

1 **FINAL REPORT TO THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**
2 **OF STATISTICAL RESEARCH ON PCA GROWTH AND GIVING**
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7 If you have any questions about the attached report, please email Frank Brock at
8 brock@covenant.edu or me at dhitzfeld@pcanet.org.
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11 Diane Hitzfeld
12 Administrative Assistant
13 to the Strategic Planning Committee
14 3/15/05
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33 [NOTE: This cover page is included on the PCA Strategic Planning web page, but will be
34 removed from the final report for inclusion into the *GA Commissioner Handbook*.]
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1 [NOTE: The blank lines at the top of this page are included in order to align this excerpt with the
2 printed report in the *Commissioners Handbook*, i.e., the report begins on line 6 in the *Handbook*
3 and so these lines were added so that this web file would also begin on line 6.]
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6 **VI. Statistical Analysis**

7 As a first step in progressing on the SPC's third strategic initiative, "organizing resources to better
8 serve our corporate mission," an analysis was undertaken of the statistical information collected by
9 the PCA Stated Clerk through the annual Statistical Survey, as published in the PCA Yearbook.
10 Data from 2003 and prior years were charted in order to give a pictographic view of the
11 denomination at present, as well as historically over its 30+-year history. The first chart gives an
12 overview of how Reformed denominations fared against other religious traditions. The remaining
13 ten charts are specific to PCA growth.

14 It should be noted that, currently, the Stated Clerk gives a brief summary report of denominational
15 statistics in his annual report to General Assembly commissioners. In addition, statistical
16 information is published in the PCA Yearbook; less than 700 copies are sold/distributed annually.

17 **Limitations and Interpretations**

18 Currently, 60-65% of churches respond to the Stated Clerk's Survey and report their membership
19 and giving information to the denomination. In 2003, just over 50% responded to update or
20 provide information; the other 10-15% have responded within the last 1-5 years, so the Clerk's
21 Office has published that information, albeit not as current. There are 251 churches that have
22 never reported statistics at all; most of those are churches of small size. In fact, 69% of those 251
23 churches are mission churches, 33 are Korean churches, 19 have vacant pulpits and 27 are older
24 established churches of a relatively small size.

25 This may seem like a poor showing when the goal of a denominational report is 100% of member
26 churches reporting annually. It would be ideal if this report and analysis could be a true picture of
27 the entire denomination. However, as far as statistical analysis is concerned, 2/3 of the whole
28 dataset is actually a very good indicator of the whole. This amount of data allows legitimate
29 conclusions to be drawn about what the denomination looks or acts like, and within reason and
30 good judgment, it is valid to use this information to construct an aggregate picture.

31 Furthermore, it must be recognized that there are limitations inherent in the reporting tool and
32 process used by the Stated Clerk's Office. Reporting is voluntary, and is done using "the honor
33 system"; the Stated Clerk's Office cannot go to each church and interpret its statistical information
34 for consistency across churches. Even though the data collection form is reviewed annually for
35 instructions in completing the survey and clarity of detailed field explanations, there are many
36 differences in how each individual church prepares its budget and interprets or reports its statistical
37 information, particularly its financial statistics. There is perhaps no single form or tool which
38 would "fit" every church budget in the PCA, and thus, the person in the PCA church who fills out
39 the collection form must make judgment calls as to what type of church spending goes into which
40 Survey category.

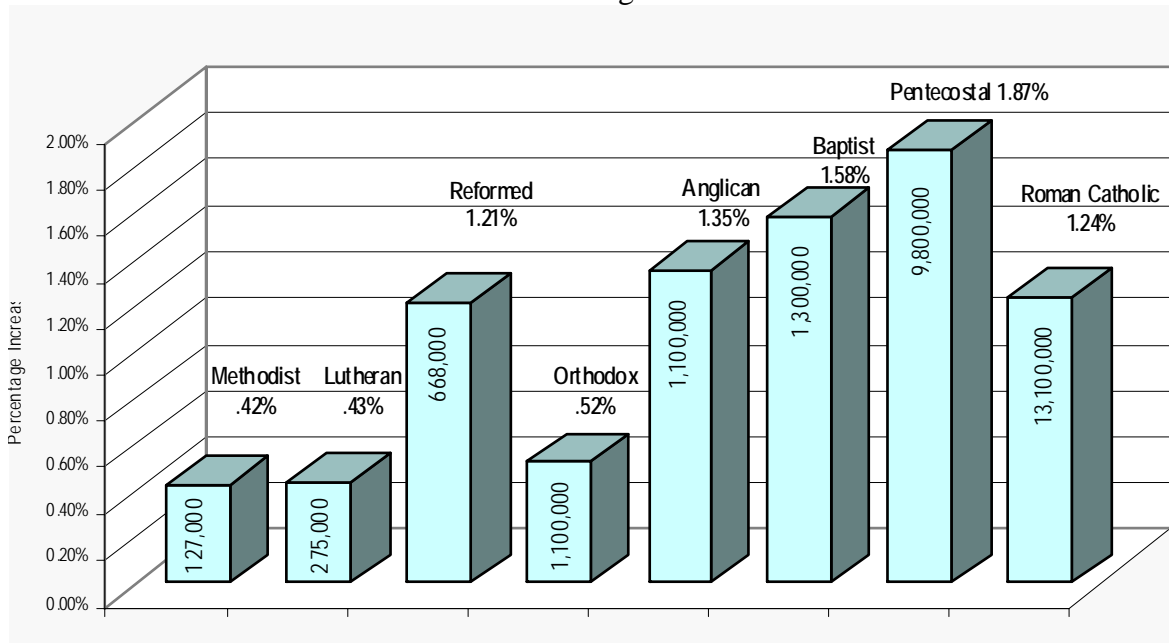
1 All in all, there are ample reasons to argue with the information presented, but there are many
2 more reasons to study and gain from what it says, using wisdom in applying conclusions drawn.
3 In short, the Yearbook gives the best information that current resources will allow. Limited
4 information is better than no information.

