Implementing new models of new church development	41%	38%
Helping congregations understand the changing demographics of their communities	41%	40%
Helping congregations with financial matters	44%	41%
Helping congregations with church redevelopment or transformation	54%	46%
Helping congregations with conflict	60%	54%

Sessions were further asked a general question on presbytery support: “How supportive of your congregation has your presbytery been” in the past two years? Two-thirds respond “very supportive” (25%) or “supportive” (41%). Only 6% respond “not supportive.”¹

Only around one-third of sessions provide an opinion on the question, “which term best summarizes your congregation’s relationship with the synod” over the past two years? Indeed, more than half respond “not enough contact on which to base an opinion” (52%; another 12% are “not sure”). Of those with an opinion—36% of the total—less than three in ten respond either “excellent” (8%) or “very good” (13%), though 37% respond “good” (34%). Another 27% respond “fair,” and 15%, “poor.”

Asked whether they think their synod could have “provided more services to your congregation than it did” over the past two years, almost eight in ten sessions respond either “not sure” (24%) or “our congregation did not have any contacts with or receive any services from the synod” (54%). Of the rest, 55% respond “no, it is doing all that it can,” leaving 45% who indicate that the synod could have done more.

For Presbyteries

Three in four presbytery leaders report that their presbytery received one or more services (from a list of 12, including “other”) from their synod in the past two years (75%). These leaders were asked whether their synod could have “provided more services to your presbytery than it did” over the past two years, and a third responded “not sure” (32%). Only 153, or around a quarter of all presbytery leaders (24%) have an opinion. Of these, six in ten respond “no, it is doing all that it can” (60%).

¹ It is interesting that ratings of overall support are greater than ratings of support for any specific activity. It should be noted that the general support question appeared early in the questionnaire, while the questions about support in specific areas were located much later.

An identical share of synod leaders with an opinion (60%) also respond “no, it is doing all it can” to a parallel question, regarding whether they think their synod could have “provided more services to its presbyteries than it did” over the same time period.

Finances

Presbytery and Synod Budgets

Fewer than half of presbytery leaders are familiar with their presbytery’s budget (48%). Those who are reveal that there is considerable variety in the shares of presbytery funds that come from each of several sources (see Appendix B). In general, however, in most presbyteries the bulk of funds come from either per capita apportionment or general mission giving. (See Table 6.)

	Presbytery Budgets		Synod Budgets	
	Median Percentage from Each Source	Percent of Presbyteries Reporting Any Income of This Type	Median Percentage from Each Source	Percent of Synods Reporting Any Income of This Type
Per capita	40%	94%	42%	100%
General mission giving	35%	97%	13%	85%
Unified giving	14%	76%	10%	82%
Investments and endowments	5%	91%	10%	100%
Bequests	0%	38%	0%	40%
Rents or fees	1%	50%	0%	40%
Sale of property	0%	26%	0%	0%
Other	4%	10%	26%	20%

Half of synod leaders are familiar with their synod’s budget (49%). Those who are report that the largest single source of income for synods is per capita apportionment which, with a median of 42%, is very close to the budget share from per capita for presbyteries. Synods, however, rely less on general mission giving (median of 13%) and unified giving (median of 10%) than do presbyteries, and more on investments and endowments (10%).

Per Capita Apportionment

Eight in ten presbytery leaders believe that “the current split of per capita funds among your presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly” is either “very appropriate” (30%) or “appropriate” (52%). The 19% responding “inappropriate” or “very inappropriate” were further asked to indicate how they “would change the relative distribution of per capita funds.” Almost all think more funds should go to their presbytery (95%), and an overlapping 26% think more should go to the General Assembly. Almost no one (7%) thinks more per capita funds should go to their synod. Consistently, most of these same respondents think a lesser share should go their synod (77%) or to the General Assembly (46%), while only 5% think less should go to their presbytery.

