



Canadian Evangelical Congregational Full-time and Part-time Staffing Complements, 2003–2009

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Grace Tabernacle could be any Canadian evangelical congregation. It has a senior or lead pastor who does preaching and leadership development, a youth pastor, a family ministries pastor, a worship pastor, an administrator, and a custodian. This may seem like a lot of people but only the senior pastor and the administrator are full-time. Five years ago the church brought on the youth pastor so the senior pastor could hand off that ministry. Four years ago it hired the person who was leading worship for 10 hours a week so it knew worship was being looked after instead of relying on volunteers. Sunday school was growing and the church could not find anyone to be a volunteer Sunday School superintendent, so a 25-hour-a-week family ministries pastor position was created.

Grace Tabernacle's staffing is changing in response to declining volunteerism along with rising congregational expectations. Like other congregations, it is bolstering its staff with specialized, part-time ministers. At the same time, full-time positions are in decline. Exactly what is happening with Canadian evangelical full- and part-time staffing complements and what might it mean for ministry? These are the questions that this paper sets out to answer.

These are the major findings of this paper:

- The percentage of congregations without any salaried staff grew between 2003 and 2009.
- Both urban and rural congregations tended to reduce their full-time staffing complements.
- Both urban and rural congregations tended to add part-time staff.
- Both urban and rural converted some full-time positions to part-time ones.

Methodology

Since 2000, the Canadian Charities Directorate has been making Charity Information Returns (CIR) available online.¹ CIRs track more than 200 pieces of financial and program data including staffing levels and compensation.² This paper will consider just two:

- Line 300: The number of permanent, full-time, compensated positions in the fiscal period. This number should represent the number of positions the charity had including both managerial positions and others, and should not include independent contractors; and
- Line 370: The number of part-time or part-year (for example, seasonal) employees the charity employed during the fiscal period.³

¹ <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/ebci/haip/srch/advancedsearch-eng.action>.

² See "Registered Charity Information Return" (T3010) (<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/formspubs/prioryear/t3010b/t3010b-09e.pdf>), accessed May 10, 2011) for the most recent version of the CIR under consideration in this paper. See also "Completing the Registered Charity Information Return" (<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/formspubs/prioryear/t4033b-09e.pdf>, accessed May 10, 2011).

³ Three versions of the CIR were used to collect data between 2003 and 2009: T3010A-03 (<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/formspubs/prioryear/t3010a/t3010a-03e.pdf>, accessed May 10, 2011); T3010A-05 (<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/formspubs/prioryear/t3010a/t3010a-05e.pdf>, accessed May 10, 2011).



This paper looks at Canadian evangelical congregations that, for the purposes of this paper, are defined as congregations affiliated with one of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's (EFC) 39 affiliate denominations.⁴ The dataset included 5,456 congregations that had a CIR posted online for at least one of the fiscal years from 2003 to 2009 on April 21, 2011.⁵ These 5,456 congregations make up about three-quarters of the congregations affiliated with one of the EFC's affiliate denominations, and approximately half of all Canadian evangelical congregations.⁶

Given that the median budgets of rural congregations are roughly half those of urban congregations, and that salaries are usually the largest line item in a congregation's budget, I hypothesized that a congregation's setting would influence its staffing.⁷ Therefore it was decided to segment the data into urban and rural congregations. A congregation was identified as rural if the second character of its postal code registered with the Charities Directorate was a zero (per Canada Post procedures) and as urban otherwise.⁸ Appendix A describes the sample further according to denomination, province, and setting.

I categorized congregations for both full- and part-time staffing complements as follows: 0 staff, 1 staff, 2 staff, 3 staff, 4 staff, and 5 or more staff.⁹

There are two types of analysis that this paper will follow as we compare evangelical congregational staffing complements in 2003 and 2009. First we will look at the difference in the distributions of staffing complements in 2003 and 2009. Second, we will follow the changes in staffing complements for congregations according to their full-time staffing categories in 2003. This means that when we consider changes in part-time staffing it will be in light of the changes to full-time staffing.

Extra attention will be given to the situation where a congregation has no full-time staff because these congregations will likely find it more difficult to carry on their ministries than those with full-time staff.

When considering a paper on staffing and evangelical congregations one naturally thinks of pastoral staff. However, staff, for the purpose of this study, means all staff, not just clergy. The CIR data do not segment its data according to job descriptions. We are still, however, able to make useful inferences about the meaning of staffing levels and changes to these levels based on experience. We know, for instance, that, typically, the first full-time employee of a congregation is a pastor. This does not mean that the inference is true in all cases, but when we

arc.gc.ca/formspubs/prioryear/t3010a/t3010a-05e.pdf, accessed May 10, 2011); and T3010B (09) (<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/formspubs/prioryear/t3010b/t3010b-09e.pdf>, accessed May 10, 2011). The compensation line numbers vary from form to form but the line descriptions are materially the same.

⁴ See <http://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/netcommunity/page.aspx?pid=848> (accessed May 10, 2011) for a list of the EFC's affiliate denominations. See Appendix A table 4 for the sample's denominational distribution of these congregations.

⁵ <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/ebsi/haip/srch/advancedsearch-eng.action>.

⁶ There are between 11,000 and 12,000 evangelical congregations in Canada.

⁷ For a discussion of urban and rural congregational incomes, see Rick Hiemstra, "Canadian Evangelical Congregational Income, 2003–2008" *Church & Faith Trends* 3:1 (February 2010): 13 (<http://files.efc-canada.net/min/rc/cft/V03I01/CECI-2003-2008.pdf>, accessed May 10, 2011).

⁸ Canada Post has urbanized New Brunswick postal codes. There are many evangelical congregations in a rural setting in New Brunswick, but the general rule was followed for the analysis in this paper rather than trying to make an independent determination of which New Brunswick congregations were urban and which were rural. Urban and rural counts will not, therefore, add up to counts for the entire dataset because New Brunswick congregations are excluded from urban and rural calculations.

⁹ Where no staffing data (missing values) were reported those missing values were deemed to be zero for the purpose of this study.



have the benefit of such a large sample, we can be reasonably confident that the descriptions of central tendencies will have a useful correlation with what we know experientially to be typical. This is especially true when we are dealing with smaller staffing complements.

Full-time Staff

Full-time staff form the foundation of most congregations' staffing complements. As we will see, however, for the typical congregation this foundation is weakening. There were more congregations without any full-time staff in 2009 than in 2003, and the overall trend was toward reducing full-time staffing complements. In examining these trends we will first look at the distribution of full-time staffing complements in 2003 and 2009, noting differences. We will pay particular attention to the situation where a congregation reported no full-time staff. We will then look at the changes in full-time staffing according to full-time staffing categories in 2003. We will examine these changes in two ways. First, we will look at how full-time staffing complements changed for congregations in the different full-time staffing categories in 2003. Second, we will examine the composition of the group of congregations that made additions and the group of congregations that made reductions.

