

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE STATISTICIAN

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THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE STATISTICIAN

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

As an annual conference statistician, you are probably already aware that the source of all churchly wisdom for United Methodists, ***The Book of Discipline***, is of little help in acquainting you with your job. It states how and when you are to be elected (Par. 603.7) and that you are to use forms prepared for your work by the General Council on Finance and Administration (Par. 606.7-8). With time and determination you might turn up a few other references to items which are to be reported on the Local Church Report form, but they are sparse and not particularly helpful.

The purpose of this manual is to provide an overview of the essential work of a statistician, some suggestions for accomplishing it and some ideas for reporting your work to the annual conference.

RELATIONSHIPS

1. One of the statistician's closest working relationships in most annual conferences is with the **conference treasurer**. In many conferences the treasurer has at least partial responsibility for collecting, checking and summarizing the information from Tables 2 and 3 of the Local Church Report, with the statistician having primary responsibility for Table 1 data. The statistician is responsible for all the data coming from the local churches and the treasurer is responsible for all the financial information pertaining to the local churches. Even where the statistician is responsible for the data from all three Tables, the treasurer's records may be consulted when checking the accuracy of the Table 2 reports. This relationship will be explored in more detail in the various sections of this manual.
2. The **conference secretary** is normally responsible for the publication of the conference journal. Since the statistician's report is a major block of material in the journal, these two officers will work together closely during the period of time when copy is being prepared for publication. (See the section on Summarizing and Reporting, later in this section.)
3. The data collected by the statistician will be useful to the **Conference Council on Finance and Administration**, the **Conference Council on Ministries or equivalent structure**, the **District Superintendents** and the **conference program agencies** in their planning responsibilities. The statistician should be alert to cultivate opportunities for sharing the data that has been collected, as well as insights about its meaning.
4. In many conferences the statistician selects **assistants** in each district to aid in the work of collecting the reports and data for that district.

REPORT FORM

Most of your work will be involved with collecting information from the "**Local Church Report to the Annual Conference.**" This report form is revised quadrennially by the church's Committee on Official Forms and Records (*Book of Discipline*, Par. 805.4c). The Committee asks for two things: 1) your suggestions regarding the items on the report -- their content, wording, format and instructions; and 2) your patience and understanding with its judgments about what items can and cannot be included on the report for general church use. The Committee receives many more suggestions than it uses; but almost all of the changes made at the beginning of each quadrennium are the result of suggestions from persons who use the forms, and a number are from conference statisticians. **Your comments and suggestions should be addressed to the Committee on Official Forms and Records, General Council on Finance and Administration, PO Box 320029, Nashville, TN 37203-0029** or by Email to Scott Brewer, sbrewer@gcfa.org or Beanie Rankin, brankin@gcfa.org.

For easy reference, a copy of the Worksheets for the Local Church Report, containing both the instructions and the items on the report, will be distributed with this manual. They will be for 2009-2012 and will first be used to collect data for the year 2009.

CHARACTERIZATION OF USEFUL DATA

Considering the volume of information that is processed each year from the Local Church Reports, it is inevitable that errors will occur, both in reporting and in collecting the data. Nevertheless, it is important that the conference statistician and others who draw together the information from these reports recognize that the care they exercise in performing their work accurately is at the foundation of any usefulness the data may have. In addition to being published in the conference journal annually, the information gathered by the statistician is potentially of great usefulness to the church in assessing its weaknesses and strengths and in planning its future ministry. To fulfill this potential the data should be **valid, reliable** and **comparable**.

1. In order for this data to be **valid**, the persons completing the reports need to have a clear understanding of what information is being requested. For example, when reporting professing members, it is important that everyone have the same understanding of the definition of a professing member. The statistician can assist in collecting valid data only if he or she has a clear understanding of the questions on the report form.
2. In order for it to be **reliable**, it is important that the information be gathered in a consistent way from year to year. For example, if an annual conference frequently changes its instructions to pastors as to what kinds of local church expenditures are reported in various categories on the report form, the relationship between figures from year to year will have little meaning. The statistician may not always be able to control this, but should nevertheless be aware of potential problems.