An even greater share of synod leaders believe that the per capita split among governing bodies is “very appropriate” (9%) or “appropriate” (84%). Only three respondents choose “inappropriate” or “very inappropriate”—too few for an analysis of their opinions on how to shift funds.

Presbytery leaders have mixed opinions on “moving away from a per-capita funding model to a different type.” While a small majority (51%) are “very interested” or “interested” in moving away from per-capita funding for synods, fewer so respond concerning the General Assembly (43%) and presbyteries (35%). And 28%, 34%, and 39%, respectively, are “not interested” in such a shift. (See Table 7.)

Table 7. Interest in Moving Away from a Per Capita Model

Degree of interest in shifting away from a per-capita model for funding each type of governing body	Presbytery Leaders' Responses			Synod Leaders' Responses		
	Presbyteries	Synods	General Assembly	Presbyteries	Synods	General Assembly
Very interested	16%	33%	24%	12%	11%	12%
Interested	19%	18%	19%	21%	24%	23%
Somewhat interested	26%	22%	22%	14%	16%	16%
Not interested	39%	28%	34%	54%	49%	49%

Only around a third of synod leaders are “very interested” or “interested” in moving away from a per capita model for funding either presbyteries (33%), synods (35%), or the General Assembly (35%). More are “not interested,” including a majority regarding funding for presbyteries: 54%, 49%, and 49%, respectively.

(For more on finances, see the “Trends” section, which follows.)