Distribution of Full-time Staffing Complements in 2003 and 2009

We will look the percentage distribution of full-time staffing complements between 2003 and 2009, first for urban congregations and then for rural ones. **For urban congregations only the zero full-time staffing category made percentage gains between 2003 and 2009, growing from 10.8% to 16.9% (see charts 1 and 2). The percentage share of every other staffing category was slightly smaller in 2009 than in 2003.**

Chart 1. Percentage distribution of urban full-time staffing complements, 2003

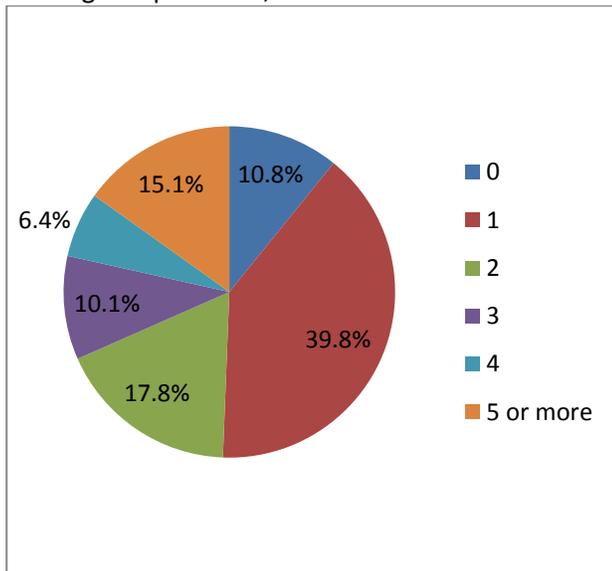
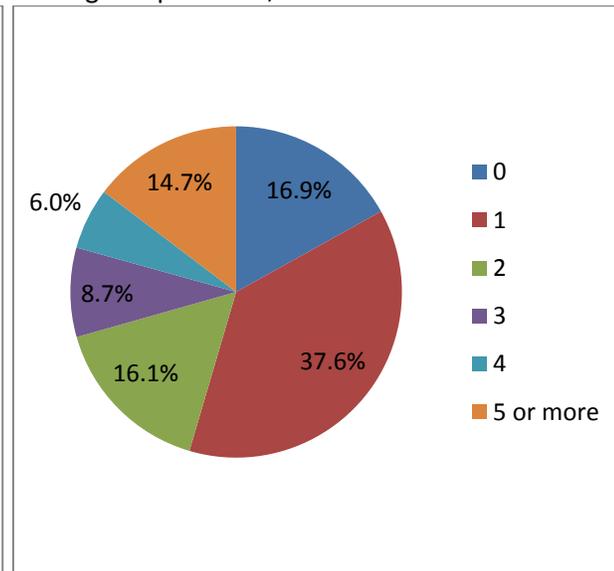


Chart 2. Percentage distribution of urban full-time staffing complements, 2009



As with urban congregations, the only full-time staffing category that grew between 2003 and 2009 for rural congregations was the zero full-time one, rising from 18.0% to 28.2% (see charts 3 and 4). In 2009, more than three quarters of rural congregations reported 1 or fewer full-time staff compared with just more than half of urban congregations.



Chart 3. Percentage distribution of rural full-time staffing complements, 2003

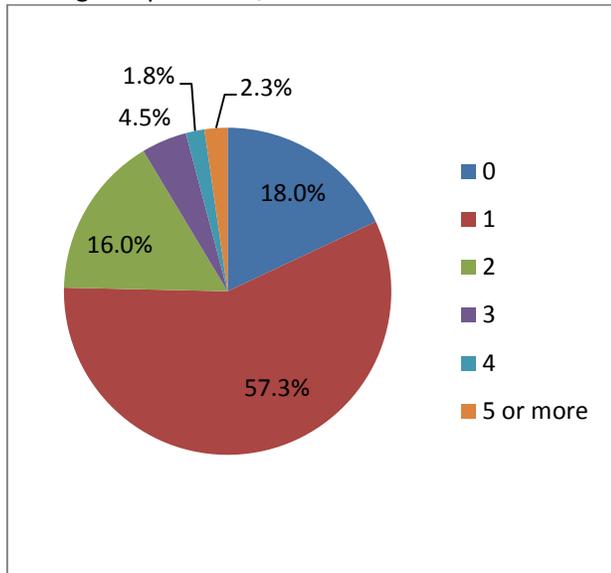
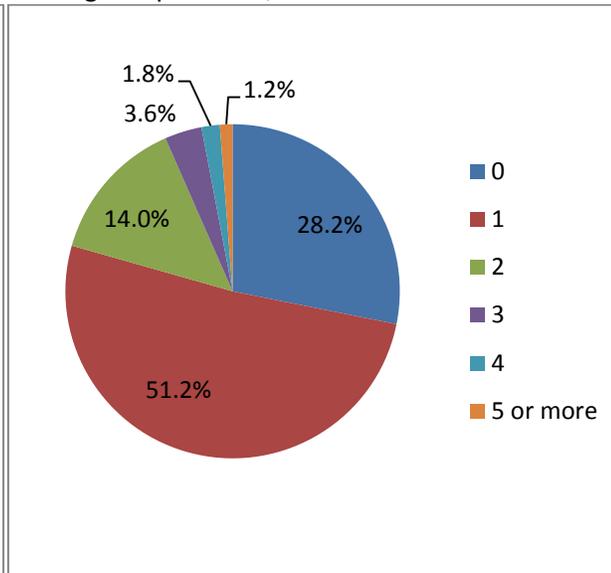


Chart 4. Percentage distribution of rural full-time staffing complements, 2009



Rural congregations tend to have smaller budgets than urban ones, so a higher percentage of rural congregations with zero full-time staff is not in itself surprising. However the trend toward smaller or no full-time staffing complements for both rural and urban congregations is surprising. We know that the income trajectory for congregations over this period has, as a whole, been positive.¹⁰ We expected that congregations with growing income would hire staff, some of which would be full-time. This expected growth in full-time hiring, however, did not happen.

It is difficult to say what might constitute a full-time staffing shortage for a congregation without knowing its particular staffing needs. Some denominations (for example, some Plymouth Brethren and some Mennonite groups) tend not to hire clergy.¹¹ Even if some traditions tend not to hire clergy, most congregations that grow past 40 or 50 members will have administrative needs beyond what can reasonably be expected from volunteers. Having pastoral and administrative needs does not necessarily mean that a congregation will meet these needs with full-time staff. However, most congregations will find that there is a benefit to having at least one person giving consistent full-time oversight to the ministries of the congregation. For this reason, we believe that an absence of full-time staff can reasonably be understood to be a shortage.

Congregations with Zero Full-time Staff

Between 2003 and 2009, the percentage of congregations, both urban and rural, reporting no full-time staff grew. While there was a greater percentage of rural congregations, 28.2%, without full-time staff in 2009 than urban ones, 16.9%, the rate of growth in congregations without full-time staff was roughly the same for both settings, at just more than 50%.

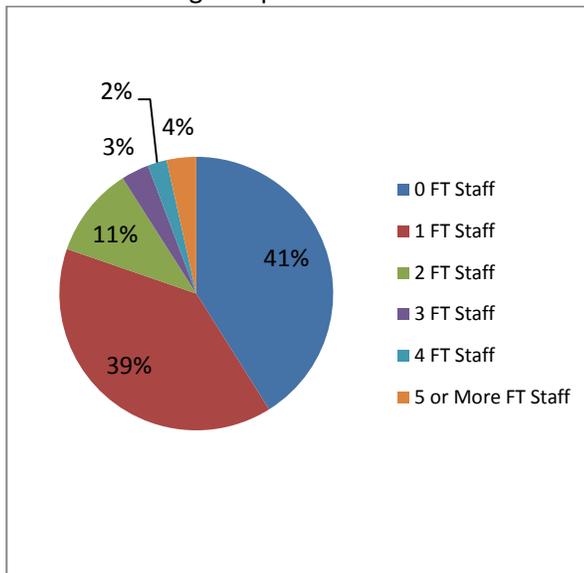
¹⁰ Hiemstra, "Canadian Evangelical Congregational Income, 2003–2008."

¹¹ All of the denominations included in this sample tend to hire clergy for their congregations. See Appendix A.