3. In collecting the data on the national level, the Department of Records and Statistics tries to compile it so as to be as **comparable** as possible. For example, it is important that broad categories of expenditures, such as clergy support or benevolences, contain as nearly as possible the same items in all annual conferences. Only if this is true can the data from many annual conferences be combined or compared to yield meaningful results. Starting with data collection for the 2002 statistics, GCFA has asked for the assistance of the Conference treasurers in making sure that we've correctly re-allocated portions of funds to the correct lines on Table 2. If you've not had a discussion with your conference treasurer regarding this, we suggest that you do so very soon. As always, we would be happy to help you and your conference treasurer understand better the information we are requesting. Please feel free to contact our office at any time for better clarification of this process.

SECURING AND MAILING REPORT FORMS TO PASTORS

Normally order blanks for Local Church Reports and related materials are emailed from the Department of Records and Statistics to annual conference statisticians in July of each year. If the secretary, statistician and treasurer agree that someone other than the conference statistician should order all of these supplies, you should notify the Department of Records and Statistics in writing and ask that the order blank be sent to one of the other officers.

As quickly as possible, complete the order blank and return it to the **Department of Records and Statistics**. Your order will be processed, and the supplies will be mailed or shipped to you from our stock.

There is no charge to annual conferences for these supplies. Their cost is borne by the budget of the Department of Records and Statistics and thus, indirectly by your conference's payments to the General Administration Fund. Conferences are asked to remember that their careful use of these supplies will contribute to the economical operation of the church. **These forms are also available on the GCFA website, www.qcfa.org, under Forms and Records.**

Preparing reports for mailing - Annual conferences vary widely in the amount of time and effort spent in preparing the reports before sending them to the pastor.

1. In many conferences the heading information and line 1 are completed by the conference statistician or other officer before the report forms are sent to the pastor. This assures that the line 1 entry will agree with the line 9 entry for the previous year and can save time in the processing of the reports after they have been returned by the pastor. If this practice is followed, pastors should be given instructions as to how they can make adjustments in the membership figure which may be necessitated by a reworking of the membership roll (see instructions to line 1-9, there are two lines added this quadrennium to help clarify this type of change). **If a conference is**

using the Eagle Data Collection system, line 1 is automatically populated by the line 9 data from the prior year.

2. When the conference has a full-time treasurer or business manager with an office staff, the statistician may sometimes be able to arrange for the preparation and mailing of the report forms by that office.
3. **The conference statistician and treasurer should work out carefully the division of responsibility for preparing Table 1, 2 and 3 reports for mailing and for checking and processing the completed Table 1, 2 and 3 reports when returned. They should also determine in advance who will be responsible for contacting the pastors and/or district superintendents regarding late reports. If the web-based system is used the information will be entered by the local church. There is a report which will show progress at any point, so that contact can be made before all the reports are due to be submitted.**
4. Most conferences have found that it is helpful for the conference officers to prepare supplementary instructions applicable to their conference only. These instructions should include at least:
 - a statement of the deadline date;
 - where and how the reports are to be returned to the statistician and/or treasurer;
 - if using three-part forms, whether all three copies are to be returned or the third copy retained by the pastor;
 - other matters on which practice may vary from conference to conference.The instructions may also include specific directions as to what conference funds are to be reported on which Table 2 lines and which portions of the Table 2 forms are to be left blank by the pastor, to be completed by the conference treasurer's office. They may also include suggestions or instructions regarding any procedures that have been found to be helpful over the years in assisting pastors to complete their reports accurately and legibly.
5. Among the supplies that may be ordered through the Department of Records and Statistics are envelopes for use in mailing the report material to the pastor and having it returned by the pastor. These envelopes are not printed in any way. You may find it worthwhile to have the address to which reports are to be returned stamped or printed on the envelope.
6. In some instances annual conferences have expressed the need for having items of information not requested on the regular Local Church Report form. Some have met this need by preparing a supplemental report containing additional questions, to be mailed and returned with the regular report. This should only be done with the consent and cooperation of the bishop and other appropriate officers.