5 **Growth in Reformed Denominations**

6 The chart below was compiled from World Christian Trends: AD 30 - AD 2200, Barrett, David
7 B. and Todd M. Johnson Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001, pp. 361-380. The various
8 religious traditions are in order left-to-right by number of members added, with that number being
9 displayed on the front of each bar. The growth rates, or height of the bars, are reflections of the
10 increase in members compared to the size of the total membership of each religion. Based upon
11 these figures, the Reformed denominations are growing at a very fast rate compared to their
12 overall size of membership.

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Annual Growth Rate of Religions
2000 Figures



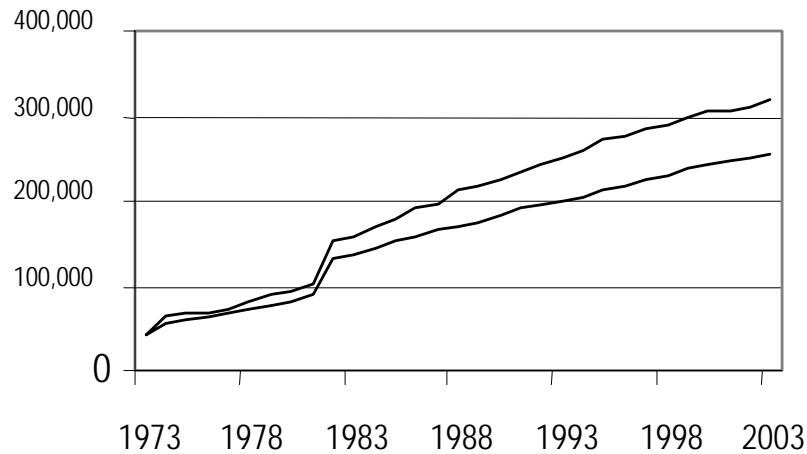
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1 **Growth in PCA Membership**

2 In terms of PCA membership, the denomination is growing at 4.7% annually. That means
3 that in 25 years, the PCA would pass the 1 million mark, and would join the ranks of what
4 would be considered a large denomination. The PCUSA for example, today, is 2.5 million;
5 the Southern Baptists are 15 million). On this chart, the gap between two lines represents
6 growth in non-communicant members. This gap is widening over time, which is probably a
7 good sign. It means the PCA is beginning to grow at a faster biological rate, and that is a
8 reflection of “youth” in the denominations’ midst. On the down side, growth is slowing as
9 the PCA gets larger; in the last 10 years, the growth rate was only 2.5%.

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Growth in Membership
Total membership includes ministers and non-communicants



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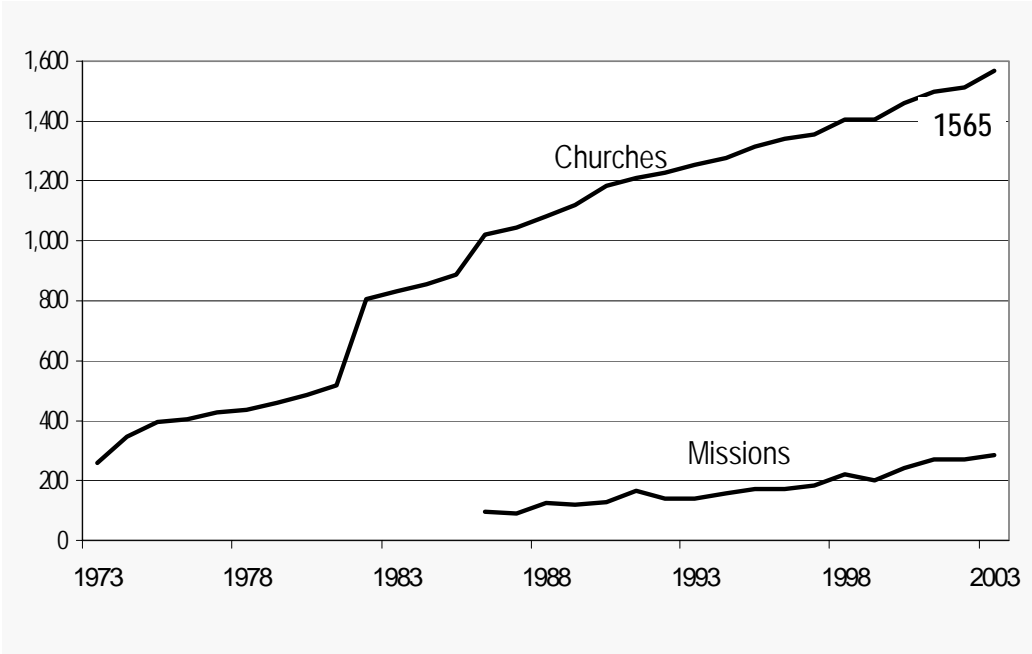
Average annual total membership growth is 4.7%.
At this rate, by 2028, total membership would be over 1 million.