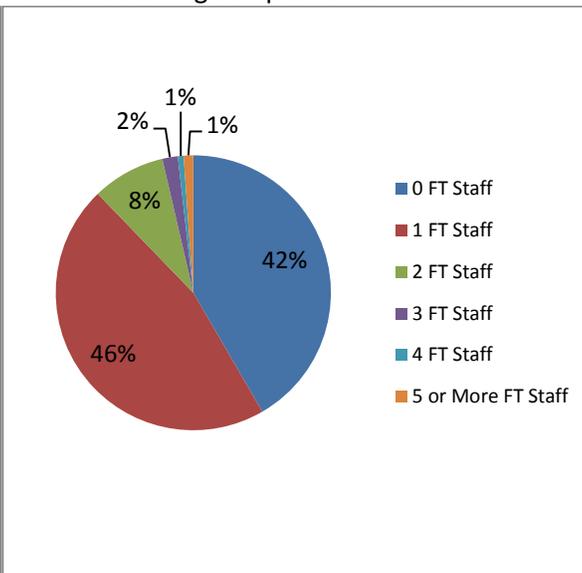
Usually when one tracks changes in growth it is the starting point, in this case the year 2003, that would serve as the reference point (and that is what we will do later on). In the case of zero full-time staff it is also helpful to the question “What full-time staffing levels did the congregations without full-time staff in 2009 have in 2003?” This helps us get at whether we had big congregations, with big staffing complements, or small congregations, with small staffing complements, that are finding themselves in the situation where they have lost all of their full-time staff. In answer to this question, charts 5 and 6 show us congregations that fed the zero full-time staff category in 2009 were reasonably consistent for both urban and rural congregations. About two fifths previously reported zero full-time staff in 2003, another two-fifths had reported just 1 full-time staff in 2003, and the final fifth came from congregations that reported 2 or more full-time staff in 2003 (see charts 5 and 6).

Chart 5. Percentage distribution of urban congregations who reported zero full-time (FT) staff in 2009 according to their reported full-time staffing complements in 2003^a



^a For congregations that had a CIR in both 2003 and 2009.

Chart 6. Percentage distribution of rural congregations who reported zero full-time (FT) staff in 2009 according to their reported full-time staffing complements in 2003^a



^a For congregations that had a CIR in both 2003 and 2009.

Of the congregations that had full-time staff in 2003, 9.2% of urban congregations and 16.2% of rural congregations reduced those full-time complements to zero by 2009. While this looks particularly alarming for rural congregations, one must remember that a greater percentage of rural congregations had just one full-time staff, 57.3%, than urban ones, 39.8%, in 2003. When full-time staffing levels are modest it of course takes fewer reductions to get to zero.

Looking now at congregations that had zero full-time staff in 2003, 39.8% of urban congregations and 33.8% of rural congregations reported adding at least one full-time staff person by 2009 (data not shown). Further study is needed to determine why these congregations that previously had zero full-time staff added to their full-time staffing complement while others did not.



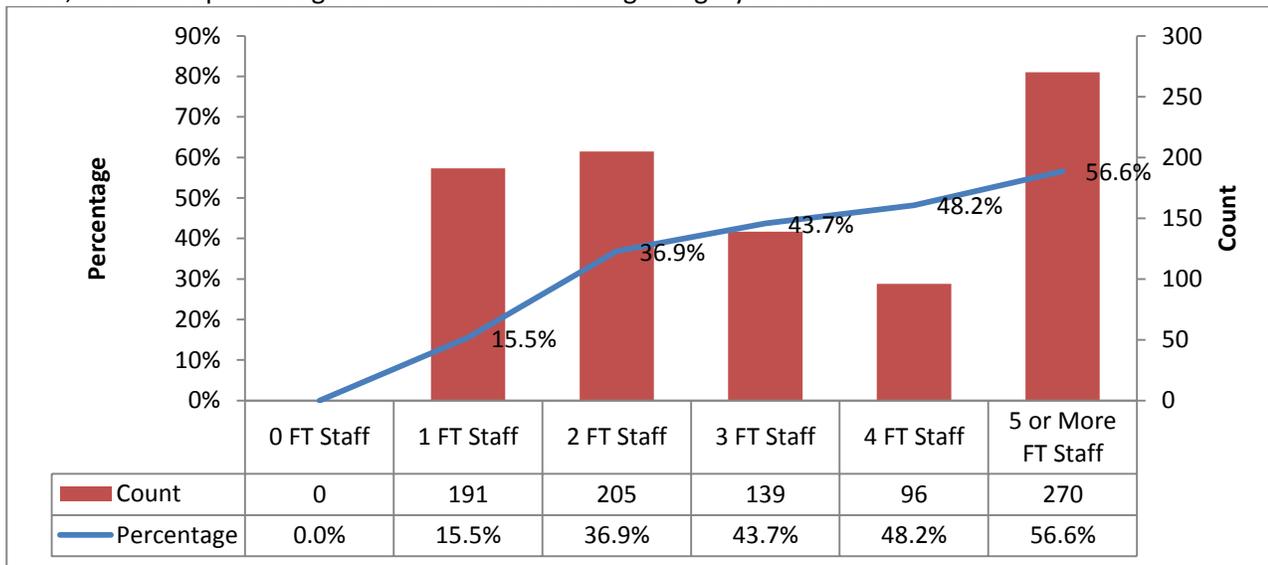
Full-time Staffing Reductions

Charts 1 through 4 showed the full-time urban and rural staffing distributions for 2003 and 2009. We have already noted where the major changes to the distributions occurred; however, this just provides us with two snapshots and does not tell us anything about the movement of congregations between full-time staffing categories.

Which congregations were adding and which were reducing full-time staff? Were there differences according to the full-time staffing complement that congregations started out with in 2003? Did the trends look different for urban and rural congregations?

The larger an urban congregation’s full-time staffing complement was in 2003, the greater the likelihood that it would reduce full-time staff, a pattern that seemed to hold for rural congregations as well (see charts 7 and 8).¹² However, irrespective of the full-time staffing complement in 2003, rural congregations were more likely to reduce their full-time staffing complements than urban ones.

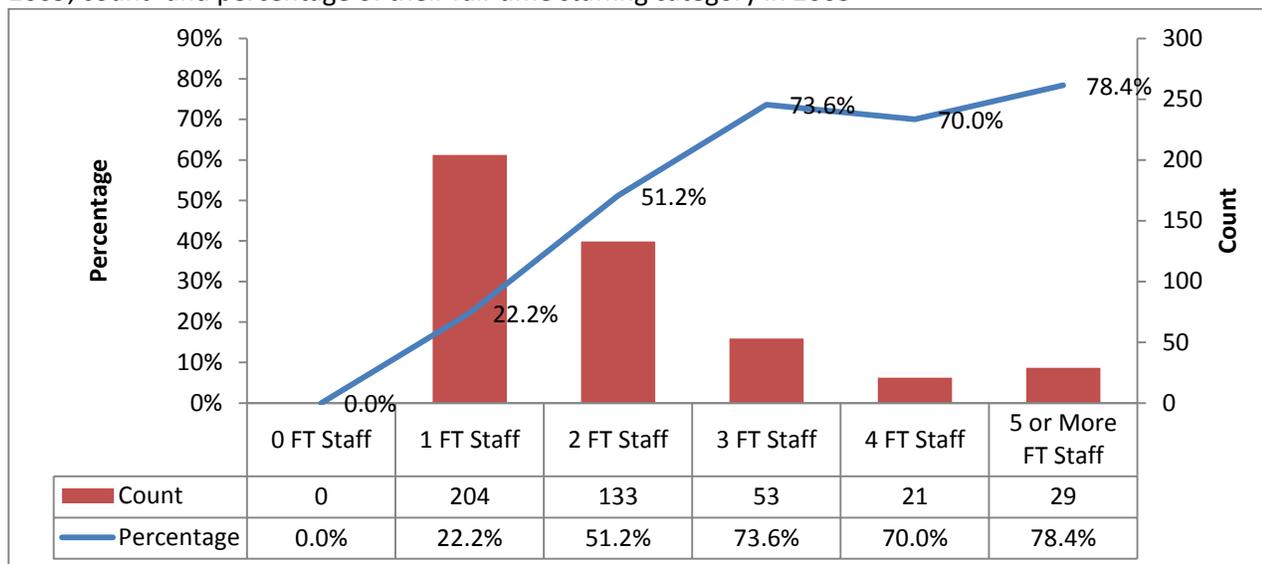
Chart 7. Urban congregations that made reductions to their full-time (FT) staffing complements between 2003 and 2009, count and percentage of their full-time staffing category in 2003



¹² The numbers of observations for rural congregations with 4 and 5 or more full-time staff (32 and 37, respectively) are too small for us to say the pattern holds for rural congregations with the same confidence as for urban ones (see chart 8).