Trends

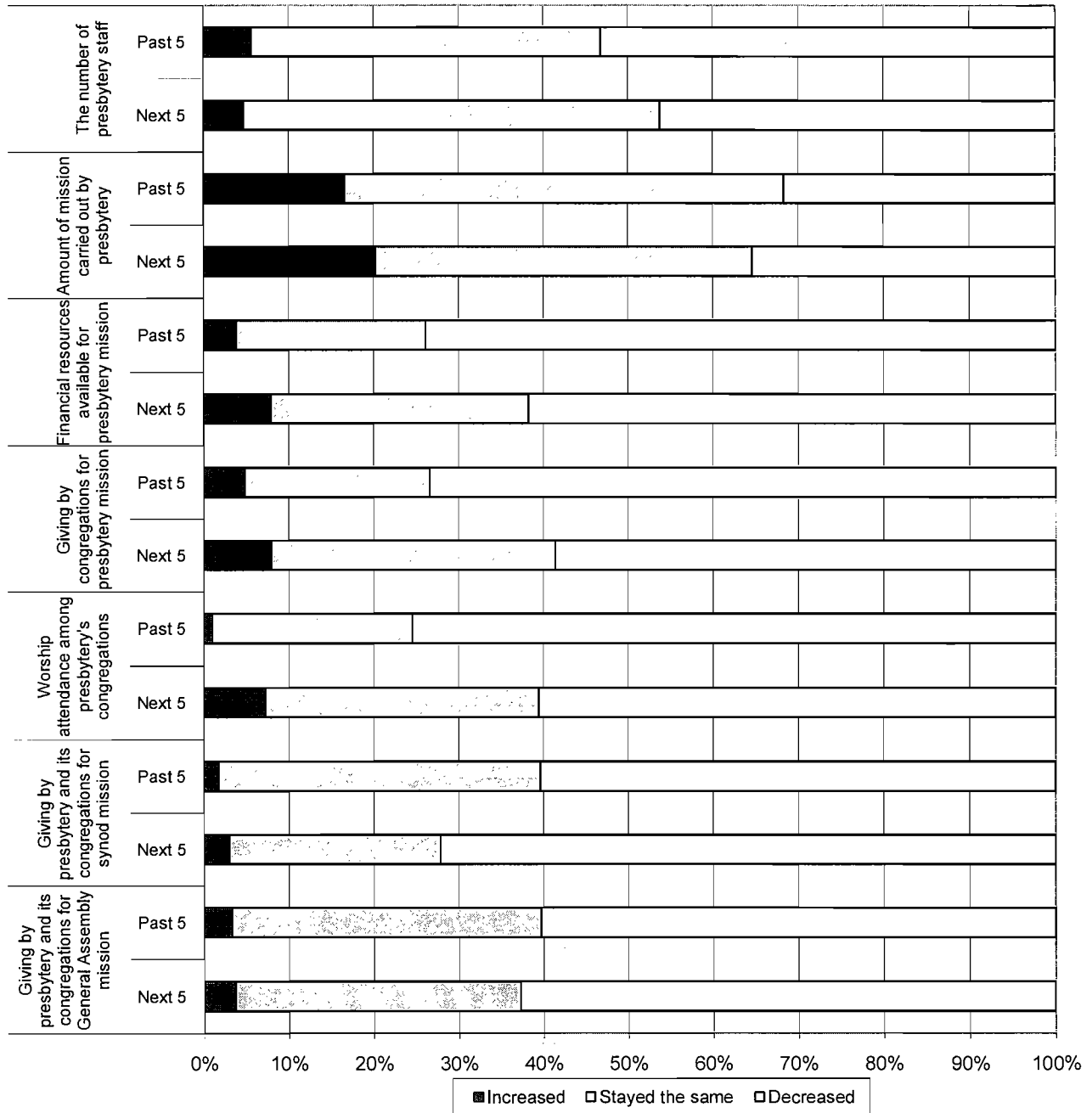
In the Presbytery

When presbytery leaders were asked about changes in seven aspects of mission and finances in the presbytery over the past five years, the highest “increase” response is 17%, for mission. All of the other “increased” totals are less than 10%. Asked about expected changes in the same seven aspects over the next five years, the highest “increase” response is 20%, also for mission. Again, no other aspect has an “increase” response as high as 10%. (See Figure 1 on the next page.)

By contrast, majorities of 59% or more believe there has been and will be a decrease in five of the factors: “financial resources available for the presbytery’s mission, in general”; “giving by congregations for the mission of your presbytery, in particular”; “total worship attendance among all congregations in the presbytery”; “giving by your presbytery and its congregations for the mission of your synod”; and “giving by your presbytery and its congregations for the mission of the General Assembly.” For the other two aspects, the “decreased” percentages for “the number of staff” are 53% over the past five years and 46% over the next five years, and for the “amount of mission carried out by the presbytery, in general,” 32% over the past five years and 35% over the next five.

Judging by the percentages who respond “increased,” presbytery leaders are slightly more hopeful about the next five years than the past five regarding six of the seven factors: “total worship attendance among all congregations in the presbytery” (“increased” responses up 6%); “financial resources available for presbytery mission, in general” (up 4%); “giving by congregations for presbytery mission” (up 3%); “the amount of mission the presbytery will carry out” (up 3%); “giving by your presbytery and its congregations for the mission of your synod” (up 1%); and “giving by your presbytery and its congregations for the mission of the General Assembly” (up 1%). For the seventh aspect, “the number of presbytery staff,” the “increased” percentages drop 1%.

