



600 Shaftesbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
Toll Free 1-866-888-6785
T: 204-888-6781
F: 204-831-5675
E: office@mennonitechurch.ca
W: www.mennonitechurch.ca

Final Report on 2012 Mennonite Church Canada Congregational Survey

Introduction

The congregational survey sent out in October 2012 received 135 responses, representing 60% of our Mennonite Church Canada congregations and 65% of our members. This summary report conveys the most helpful data (and data analysis) which can be extracted from a 60% survey response. This survey is meant to be conducted annually and future reports will therefore include comparative figures which will make the data even more useful.

The survey questions related to births, deaths, baptisms, language usage and ethnic diversity require more comprehensive data for accurate analysis. This comprehensive data is available elsewhere (i.e. in Area Churches, Formation or Witness) and only brief summary remarks will be offered here.

To make the statistics as useful as possible, different reporting styles have been employed. In some cases this means using percentages; in other cases, this means using numbers. In some cases, this means extrapolating from the collected data; in other cases, this means using only actual reported results.

Births, Deaths, Baptisms

The responding congregations had an average of two births, two deaths and two baptisms per congregation.

Ethnic Diversity

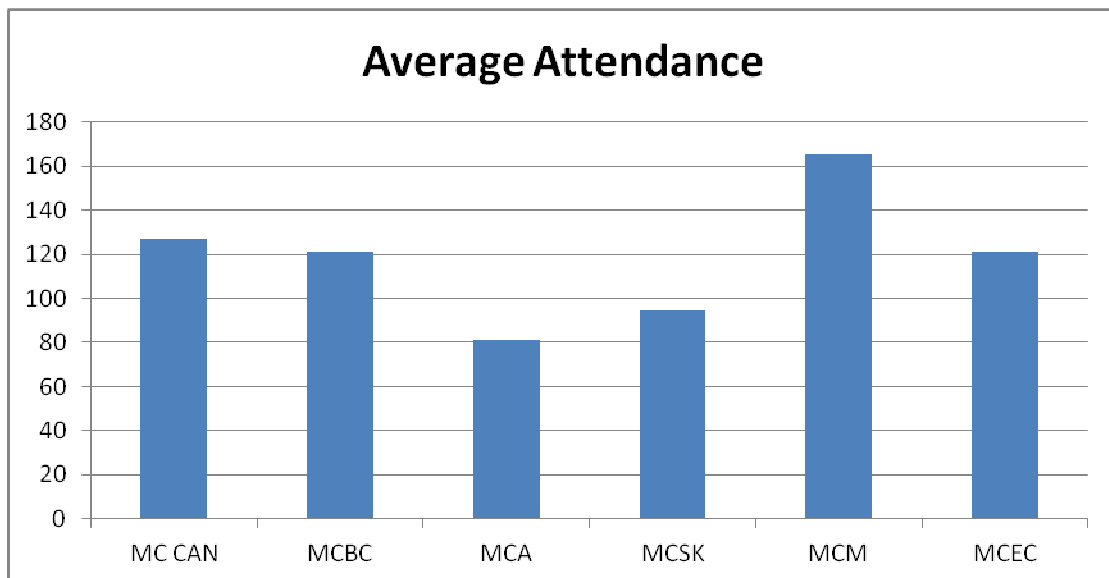
In total, survey figures indicate that almost 10% (2,500 of 27,000) of those who attend MC Canada congregations are of non-European ethnicity. 75% of our congregations have at least a few attendees of non-European ethnicity.

Languages

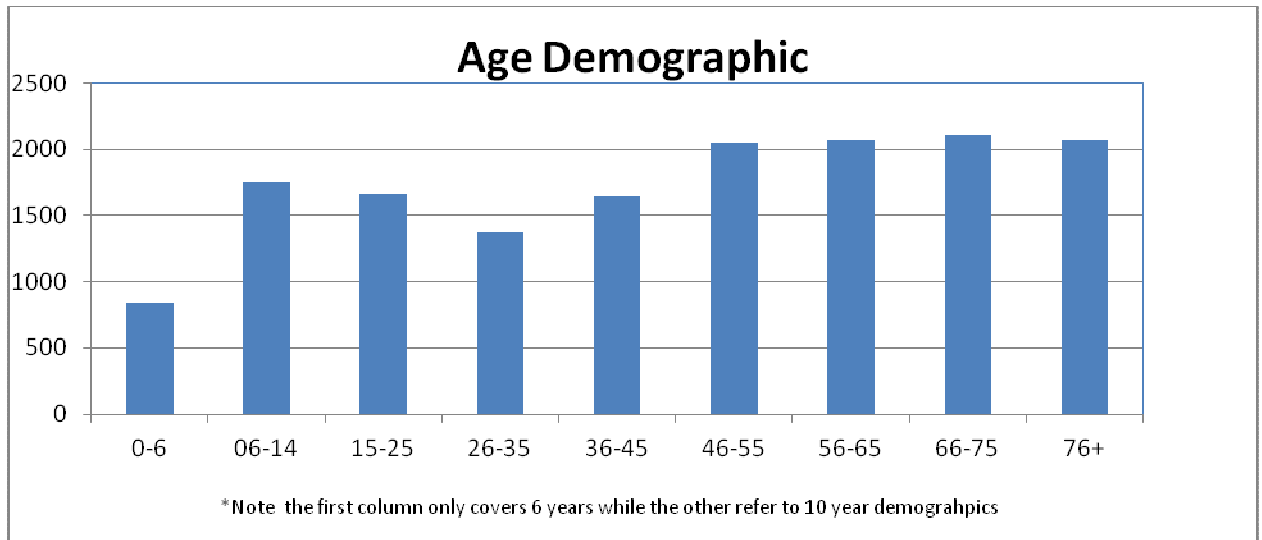
In total, 23% of our congregations use a primary language other than English (either with or without English). Information gathered from other sources indicates that MC Canada congregations worship in sixteen different languages.