Chart 8. Rural congregations that made reductions to their full-time (FT) staffing complements between 2003 and 2009, count^a and percentage of their full-time staffing category in 2003



^a Caution: There were very few observations for the 4 and 5 or more full-time staffing categories.

About the same percentage of urban and rural congregations made reductions to their full-time staff between 2003 and 2009, 28.9% and 27.6% respectively. How does this result arise when rural congregations in any given staffing category in 2003 were more likely to make reductions than the congregations in the corresponding urban full-time staffing category? The answer is that the distributions of full-time staffing categories in 2003 were different for urban and rural congregations. Rural congregations disproportionately have small full-time staffing complements, while urban congregations tend to have larger ones. Though rural congregations are more likely to make reductions according to their full-time staffing category in 2003, the size of the category from which these bigger percentage bites are taken makes the difference in the overall percentage of congregations making reductions. By examining the counts in charts 7 and 8 one can see the differences in the contributions to the total number of reducing congregations for urban and rural churches according to full-time staffing category in 2003.

Full-time Staffing Additions

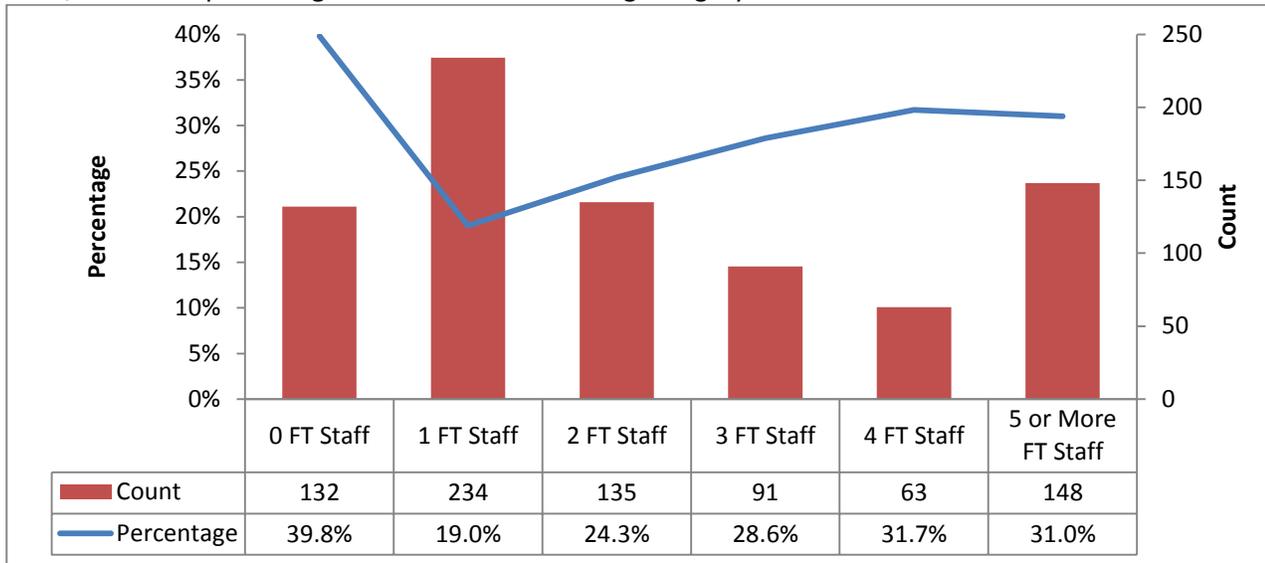
While the percentages of congregations making full-time staffing reductions were similar for urban and rural settings, a greater percentage of urban congregations, 25.8%, made additions than did rural congregations, 14.4%.

The patterns of additions across the full-time staffing categories in 2003 are different as well. We know that, of those congregations that did not have full-time staff in 2003, more than a third had added full-time staff by 2009. Such a large percentage of additions within this category of zero full-time staffing in 2003 suggests it was a high priority for congregations to have a least one person giving full-time oversight to the ministries of a congregation.

When we consider the other (1 or more) full-time staffing categories for urban and rural congregations, we see two different patterns emerging. **As one views urban full-time staffing complements in 2003 moving from small to large, congregations were more likely to have made full-time staffing additions by 2009** (see chart 9). This trend is similar to, albeit weaker than, what we saw for urban congregations that made reductions. This suggests that there is a greater level of full-time staffing level volatility among larger urban congregations than among smaller ones.

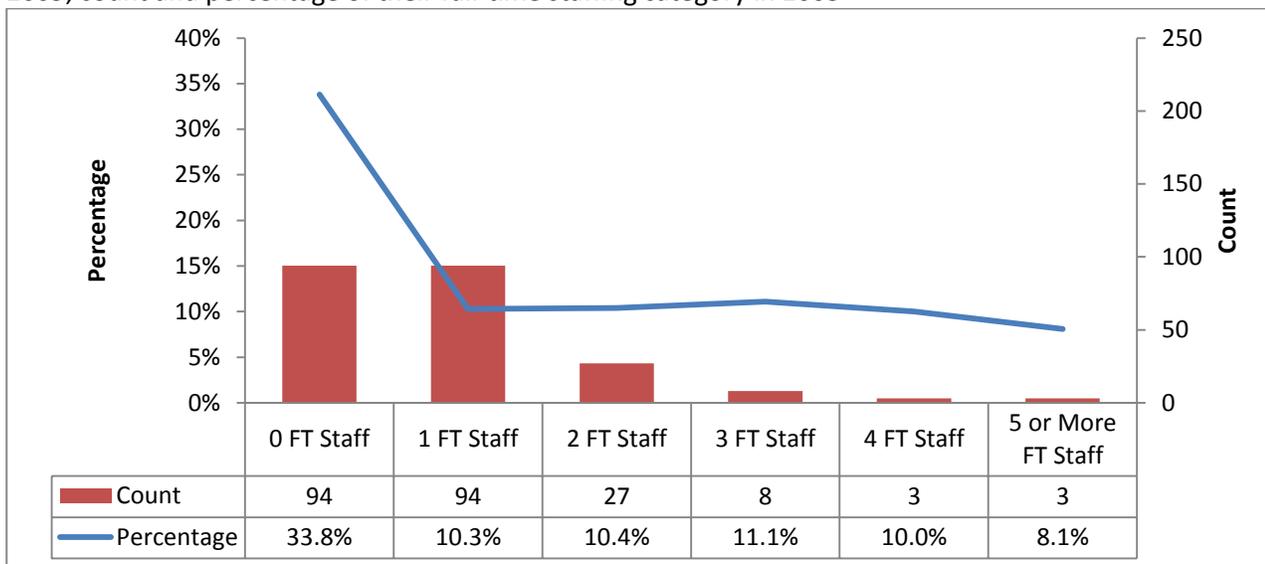


Chart 9. Urban congregations that made additions to their full-time (FT) staffing complements between 2003 and 2009, count and percentage of their full-time staffing category in 2003



When we look at the likelihood of rural congregations making additions across the full-time staffing categories in 2003, the pattern is strikingly flat at around 10% (with the exception of zero full-time staff, see chart 10). **A rural congregation that had a larger full-time staffing complement in 2003 was no more likely to make full-time staffing additions by 2009 than was a congregation with a smaller staffing complement.** When additions were made, they came almost exclusively from congregations that had zero or one full-time staff in 2003.