1 **Growth in Number of PCA Churches**

2 Over the history of the PCA, excluding the initial 2 years and 1982 when the RPCES joined
3 and was received, the number of PCA churches has increased each year by an average of
4 3.6%. (That rate is slowing as the PCA grows; the growth rate is 2.23% in the last 10 years.)
5 At the end of 2003, there were 1,565 PCA churches.

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Growth of Churches



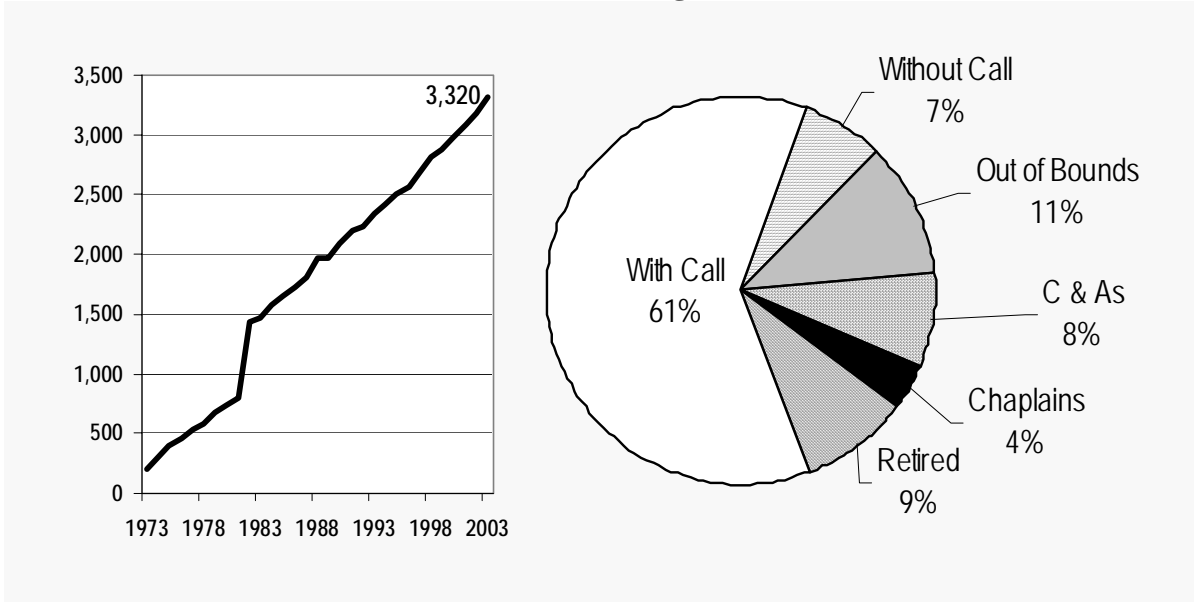
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Average annual growth is 3.6%.

1 **Growth in Number of PCA Pastors**

2 The number of Teaching Elders is growing much faster at 6.7% annually. The PCA now
3 has 3,320 ministers and the breakdown of where these men are placed is shown on the pie
4 chart on the right: 61% are called to PCA churches, 9% are retired, 4% are chaplains, 8%
5 work for the denomination (missionaries and campus ministers are included here), 11% are
6 working out of bounds, and 7% are without call.

