

FACTs ON MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP

Findings from the United Church of Christ 2015 Faith Communities Today (FACT) Survey of Congregations

Ministerial Leadership Structures: 2010 and 2015

- The percentage of senior pastors with one or more associate pastors has remained steady (from 17.0% in 2010 to 17.3% in 2015), which is reasonable given that larger churches with multiple staff tend to maintain financial stability. The percentage of co-pastors has declined slightly in the past five years; but interestingly, the number of congregations with no pastor at present increased from 3.0% in 2010 to 5.5% in 2015, perhaps indicating that the number of pastoral transitions has increased in the past few years. (Figure 1)
- Roughly 10% of pastors in UCC churches serve more than one congregation.

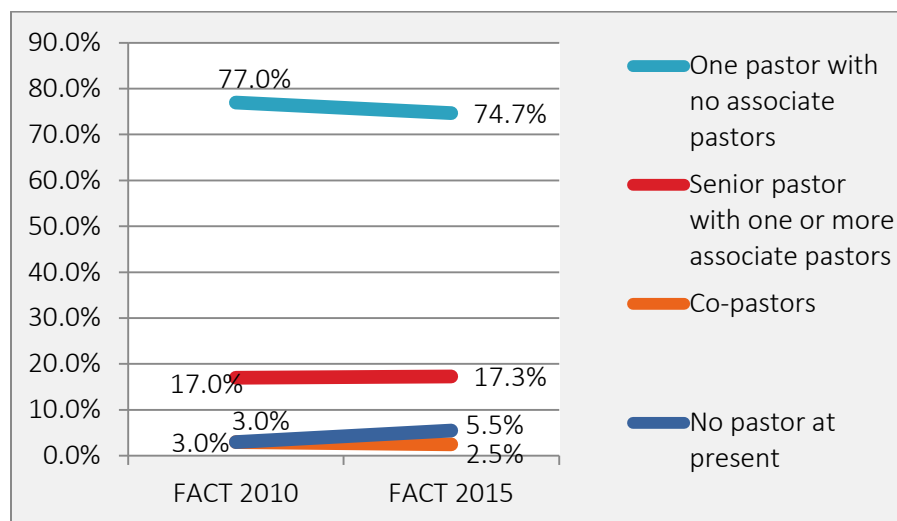


Figure 1: Ministerial Leadership Structures

- The percentage of females in lead pastor positions (senior/ solo/co-pastor) has increased in the last five years at the rate of roughly 1% per year (from 34% in 2010 to 39% in 2015), which is fairly significant. There are a number of reasons that this phenomenon is occurring, including retirement of older male ministers, societal and cultural changes impacting selection of church leadership, and the now nearly 50-50 balanced pool of male and female UCC authorized ministers.
- One in five UCC pastors possesses a terminal degree (Doctor of Ministry/Theology, Doctor of Philosophy, etc.).

Bi-Vocational Ministers

- For the FACT 2015 cycle, questions on bi-vocational ministers were included for the first time in the survey. Results indicated that nearly one-fourth (24.6%) of all local church pastors identified as bi-vocational, either by choice (14.9%) or by circumstance (9.7%).
- When asked what type of other work setting in which pastors were engaged, nearly two-thirds (62.1%) indicated secular positions and over one-third (37.9%) were ministry related.