Chart 10. Rural congregations that made additions to their full-time (FT) staffing complements between 2003 and 2009, count and percentage of their full-time staffing category in 2003



Caution: There were very few observations for 2, 3, 4, and 5 or more full-time staffing categories.

Considering the patterns of rural additions and reductions, the trend is one that would see significant rural full-time staffing shortages. Consider that in 2009, 28.2% of rural congregations reported zero full-time staff and that



13.2% more rural congregations made reductions in full-time staff than made additions between 2003 and 2009 – and this over a time span of just 6 years! It is conceivable, if current trends continue, that a decade from now half of rural congregations will be without full-time staff, and most will be reduced to just one.

Before considering the part-time staff, it is helpful to consider the net picture of the changes that are occurring with full-time staff.

Of urban congregations, 28.9% made reductions to their full-time staff while 25.8% made additions, for a 3.1% net trend toward reductions. On the other hand, 27.6% of rural congregations made reductions to their full-time staff while just 14.4% made additions, for a 13.2% net trend toward reductions.

Most full-time staffing reductions were reductions of just one staff. Of those congregations who reported staffing reductions, 57.2% of urban congregations and 76.1% of rural congregations reported reductions of just one full-time staff. Most rural congregations, however, had just one full-time staff person to lose, and when rural congregations reduced their full-time staffing complements by 1, 57.3% of those dropped to zero full-time staff. Urban congregations, on the other hand, are making bigger staffing changes. Of urban congregations that made full-time reductions, 48.2% reduced their full-time staff by two or more, while 46.5% of those that made additions to full-time staff made additions of two or more.

Part-time Staff

When we look at part-time staff we will always track changes with an eye on the covariations in full-time staffing. We will do this in three ways. First, we will analyze how the combined full-time/part-time staffing complements for congregations have changed from 2003 to 2009. Second, we will group congregations into one of three full-time staffing change categories (reduced full-time staff, no change in full-time staff, and added full-time staff) and look more closely at how their part-time staffing complement changed over the same period. Finally, we will look at how part-time staffing complements have changed according to full-time staffing categories in 2003.

Distribution of Part-time Staffing Complements in 2003 and 2009

Charts 11 and 12 show that **regardless of setting (urban or rural) or year (2003 or 2009), congregations with smaller full-time staffing complements were less likely to have part-time staff.** There are two rural full-time categories, however, that need further comment. First, there was an apparent rise in the likelihood that rural congregations with four full-time staff did not have part-time staff (see chart 12). The difference was modest enough and the number of observations were small enough (12) that this should not be regarded as a true deviation from the general trend seen in the chart. Second, rural congregations with no full-time staff in 2003 were more likely to have part-time staff than those with 1 full-time staff, breaking with our general trends. Here again the variance is modest (although the number of observations is sufficient) and the general observation is still useful for understanding how likely it is that a congregation in a particular staffing category was to have part-time staff in comparison with congregations in other full-time staffing categories.



Chart 11. Percentage distribution of urban part-time (PT) staffing complements by full-time (FT) staffing complements, 2003 and 2009

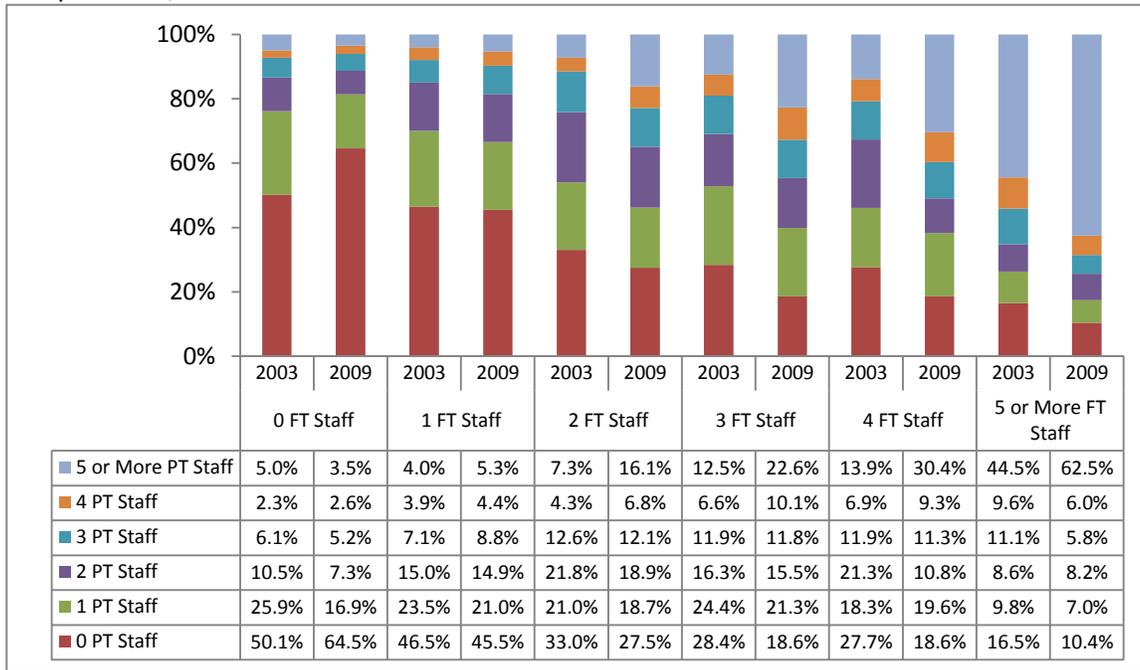
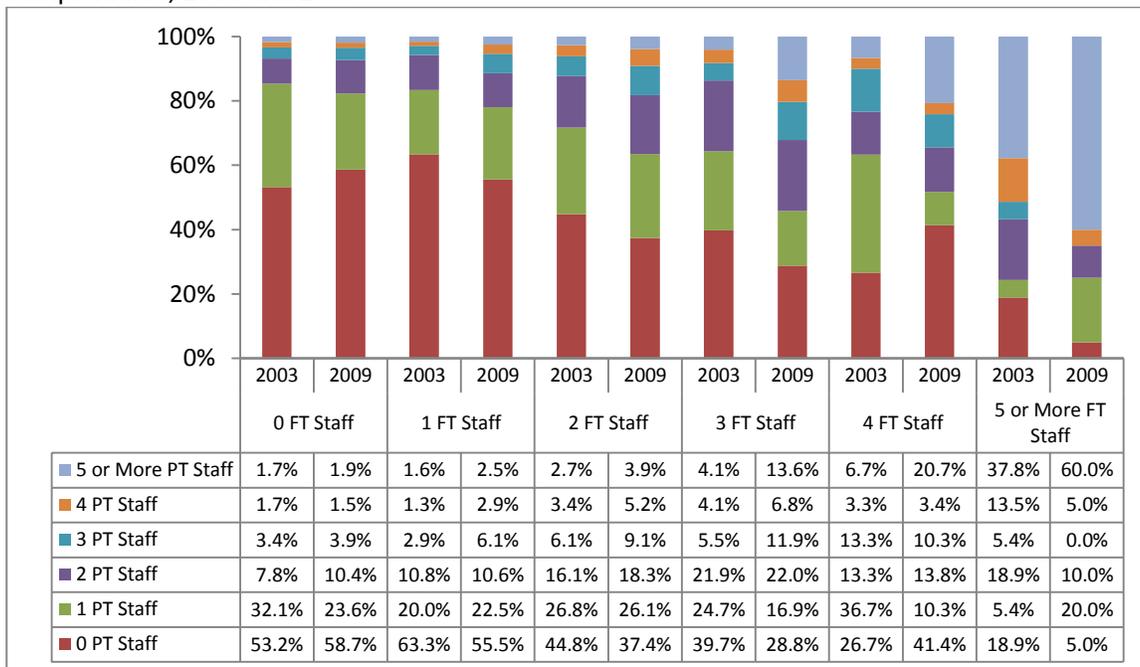


Chart 12. Percentage distribution of rural part-time (PT) staffing complements by full-time (FT) staffing complements, 2003 and 2009^a



^a Caution: There were very few observations for 4 and 5 or more full-time staffing categories. See chart 14.