A number of Annual Conferences are currently collecting data electronically or on-line. If this is the case for your conference, you may desire to request only a handful of report

forms for review by select conference officers. However, we are always happy to send out as many reports as you need.

COLLECTING REPORTS

Conference statistician's experiences vary as to the amount of difficulty encountered in securing completed reports from pastors. There are no easy answers where there has been a problem of this type; however, the following are some suggestions for your consideration:

1. **Statisticians need the cooperation and support of the bishop and district superintendent in the performance of their duties. In many conferences it is the practice that statisticians will notify district superintendents of pastors whose reports are past due, and it is then the responsibility of the district superintendent to obtain the late reports.** For conferences using the Eagle system, there is a report showing the progress of churches at any point.
2. Par. 606.7, ***Book of Discipline*** states: "The Local Church Report to the Annual Conference shall be submitted on the prescribed forms no later than thirty days following the close of the calendar year. If the Annual Conference sets an earlier deadline for receiving the reports, the earlier deadline shall apply."
3. In some conferences, where geography and scheduling permit, a specific date and place are set aside early in the year for the conference as a whole or in each district, and pastors are asked to deliver their reports personally to the statistician and/or assistant. This may be done in connection with a district or conference meeting which has been called by the superintendent or bishop. This plan has the obvious advantage of allowing the statistician to check over the Local Church Report with the pastor present, so that any questions about information reported can be clarified immediately. However, in many conferences local circumstances simply make it impractical. In most areas it would only be workable in instances where the bishop and superintendent feel that there are other justifiable reasons for holding meetings at that particular time of the year.
4. **Statisticians should be certain that the date reports are due and the name, address, and Email address of the person to whom they are to be sent are prominently visible on instructions sent to the pastor with the report forms/cover letter.** The name, address, telephone number, and Email address of a person to whom pastors may address questions about the reports should also be included.
5. During the period when reports are being completed and submitted, the statistician will be asked to answer many questions about how to respond to various items. Statisticians should study the worksheets carefully and try to anticipate as many questions as possible. Upon request, the Department of Records and Statistics will

try to clarify any questions you as statistician may have about the reports or individual items included on it. Even if you use a modified form, knowledge of the information on the GCFA forms will be very useful.

CHECKING AND EDITING*

As reports are received, they should be checked to see that the information they contain is **complete, legible** and -- as far as the statistician can determine --**accurate**.

1. Completeness - Check the blank lines to make sure that it is reasonable that there is nothing to report on them.
2. Legibility – If you are still receiving paper copies, be sure that all figures can easily be read. If applicable, check any copies to make sure figures are clear there also.
3. Accuracy - As the statistician becomes more experienced, the task of discovering inaccurate reporting will become easier. It is obviously impossible to know whether every figure reported is accurate, but it should be possible to identify the instances in which a clearly unreasonable figure has been reported. If using the Eagle system many errors will be corrected before being submitted to the conference office by putting into place validations.

In addition to the test of whether a figure is reasonable, the following should be observed:

- a. Proper alignment of figures - In the process of copying from the worksheet to the report form, it sometimes happens that a series of figures is copied on the wrong line. This usually will be obvious, because at least one of the figures in the series will be obviously wrong for the line on which it appears.
- b. Dollars and cents - **All Table 2 and 3 items are to be reported in dollars: no cents should be reported. If the person who completed the report has not followed this instruction, the statistician should make appropriate corrections (on both the original and any copies) immediately.** If it is not corrected in the checking procedure, it may be overlooked when the reports are summarized and typeset, leading to serious errors. This can be caught in the web-based system with warnings of the amount being a certain percentage different from the year before.
- c. Large amounts - If commas have been used in figures of 1,000 or larger, check to see that they are correctly placed. Check especially the figures in lines 36-39 and any other very large figures in Table 2.
- d. Totals - Check the totals on lines 9, 19, and 65. If they are incorrect, find out

Please note that line numbers referred to in this manual are for the 2009-2012 quadrennium.

why and make appropriate corrections. Other than faulty addition or subtraction, some of the more common reasons for incorrect totals are:

- 1) Professing Membership - Sometimes a pastor will simply enter the number of names of professing members on line 9, without checking to see whether this agrees with the addition and subtraction in lines 1-8. If the correct line 1 figure has been entered before mailing the report forms to the pastors, it may have been altered. If it has not, it may differ from the membership reported on line 9 the previous year. If there are irregularities in reporting membership, it is probably best, whenever possible, to contact the pastor directly for clarification.