7 **Growth in Teaching Elders**



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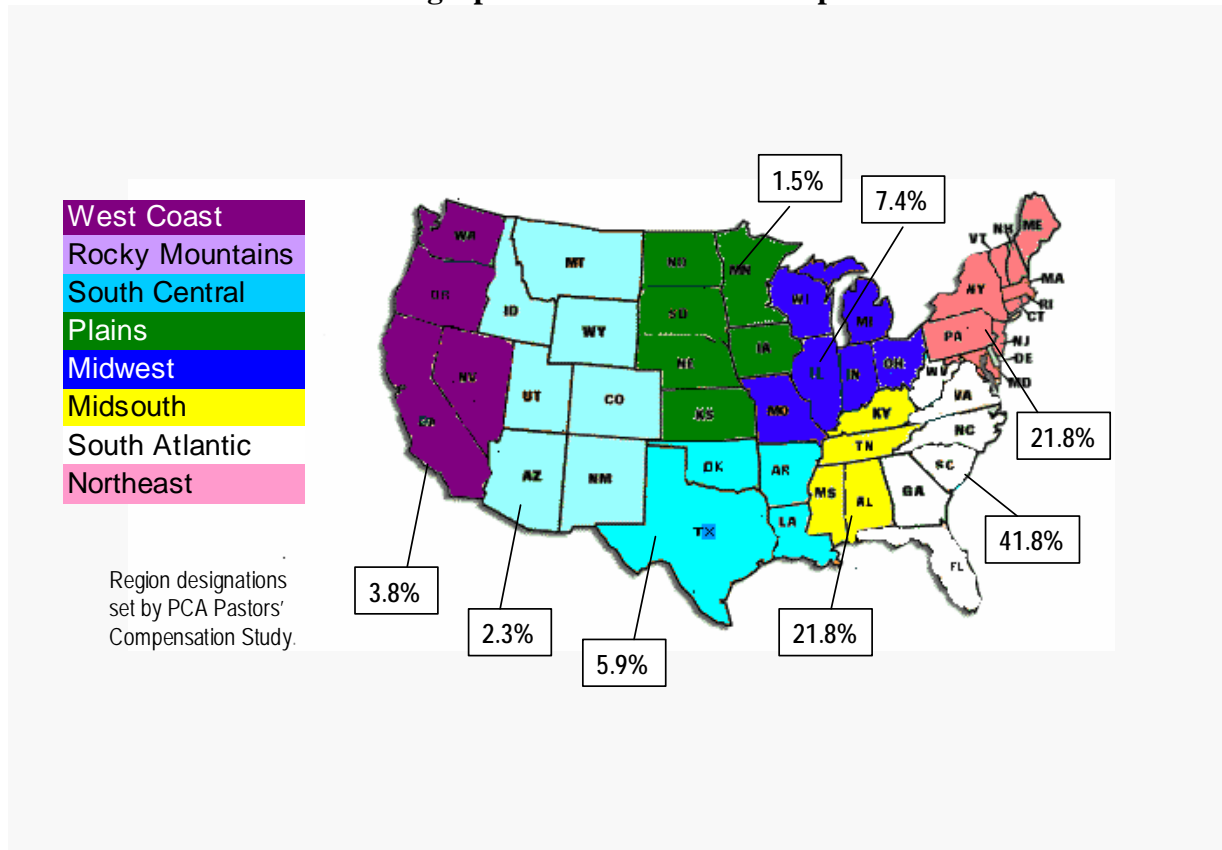
Average annual growth is 6.7%.

1 **Geographical Location of PCA Membership**

2 Looking at how the PCA is distributed geographically, 63.6% of members are in the
3 southeastern United States. However, the PCA is also strong in the Northeast region. The
4 sum of members in all the other regions combined is only around 20%, which is less than
5 any one of the other three regions.

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Geographics of PCA Membership

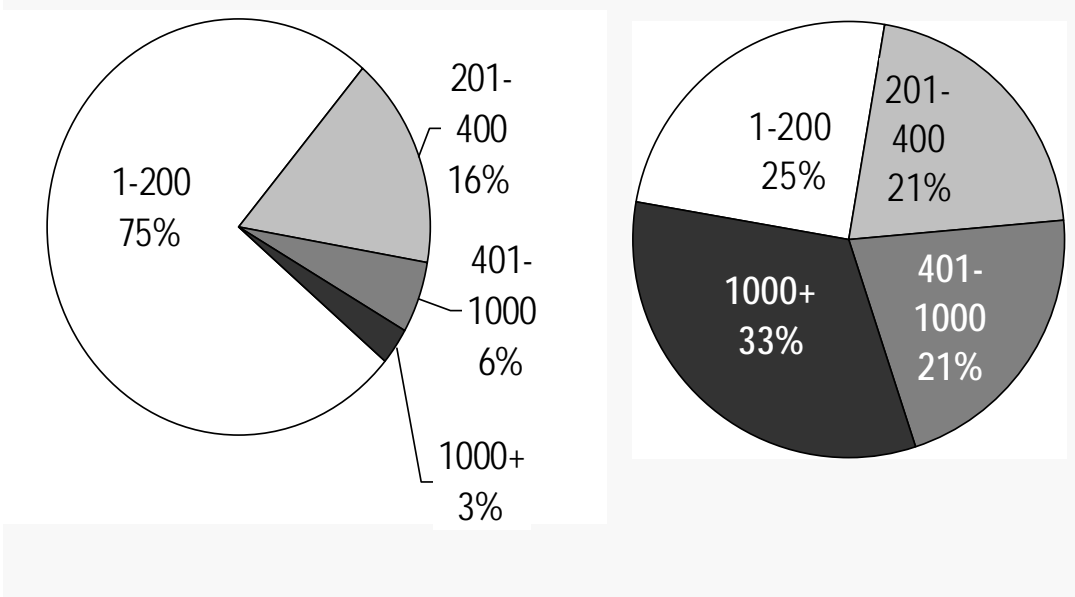


1 **Distribution of Church Size and Membership**

2 While the PCA is currently a denomination of small churches, its membership is relatively
3 equally distributed between the four categories based on church size. In 2003, 75% of the
4 churches in the PCA had 200 communicant members or less. In fact, more than half (53%)
5 of the churches have less than 100 members. On the other hand, 33% of members attend the
6 37 “big” churches having 1000 or more members. 75% of members are in 25% of the
7 churches.