Charts 13 and 14 show that **most congregations without part-time staff were in the zero and 1 full-time staffing categories**. In 2009, 76.4% of urban and 86.4% of rural congregations without full-time staff were in the zero and 1 full-time staffing categories, up from 64.7% and 82.3% respectively in 2003.

Chart 13. Urban part-time (PT) staffing complements by full-time (FT) staffing complements, 2003 and 2009

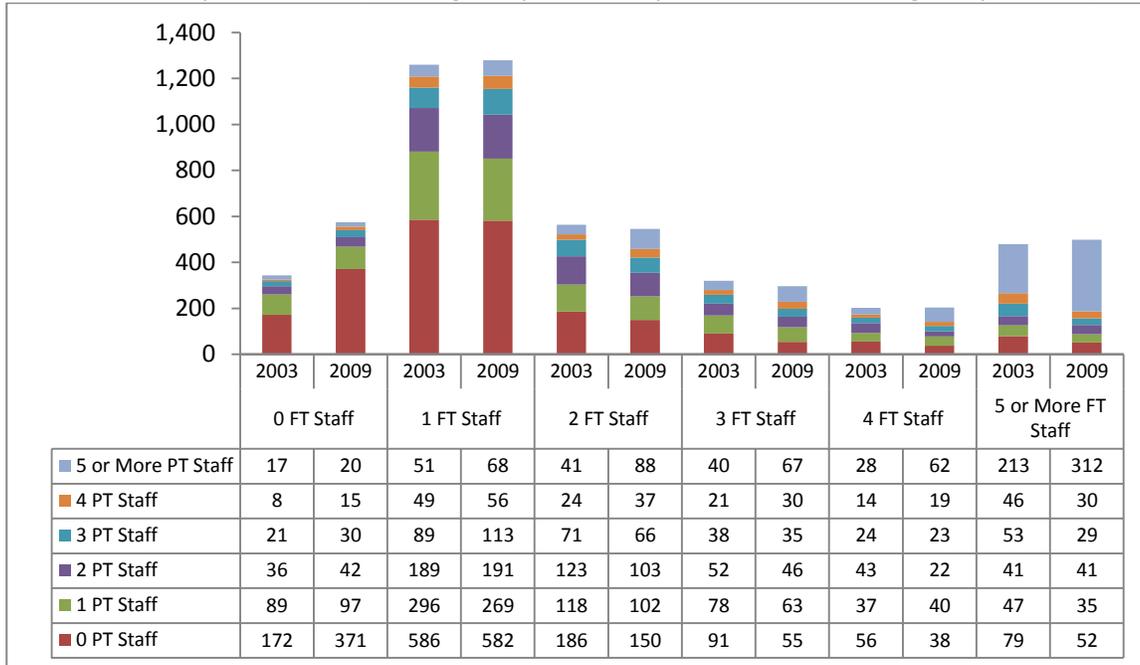
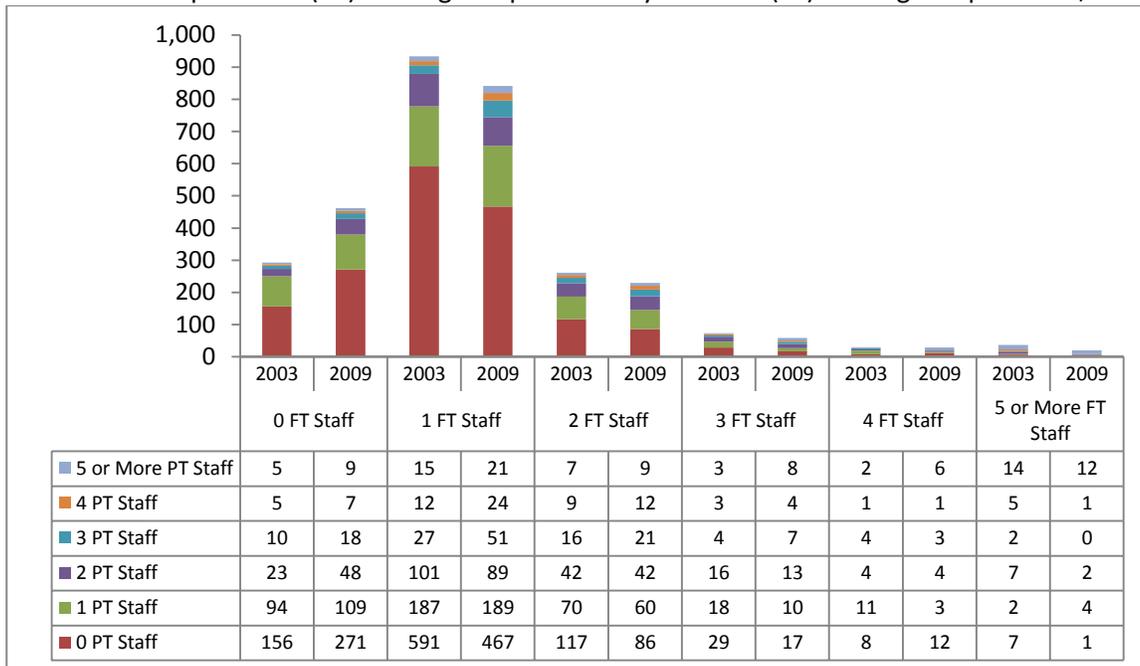


Chart 14. Rural part-time (PT) staffing complements by full-time (FT) staffing complements, 2003 and 2009





The percentage of congregations that reported neither full- nor part-time staff is growing. In 2003, 5.4% of urban congregations and 9.6% of rural ones reported zero staff. By 2009 these numbers had risen to 10.9% and 16.5% respectively.

Part-time Staffing Additions and Reductions, 2003 to 2009

While full-time staffing levels were decreasing, part-time staff levels were increasing. There were 3.1 percentage points more urban congregations reporting reductions than additions in full-time staff between 2003 and 2009; however, for part-time staff 15.0 percentage points more urban congregations reported additions than reductions (see table 1). The trend was broadly similar among rural congregations, with 13.2 percentage points more reductions than additions in full-time staffing complements and 8.2 percentage points more additions than reductions in part-time staffing (see table 2).

Table 1. Percentage of urban congregations reporting changes in full-time and part-time staffing levels between 2003 and 2009^a

		Full-time Staff			Total
		Reduced	No Change	Added	
Part-time staff	Reduced	6.4%	10.0%	8.3%	24.7%
	No change	7.5%	21.0%	7.1%	35.6%
	Added	15.0%	14.3%	10.4%	39.7%
Total		28.9%	45.3%	25.8%	100.0%

^a Numbers may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Table 2. Percentage of rural congregations reporting changes in full-time and part-time staffing levels between 2003 and 2009^a

		Full-time staff			Total
		Reduced	No change	Added	
Part-time Staff	Reduced	5.9%	10.3%	4.9%	21.1%
	No change	10.5%	33.7%	5.5%	49.7%
	Added	11.2%	14.3%	4.0%	29.3%
Total		27.6%	58.0%	14.4%	100.0%

^a Numbers may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Interestingly, for both urban and rural settings, **it was the congregations who either reduced or maintained their full-time staffing complements that were more likely to increase their part-time staffing complements.** In the cases where full-time staff complements were reduced and part-time staff were added, it is likely that full-time positions were being replaced by part-time ones. This does not necessarily mean that part-time staff would be stepping into the identical positions that were being vacated by full-time staff. When there are changes in congregational staffing there are often changes in a congregation's ministry foci. Staffing changes will often result in a realignment of ministry responsibilities for some or all of a congregation's staff.