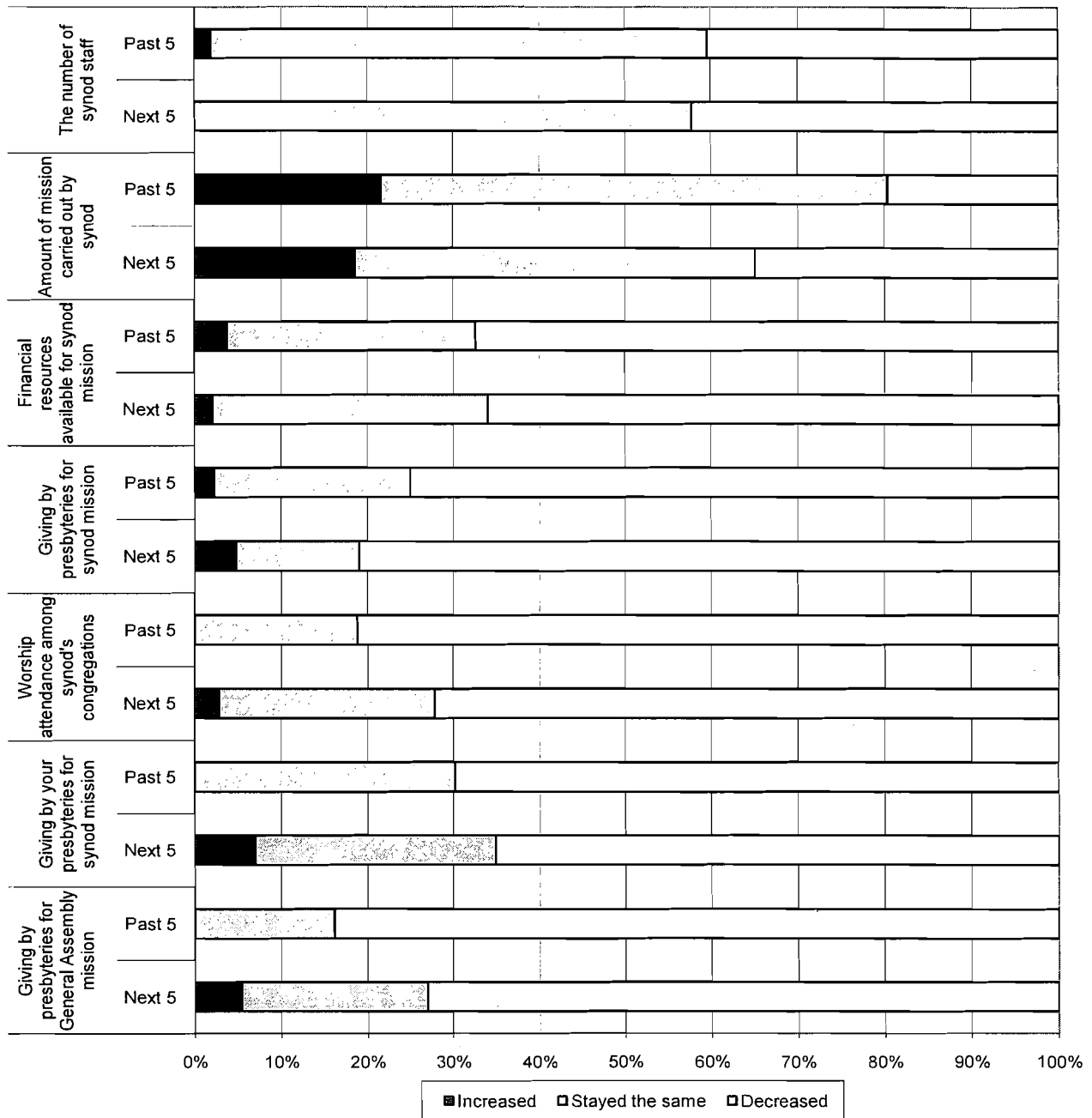
Figure 1. Presbytery Leaders' Views on Their Presbytery's Trends in Mission and Finances: Past Five Years and Next Five Years



In the Synod

Fewer than 10% of synod leaders report an increase in six of seven aspects of their synod over the past five years (including three for which no one responded “increased”). The exception is “the amount of mission carried out by the synod,” which 22% describe as “increased,” 59% as “stayed the same,” and 20% “decreased.” In contrast, majorities of two-thirds or greater respond “decreased” for five of the other six aspects. The exception here is “the number of synod staff,” which 40% indicate has “decreased” and 58% “stayed the same.” (See Figure 2.)