Attendance

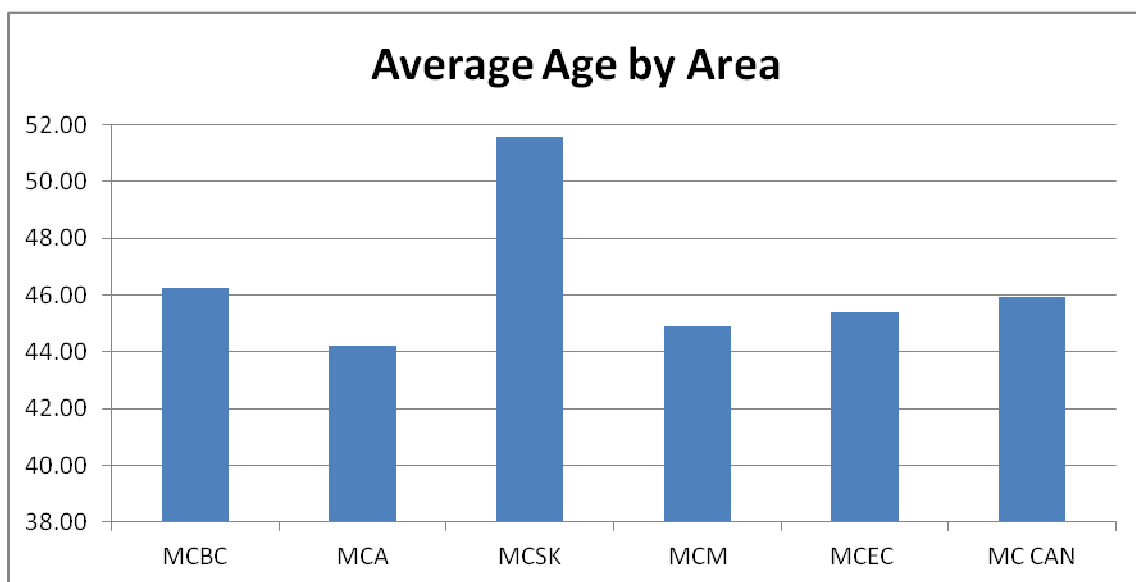
The estimated weekly attendance at our MC Canada congregations is 27,000, which averages out to 120 attendees per congregation. The average age of MC Canada's attendees is 46. While this reflects an aging demographic, it is significantly lower than the national average age for church attendees (59) and much lower than the average ages reported by mainline Canadian denominations (70). MC Canada's average is similar to figures reported by most evangelical denominations. The graph below shows the average attendance in each of the Area Churches, with MC Manitoba having a significantly higher average attendance.



The total percentage of attendees under the age of 30 is 31%, or almost a third of our attendees, which is a very positive result when compared to many churches in Canada. Only 30% of our congregations have a significantly aging demographic (i.e. at least two-thirds of attendees are over 50), which means that 70% of our congregations have a relatively balanced age demographic (with an average age of 40 or less). The graph below reflects both the aging demographic and the relative balance in age groups. Of particular interest may be the slightly lower numbers in the 26-35 age demographic.



Looking at the age demographic in our Area Churches, we see that approximately 37% of congregations west of Manitoba (roughly the same in all three Area Churches) are significantly aging (average age well over 60), while only 20% of Manitoba congregations are aging, and 27% of MCEC congregations. However, as seen in the graph below, the overall average age in MC Saskatchewan is significantly higher than in other Area Churches, and MC Alberta has the lowest overall age average.





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MC Canada-produced worship materials

The most commonly used MC Canada-produced worship materials are: Leader¹ magazine (80% of congregations use this regularly), special Sunday worship service materials (57%), Advent/Epiphany and Lent at home devotional materials (35%), and Season of Prayer (24%).

Conclusion

The data collected in this initial congregational survey suggests that Mennonite Church Canada congregations are doing well. While we know that long-term trends indicate declining numbers and an aging demographic, it is clear that we have the time for thoughtful analysis on how to face the paradigm shifts which will happen in the wider church this century. The future of the church, and of Mennonite Church Canada, will look different and we will need to be creative in exploring options for that future. I hope this survey can be one of the tools we use for that exploration.

Vic Thiessen
Executive Minister, Church Engagement
April, 2013

¹ Produced by MennoMedia with representation from Mennonite Church Canada