While the percentage of urban congregations that reduced both full- and part-time staffing complements was slightly higher than rural ones, 6.4% versus 5.9%, if we conversely look at the percentage of congregations that were growing in both full- and part-time staffing complements, urban congregations clearly have the advantage. Between 2003 and 2009, 10.4% of urban congregations added both full- and part-time staff versus just 4.0% of rural ones.



Congregations, both urban and rural, were more likely to add part-time staff than to reduce them with two exceptions (see charts 15 and 16). First, congregations with zero full-time staff in 2003 were more likely to reduce their part-time staff than to add part-time. Where the congregations from the category with zero full-time staff in 2003 made full-time staffing additions between 2003 and 2009 and they made changes to their part-time staffing complements, they were four times as likely to make part-time staffing reductions as additions. This suggests that when these congregations with zero full-time staff in 2003 were adding full-time staff they were upgrading a part-time position. Second, rural congregations that had very large full-time staffing complements in 2003 (5 or more) were more likely to make part-time staffing reductions than additions. These congregations were also more likely to make full-time reductions and it suggests that the period from 2003 to 2009 was very difficult for rural congregations that started out with large staffing complements in 2003.

Chart 15. Urban congregations that made additions and reductions to their part-time staffing complements between 2003 and 2009 as a percentage of their full-time staffing category in 2003

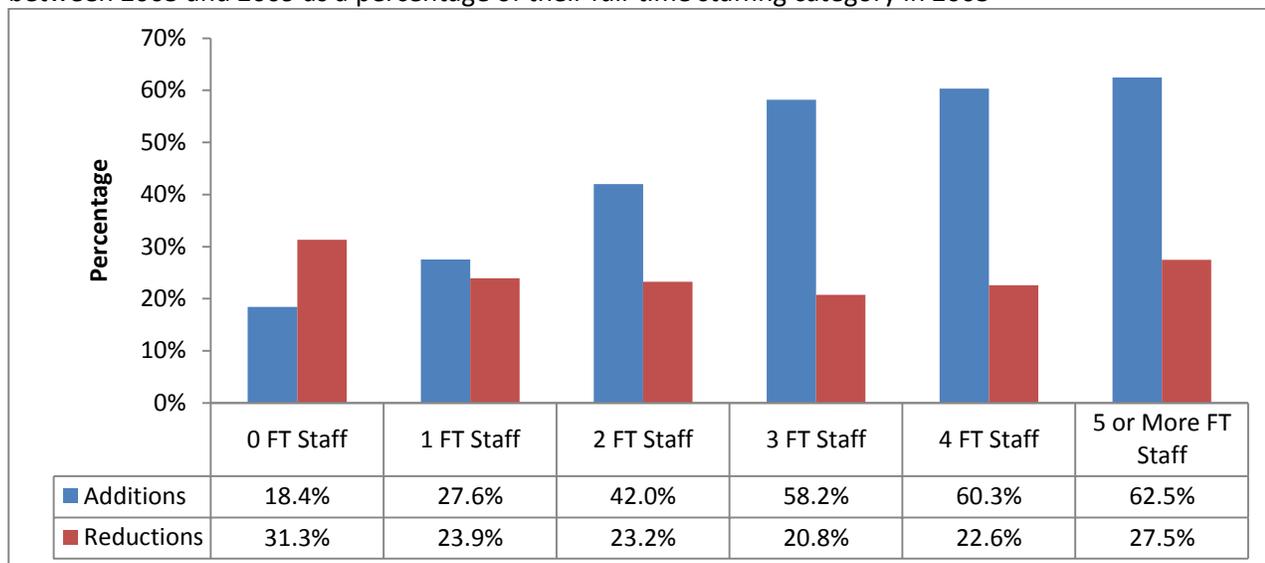




Chart 16. Rural congregations that made additions and reductions to their part-time staffing complements between 2003 and 2009 as a percentage of their full-time staffing category in 2003



Caution:

There were very few observations for 4, and 5 or more full-time staffing categories.

Overall, between 2003 and 2009, 24.7% of urban congregations reduced their part-time staffing complements while 39.7% of congregations increased them; the numbers for rural congregations were 21.1% and 29.3% respectively. In both urban and rural congregations, however, the increase in part-time staff was greatest among those congregations that reduced their full-time staff.

Of the congregations that reported a reduction in full-time staff, urban congregations reported making additions to part-time staff over reductions by a ratio of 2.4 to 1, while rural congregations showed the same trend at a ratio of 1.9 to 1.

Of the congregations that reduced full-time staffing complements between 2003 and 2009, 44.6% of urban congregations and 37.0% of rural ones added the same number or more part-time staffing positions.

How significant is this conversion? If we look at the opposite trend (congregations that appear to be converting part-time positions into full-time ones) we find that between 2003 and 2009, of the congregations that increased their full-time staffing complements, 25.1% of urban congregations and 40.0% of rural ones reduced their part-time staffing complements by an equal or greater number of positions.

Put another way, if we consider all congregations and not just those which made reductions in full-time staff between 2003 and 2009, 12.9% of urban congregations and 10.2% of rural ones appear to have converted full-time positions into one or more part-time positions between 2003 and 2009. Going the opposite direction, congregations that appear to be converting part-time positions to full-time ones, there we found only 6.4% of urban and 4.6% of rural congregations. So, on the whole, it would appear that **full-time positions were being converted to part-time ones at roughly twice the rate that part-time positions were being converted into full-time ones**. The net percentage of full- to part-time converting congregations over part-time to full-time converting congregations was 6.5% of urban congregations and 5.6% of rural ones. This seems modest, until we consider the short time period over which we observed this change – just 6 years.



The larger the urban full-time staffing complement in 2003, the more likely a congregation was to have made additions to its part-time staffing complements by 2009 (see chart 15). Rural congregations on the other hand apparently have found it increasingly difficult to add part-time staff in the higher full-time staffing categories in 2003 (see chart 16).¹³ Examining the same full-time staffing categories in 2003 for reductions in part-time staff, we see different trends. The percentage of urban congregations reporting reductions is reasonably flat across all full-time categories in 2003, meaning that an urban congregation's full-time staffing category does not appear to influence the likelihood that it would reduce part-time staff. Rural congregations with larger full-time staffing complements in 2003, on the other hand, appear more likely to reduce part-time staff than those with smaller full-time staffing complements.

Conclusions

There were more congregations going without full-time staff in 2003 than in 2009, and the shortage is more acute for rural congregations than urban ones. Assuming that smaller congregations have smaller staffing complements, it would appear that, regardless of setting, that it is the smaller congregations that are having the most trouble finding full-time staff.

While there are more congregations going without full-time staff, there is also a trend toward reducing the number of full-time staff. Congregations with larger staffing complements in 2003 were more likely to have made full-time staffing reductions by 2009 than congregations that started out with smaller full-time staffing complements. Some congregations, however, made additions. In these cases larger urban churches were more likely to make additions, while staffing size did not appear to have any effect on the likelihood that rural congregations would make full-time additions. On the whole, however, the trend was toward fewer full-time staff.

It was the congregations who either reduced or maintained their full-time staffing complements that were more likely to increase their part-time staffing complements. Full-time positions were being converted to part-time ones at roughly twice the rate that part-time positions were being converted into full-time ones. The larger the urban full-time staffing complement in 2003, the more likely a congregation was to have made additions to its part-time staffing complements by 2009.

Other studies will be needed to definitively say why some of the trends we have observed here are happening. Still, I offer these thoughts on what might be happening with staffing in our congregations.