8 **Church Size**

9 **Number of Churches** **Percent of PCA Membership**

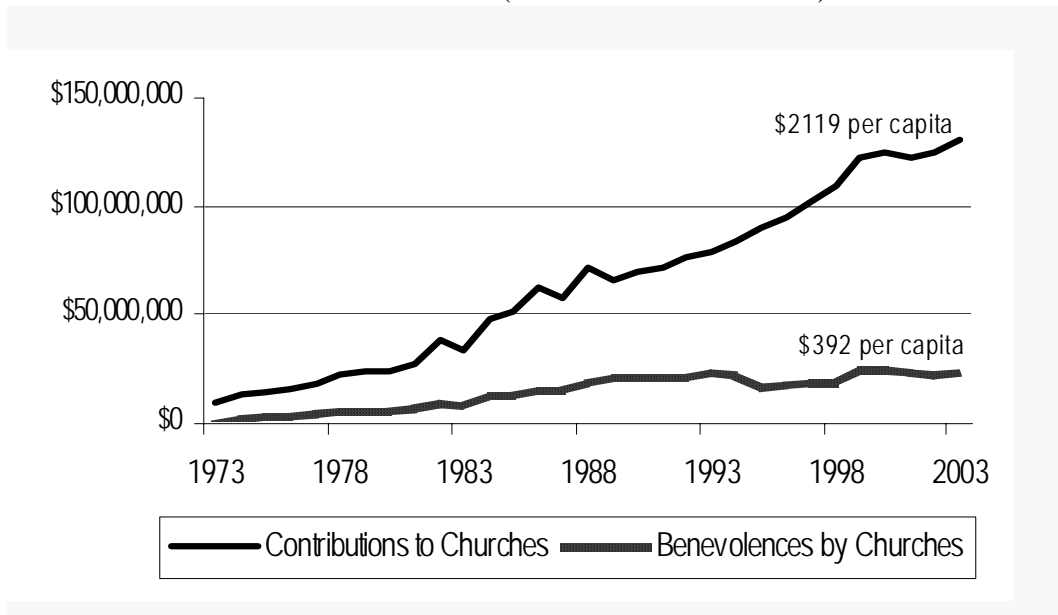


1 **Growth in Church Income and Benevolences**

2 This chart shows the total contributions coming in to PCA churches on the top line. The
3 bottom line shows the sum of benevolences paid out by PCA churches. In 2003, this
4 calculated to be just over \$2,100 per capita in contributions and \$392 per capita in
5 benevolences. (The charted figures have been adjusted for inflation and are shown in 1973
6 dollars, that's just over \$500 per capita contributions and \$95 per capita benevolences.)

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Contributions and Benevolences
Totals for the PCA (in constant 1973 dollars)