**Figure 2. Synod Leaders' Views on Their Synod's Trends in Mission and Finances:
Past Five Years and Next Five Years**



A few more synod leaders believe that several of these aspects will “increase” in the next five years than believe they have increased in the past five, but they are very small in number. For example, 5% believe giving by presbyteries to General Assembly mission will have increased in the next five years, compared to 0% who believe it has increased over the past five. Similarly, for four aspects, fewer synod leaders expect a drop in the next five years than believe there has been one over the past five: “financial resources available for the synod’s mission, in general (down 1%); “total worship attendance among the all congregations in all presbyteries in your synod” (down 9%); “giving by your presbyteries for the mission of your synod, in general” (down 5%); and “giving by presbyteries for the mission of the General Assembly” (down 11%).

Obstacles Facing Presbyteries

Majorities of presbytery leaders believe three (from a list of seven) factors are a “very great obstacle” or “great obstacle” to their presbytery “accomplishing its mission”:

- Lack of funding (67%).
- Insufficient support from congregations (57%).
- Differing congregational demographics (54%).

Less than one-third, however, respond “very great obstacle” or “great obstacle” to the other four factors:

- Mismatch between staff and needs (18%).
- Inability to manage conflict effectively (30%).
- Lack of staff (30%).
- Lack of vision (30%).

A “mismatch between staff and needs” is the only one of the seven factors for which a majority respond “not an obstacle” (56%). The next largest “not an obstacle” responses are for “lack of vision” (40%) and “lack of staff” (37%).

Size and Demographics

Representation of Demographic Groups

Majorities of sessions believe that the leaders in their presbytery “very effectively” or “effectively” represent the diversity of the presbytery on a variety of factors. Responses range from 66% for “racial-ethnic diversity” to 57% for both “age diversity” and “rural-urban diversity.” Responses are very similar when it comes to how effectively participants in presbytery meetings represent the same set of six factors. (See Table 8.)

Table 8. Representation of Demographic Groups in Presbyteries				
	Presbytery Leaders		Participants in Presbytery Meetings	
	Sessions	Individuals	Sessions	Individuals
	% responding “very effectively” or “effectively”			
Racial-ethnic diversity	66%	52%	68%	54%
Age diversity	57%	45%	52%	42%
Economic/social class diversity	56%	46%	59%	47%
Rural-urban diversity	57%	51%	65%	54%
Size variation of congregations	62%	54%	66%	56%
Theological diversity	61%	46%	65%	49%

The opinions of individuals are around 10% lower on every item, with combined “very effectively” and “effectively” totals ranging from 52% for “racial-ethnic diversity” to 45% for “age diversity” regarding the representation of presbytery leaders, and from 56% for “size variation of congregations” to 42% for “age diversity” regarding “participants in presbytery meetings.”

Size of Presbytery

Majorities of all three groups asked the question believe that the geographical area of their presbytery is “about right” (sessions, 55%; presbytery leaders, 64%; individuals, 69%). Almost all of the rest believe it is “too large” (43%; 33%; 29%), but almost no one believes it is “too small” (2%; 3%; 2%). (See Table 9.)

	Geographical Area			Number of Congregations		
	Sessions	Presbytery Leaders	Individuals	Sessions	Presbytery Leaders	Individuals
Too large	43%	33%	29%	19%	16%	16%
About right	55%	64%	69%	70%	68%	75%
Too small	2%	3%	2%	11%	16%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

A similar pattern is found regarding the number of congregations in the presbytery. Two-thirds or more of sessions (70%), presbytery leaders (68%), and individuals (75%) indicate that the current number is “about right.” However, compared to responses on geographical size, fewer respondents believe the number of congregations is “too large” (19%; 16%; 16%) and more believe it is “too small” (11%; 16%; 9%).

Staff Size

Presbytery leaders report a median of three full-time and three part-time staff members (these numbers include the executive presbyter and stated clerk).

Size of Synod

Synod leaders and individuals respond identically when asked about the size of their synod: two-thirds indicate it is “about right”; one-third, “too large”; and 2%, “too small.” Even more in both groups believe the number of presbyteries in their synod is “about right,” with almost all of the rest responding “too large.” Only 6% in each group believe the number of presbyteries is “too small.” (See Table 10.)