Over the last several decades, the variety of congregational ministries has grown as has the range of competencies that congregations expect of their staff. It is not just the range of competencies that has grown, however; it is the expectation that they will be carried out with the same level of excellence that they can find in ministries that congregants can find on television and other forms of media.

I suspect that many congregations are recognizing that it is rare for these giftings and qualities to be found in one candidate. So, on the whole, we are witnessing a move from full-time generalists to part-time specialists. Some examples of common part-time specialist positions within our congregations include worship leaders, youth pastors, family ministries pastors, seniors pastors, pastors of visitation, community outreach pastors, etc. Hiring part-time specialists allow ministries to grow incrementally without congregations having to commit to a full-time

¹³ I say "apparently" because the numbers of observations for the rural congregations with 4 and 5 or more full-time staff are small.



salary. It also allows them to target people with the giftings for that particular position. This allows the general quality of ministry delivery to go up because there are fewer people on staff ministering outside their strengths. While that there are potential advantages to employing part-time specialists there are also potential disadvantages. Staff may associate their value to the congregation with the priority placed on the particular program or ministry they were hired for. Congregations have more staff to invest in and develop. Part-time staff are less likely to understand the ministry of the congregation as a whole than their full-time counterparts. Creating an expectation that part-time specialists will be hired to support the sub-ministries of a congregation may discourage the development of volunteers within the congregation.

Another reason that part-time staffing levels could be growing is the need to pick up the slack from declining volunteerism in the church. If the volunteers are not there, there will be a tendency to professionalize the ministry.

In some cases, congregations may opt for part-time staff in order to save on compensation costs; however, other studies would have to confirm or refute this.

Rural congregations appear to be having trouble attracting and retaining staff. It could be that they do not have access to the same number or quality of candidates as congregations in urban centres. It may be that they are finding it difficult to pay competitive salaries, especially when many of the candidates they will be considering come to them with substantial school debts. In many cases, part-time candidates may not be able to accept a position with a congregation unless they can find at least one additional job in order to make ends meet. Rural settings are less likely to be able to provide these additional employment opportunities.

These staffing trends also have implications for Christian Higher Education institutions. Part-time positions often have a limited ministry scope such as worship or children's ministry. Will congregations expect the same level of ministry preparation for part-time positions such as a worship pastor as they do for a senior pastor? For that matter, will part-time specialists, with more modest financial means, be reluctant to invest in educational programs designed for full-time generalists? It is likely that many of these part-time specialists are simply forgoing

formal Christian Higher Education. There is a need for Christian Higher Education programs that will allow these part-time specialists to become credentialed just in their area of specialization on a schedule and budget that recognize the limitations of the positions they occupy in our congregations. If the transition to more multi-staff congregations continues (and it seems that it will), Christian Higher Education Institutions should give more attention to training ministry leaders to work in team environments, rather than as solo pastors.

Evangelical congregational full- and part-time staffing complements are, like everything else in our culture, changing rapidly. Congregations, staff, Christian higher education institutions and denominations need to be having discussions about these changes and how they are shaping our congregational lives. There are growing staffing shortages. How will staffing needs be met in the future, particularly for rural congregations? How will we train the part-time specialists for their ministry positions? When the line between volunteer ministry and part-time specialist ministry is blurry how will congregations find ways to sustain and encourage volunteers? I trust the data in this paper provide the basis on which to begin a conversation about how we can best staff our congregations going forward.



Appendix A: The Sample

Table 1. Number of congregations reporting a Charitable Information Return, urban, rural and New Brunswick (NB), 2003 to 2009

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Urban ^a	3,167	3,219	3,273	3,325	3,379	3,395	3,399
Rural ^a	1,627	1,629	1,638	1,645	1,649	1,651	1,641
NB ^b	296	295	295	295	296	295	295
Missing	366	313	250	191	132	115	121
Total	5,456						

^a A congregation was considered rural if the second character of the postal code which was registered with the Charities Directorate on April 21, 2011 was a zero ("0").

^b Canada Post has urbanized New Brunswick postal codes. There are many evangelical congregations in a rural setting, but the general rule was followed for the analysis in this paper rather than trying to make an independent determination of which New Brunswick congregations were urban and which were rural.

Table 2. Number of urban^a congregations reporting a Charitable Information Return by province or territory, 2003 to 2009

Province ^b	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
BC	600	617	628	641	657	663	670
AB	471	480	489	491	498	499	502
SK	132	133	134	136	137	136	135
MB	187	189	190	193	194	194	191
ON	1,413	1,435	1,463	1,486	1,507	1,516	1,510
QC	144	145	149	155	160	160	162
NS	150	150	150	151	154	155	158
PE	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
NL	46	46	46	48	48	48	48
YT	5	5	5	5	5	5	4
NT	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
NU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3,167	3,219	3,273	3,325	3,379	3,395	3,399

^a A congregation was considered urban if the second character of the postal code which was registered with the Charities Directorate on April 21, 2011 was not a zero ("0").

^b Canada Post has urbanized New Brunswick postal codes. There are many evangelical congregations in a rural setting, but the general rule was followed for the analysis in this paper rather than trying to make an independent determination of which New Brunswick congregations were urban and which were rural.



Table 3. Number of rural^a congregations reporting a Charitable Information Return by province or territory, 2003 to 2009

Province ^b	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
BC	166	163	164	165	167	168	167
AB	212	213	216	216	218	219	218
SK	203	206	205	206	204	202	200
MB	132	132	132	132	133	133	132
ON	502	504	508	511	511	514	512
QC	28	28	29	30	31	31	32
NS	209	208	209	209	209	208	205
PE	21	21	21	21	21	21	20
NL	140	140	140	141	141	141	141
YT	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
NT	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
NU	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total	1,627	1,629	1,638	1,645	1,649	1,651	1,641

^a A congregation was considered rural if the second character of the postal code which was registered with the Charities Directorate on April 21, 2011 was a zero ("0").

^b Canada Post has urbanized New Brunswick postal codes. There are many evangelical congregations in a rural setting, but the general rule was followed for the analysis in this paper rather than trying to make an independent determination of which New Brunswick congregations were urban and which were rural.

Table 4. Number of congregations in sample, by denomination

Denomination	N	Percentage
Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada	973	17.8%
Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches	487	8.9%
The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada	395	7.2%
Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches	364	6.7%
Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec	339	6.2%
The Salvation Army Canada/Bermuda Territory	248	4.5%
Christian Reformed Church in North America	235	4.3%
Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches	205	3.8%
Mennonite Church Canada	198	3.6%
Church of the Nazarene in Canada	183	3.4%
Canadian Fellowship of Churches and Ministers	181	3.3%
Canadian Baptists of Western Canada	145	2.7%
Canadian National Baptist Convention	143	2.6%
Associated Gospel Churches of Canada	127	2.3%
Evangelical Free Church of Canada	124	2.3%
The Free Methodist Church in Canada	120	2.2%
Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada	119	2.2%
North American Baptist Conference	104	1.9%



Table 4 (continued)

Denomination	N	Percentage
The Wesleyan Church of Canada	92	1.7%
Vision Ministries	91	1.7%
Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland and Labrador	84	1.5%
Baptist General Conference of Canada	81	1.5%
Fellowship of Christian Assemblies of Canada	80	1.5%
Evangelical Mennonite Conference	57	1.0%
Apostolic Church of Pentecost	57	1.0%
Reformed Church in America - Canada	41	0.8%
Vineyard Resource - Canada	40	0.7%
Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church	38	0.7%
Church of God - Anderson	29	0.5%
Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches	24	0.4%
Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference	20	0.4%
Anglican Network in Canada	14	0.3%
United Brethren Church	11	0.2%
Grace Communion International (formerly the Worldwide Church of God)	5	0.1%
The Evangelical Christian Church in Canada (Christian Disciples)	2	0.0%
Total	5,456	100.0%