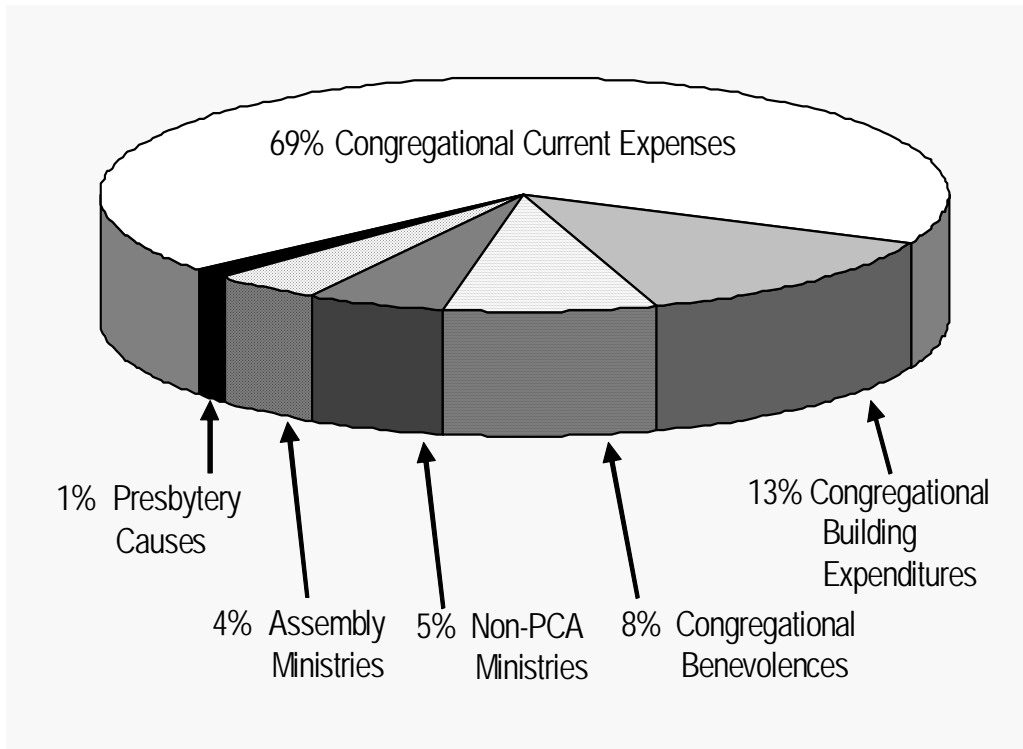


1 **Breakdown of Church Disbursements**

2 The Stated Clerk's statistics show that, in the aggregate, churches spend 69% of their budget
3 on Current Expenses for the church itself; they give 1% to Presbytery, 4% to the General
4 Assembly, 5% to Non-PCA Ministries; they spend 8% on Congregational Benevolences and
5 13% for Building Expenditures. Congregational Benevolences include such things as local
6 ministries, mercy ministries, schools, etc. The Current Expense category includes salaries,
7 utilities, Christian education, administration, travel, GA registration, etc.

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2003 Church Disbursements

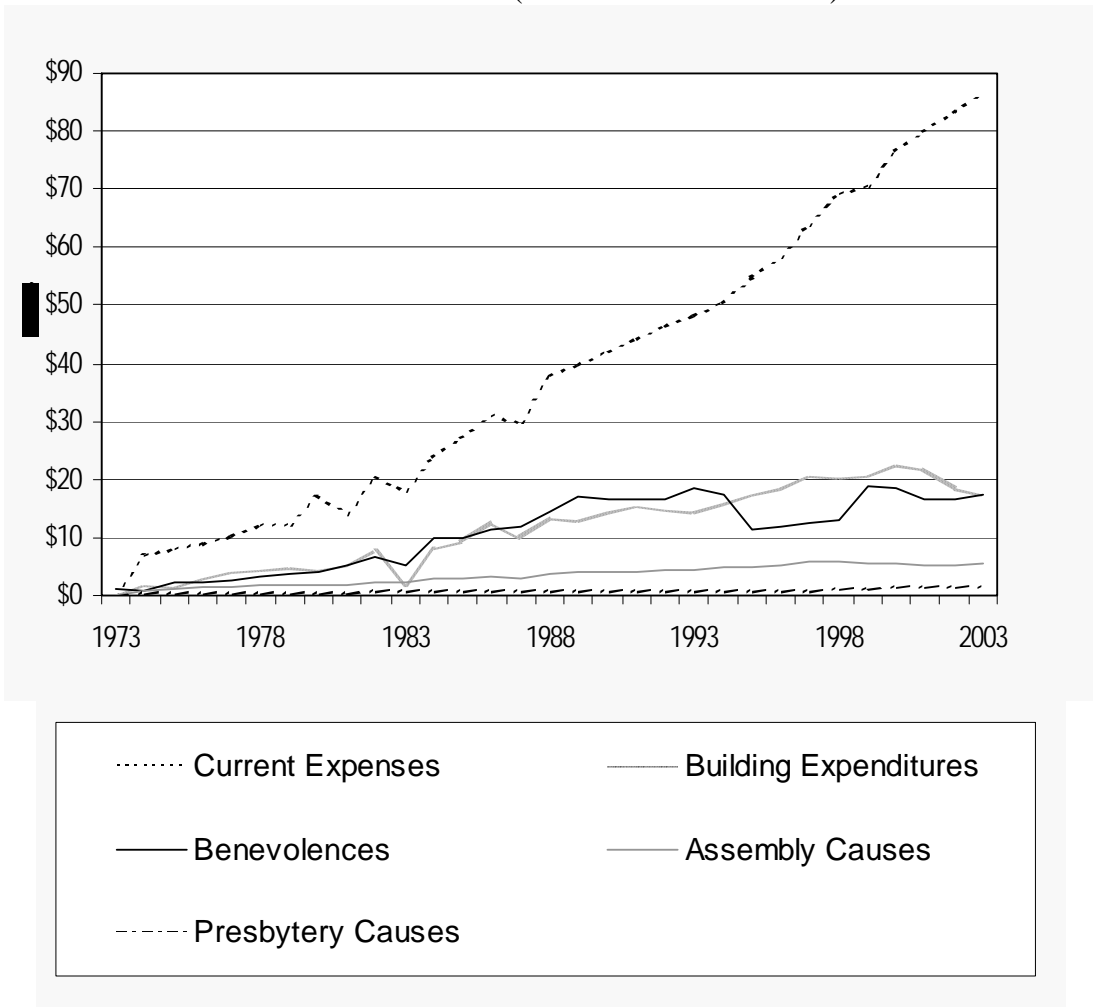


1 **Trend of Church Disbursements**

2 Over the 30+ years of the PCA's existence, church budgets have gradually shifted to the
3 breakdown shown in the last chart. On the chart below, current expenses rise sharply on the
4 top line, building and benevolences slope very slowly upward, and Assembly and presbytery
5 giving is almost flat-lined. Note: In this chart, Congregational Benevolences includes
6 giving to non-PCA ministries; the aggregate historical amount of giving to non-PCA
7 ministries is not available at the current time.