	Geographical Area		Number of Presbyteries	
	Synod Leaders	Individuals	Synod Leaders	Individuals
Too large	31%	32%	13%	22%
About right	67%	67%	82%	72%
Too small	2%	2%	6%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Staff Size

Synod leaders were not asked about staff size.

Relationships with General Assembly Agencies

Sessions and Leaders

Majorities of sessions and leaders report that their entity—congregation, presbytery, or synod—had related in some way with three of the six General Assembly agencies in the past two years: the General Assembly Mission Council; the Board of Pensions; and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Almost all leaders (96%) also report relating with the Office of the General Assembly, though only 35% of sessions do so. Fewer than half of sessions and presbytery leaders report relating to either the Presbyterian Foundation or the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program, though a slim majority of synod leaders do so. (See Table 11.)

Table 11. Relating to General Assembly Agencies			
	Sessions	Presbytery Leaders	Synod Leaders
	% reporting that their entity related in one or more ways with each agency in the past two years		
Board of Pensions	82%	78%	73%
General Assembly Mission Council	92%	92%	84%
Office of the General Assembly	35%	96%	96%
Presbyterian Foundation	38%	44%	69%
Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program	14%	30%	51%
Presbyterian Publishing Corporation	75%	100%	51%

Sessions and leaders who report that their entity had related to a particular General Assembly agency were also asked to indicate the quality of that relationship. A majority of sessions report an “excellent” or “very good” relationship with only one agency, the Board of Pensions (60%). The next highest “excellent”/“very good” total is 44%, for the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. At the low end, with 26%, is the Office of the General Assembly. (See Table 12.)

Table 12. Quality of the Relationship with General Assembly Agencies			
	Sessions	Presbytery Leaders	Synod Leaders
	% reporting that their entity's relationship with each agency is “excellent” or “very good”		
Board of Pensions	60%	80%	82%
General Assembly Mission Council	33%	51%	65%
Office of the General Assembly	26%	61%	70%
Presbyterian Foundation	39%	53%	60%
Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program	40%	56%	79%
Presbyterian Publishing Corporation	44%	50%	59%

Many more presbytery and synod leaders than sessions use “excellent” or “very good” to describe the relationship between their entity and each General Assembly agency. In fact, half or more of both groups of leaders use one of these terms to describe their relationship with each of the agencies. For both leader groups, as with sessions, the highest total of “excellent” and “very good” responses is for the Board of Pensions (presbytery leaders, 80%; synod leaders, 82%). The lowest, however, in both cases is the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (50%; 59%). (Note that the lowest shares of “excellent” or “very good” responses among presbytery and synod leaders are still much higher than the lowest shares of the same responses among sessions.)

Individuals

Individuals were asked about their familiarity with each of the six PC(USA) agencies and how helpful had been the services each one had provided to the presbytery in the past two years. Majorities report some level of familiarity with each agency, though the only agency with which a majority are “very familiar” or “familiar” is the Board of Pensions (60%). Of those with some degree of familiarity with an agency, the percentage describing it as “very helpful” or “helpful” to their presbytery ranges from 79% (Board of Pensions) to 45% (General Assembly Mission Council). With the exception of the Board of Pensions, combined “very helpful” and “helpful” responses are fairly similar for each of the other agencies, every one of them falling in the 55%-to-48% range. (See Table 13.)

Table 13. Individuals' Familiarity with GA Agencies and Ratings of Their Helpfulness to Their Own Presbytery					
	Familiarity				Helpfulness
	Very Familiar	Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not Familiar	% responding "very helpful" or "helpful"*
Board of Pensions	28%	32%	24%	16%	79%
General Assembly Mission Council	11%	28%	29%	32%	45%
Office of the General Assembly	11%	28%	34%	27%	48%
Presbyterian Foundation	13%	24%	33%	30%	54%
Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program	10%	16%	35%	39%	50%
Presbyterian Publishing Corporation	14%	27%	27%	31%	55%

*Of those indicating some degree of familiarity.

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