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Church Disbursements Trends
Totals for the PCA (in constant 1973 dollars)

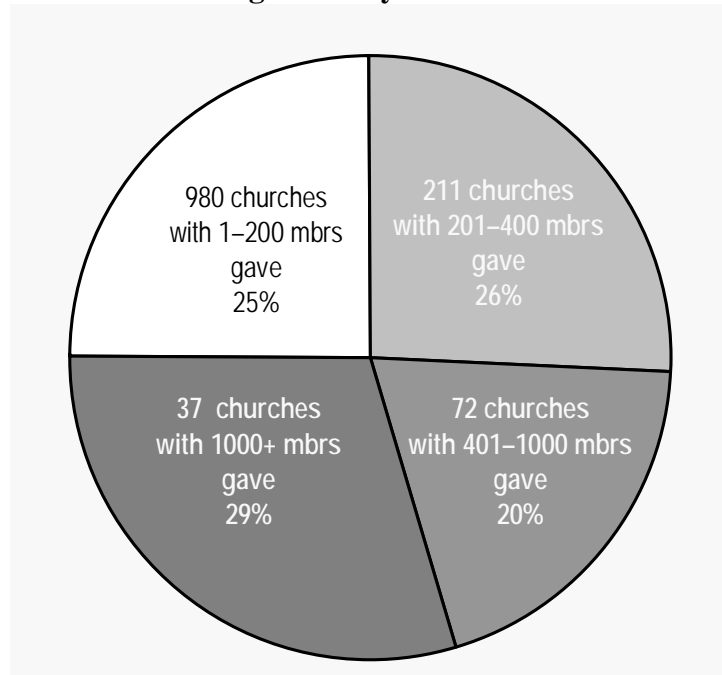


1 **Make-up of Denominational Giving**

2 Total support for denominational ministries, as reported by churches, is being shared
3 relatively evenly across church size categories. However, there is a wide variation in the
4 number of churches within each category.

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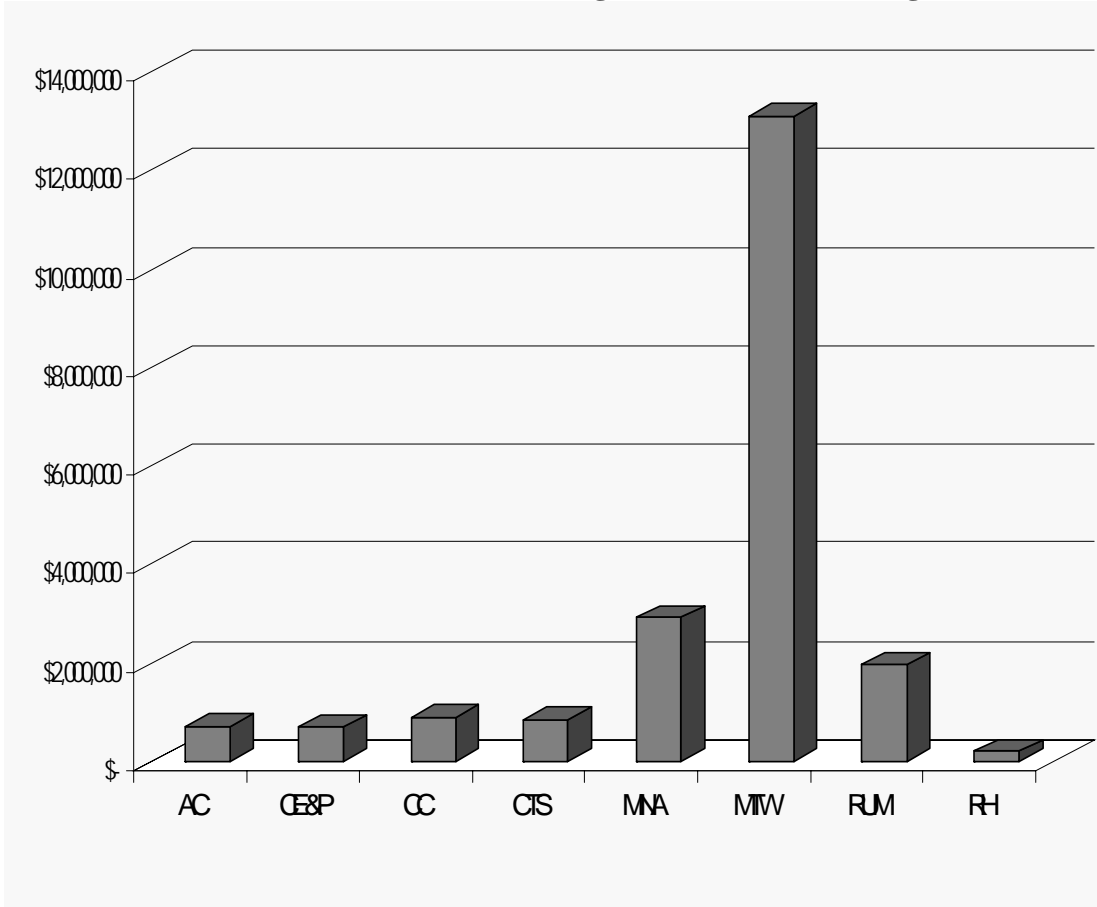
Giving to GA by Church Size



1 **Distribution of Contributions to GA Ministries**

2 Giving to Missions is a priority for many churches in the PCA. This chart is a visual look at
3 how denominational giving stacks up for each of the PCA Committees and Agencies in
4 2003. These figures indicate what churches reported giving to the denominational ministries
5 through the annual Statistics Survey. [Note: RBI and PCAF are self-funded and do not rely
6 on contributions from churches to underwrite their ministries.]

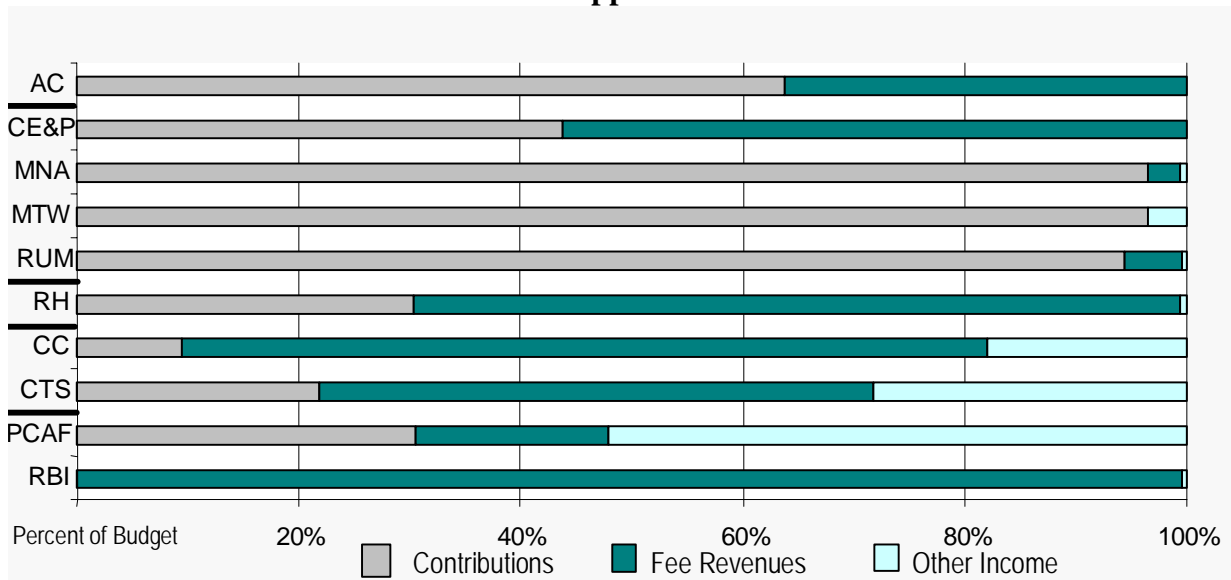
7 **Distribution of Church Giving to Committees and Agencies**



Breakdown of GA Ministry Revenues

1 The GA ministries are funded by a combination of contributions (Partnership Shares from
 2 churches, individual gifts and foundation grants), fees from services and conferences, and
 3 other income (e.g., interest/earnings income). This last chart shows the percentage of
 4 revenue types covering each ministry's 2003 budget. The figures are taken from financial
 5 reports published in the General Assembly Commissioners Handbook. Note: Most
 6 Committees and Agencies receive inadequate Partnership Share giving to fund the ministry
 7 approved by General Assembly, therefore other means of funding must be sought. Since
 8 RBI and PCAF are self-funded, they do not participate in the Partnership Shares program.

9 Breakdown of Support and Revenue



Funding Category	C&A	Contributions	% of Tot Exp	Fee Revenues	% of Tot Exp	Other Income	% of Tot Exp	Total Supp & Rev	Total Expenses*
Service	AC	\$887,856	65.9%	\$504,400	37.5%	\$1,117	0.1%	\$1,393,373	\$1,346,858
Program	CE&P	957,251	44.3%	1,229,121	56.9%	0	0.0%	2,186,372	2,159,604
Program	MNA	5,208,030	102.8%	151,557	3.0%	34,274	0.7%	5,393,861	5,064,063
Program	MTW	38,337,333	103.3%	0	0.0%	1,386,813	3.7%	39,724,146	37,109,214
Program	RUM	7,203,784	103.8%	402,446	5.8%	23,088	0.3%	7,629,318	6,938,846
Conf Center	RH	306,809	30.0%	700,952	68.6%	6,209	0.6%	1,013,970	1,022,166
Education	CC	2,000,156	10.2%	15,323,266	78.3%	3,793,613	19.4%	21,117,035	19,570,203
Education	CTS	1,782,029	21.7%	4,090,963	49.9%	2,326,067	28.4%	8,199,059	8,198,885
Self-funded	PCAF	161,741	31.0%	91,768	17.6%	276,529	53.0%	530,038	521,335
Self-funded	RBI	0	0.0%	1,093,942	94.1%	4,753	0.4%	1,098,695	1,162,126

*Adjusted for depreciation and capital expenditures