Note that 2c and 5c should be used for correcting membership figures that were previously reported incorrectly.

- 2) Church School - The most common error in reporting church school membership has been the omission of the figures in line 15 from the total on line 19. These lines have been revised and grouped such as to no longer be confusing. Please pay close attention to the new lines. Do note that no person should be counted twice. All reports showing a church school membership on line 19 should also contain supporting figures on lines 15-18. Line 20 is to be a total of all averages.
- 3) Table 2, Financial Report - The amount entered in line 65 should be the total of all figures entered in 40b plus 41b-64. This should also be the amount spent during the year for all purposes from money raised in the local church. This should not include money reported under projects for UMM, UMW, or UMY. Occasionally pastors will enter sub-totals at the end of one or more sections of the Table 2 report. The presence of such sub-totals on the report can lead to serious errors. They can occur anywhere, in the reports. Sub-totals should be stricken from the report, and care should be taken to see that they have not been added into the line 65 total.

e. Other checks for accuracy - For those line items not included in totals, or when totals are correct, it may be more difficult to spot errors, but the following should be observed:

- 1) Lines 10, 20 - These two average attendance figures will normally bear a reasonable relationship to the membership figures on lines 9 and 19. In a few special situations where large numbers of visitors or young children are regularly present, the attendance may be unusually high in relation to membership. In most churches it will fall in a regular percentage range. Your experience will tell you what this range is in most areas of your annual conference.

- 2) Based on your knowledge of the church and the community where it is located, check to see that the property value figures are reasonable.
- 3) Normally, line 38 will not exceed the total of lines 36 and 37.
- 4) Lines 40-52 - Most annual conferences have developed a procedure for either checking these items with the conference treasurer's records of receipts or for transferring information from the treasurer's records to the reports.

If this section of the report is to be completed by the pastor, the statistician (or treasurer) should prepare careful instructions as to which funds should be reported on which lines, especially for lines 50-52. Variations from the pattern set forth in the instructions can then be noted and corrected.

- 5) Lines 53-54 - The amount reported here should not include any part of the compensation paid from conference or mission aid funds. **The report is a report of what the local church paid, not what the pastor received.** If the church did not have an associate or assistant pastor appointed by the bishop, line 54 should be blank. Amounts paid for pulpit supply or for the salaries of staff persons not appointed by the bishop should be reported on line 59, 60 or 61, whichever is appropriate.
- 6) Lines 55-57 - The same general considerations which apply to lines 53-54 apply to these items also. In addition, complete the "Local Church Clergy Compensation And Expenses Worksheet". Most conferences have an established practice that should be followed.

The question often arises as to how to report amounts paid for various benefits for the pastor. This can vary, depending on annual conference policy and practice. The following guidelines may help:

- a) If the cost of benefits is apportioned or direct billed, payments on the apportionment should be reported in a uniform way along with other apportioned funds, probably on line 40b or 51.
- b) If it is conference policy that all churches pay certain items for their pastors, each church should report the cost of such items on line 56 or 57.
- c) If a church pays a pastor's self-employment tax (social security), the amount should be reported as base compensation.

- d) If a given church elects to pay for its pastor items that most pastors pay from their salary, a policy should be established as to whether the cost of such items should be considered "Base Compensation" and included on line 53 or 54 or as "Other Cash Allowances" line 57.
- 7) Lines 63 and 64 - study carefully the instructions on these two items:
- a) Figures reported on line 64 should be the amounts paid from funds raised by the local church -- either during the current year or accumulated over a number of years.
 - b) Figures reported on line 63 should be the amounts paid on the principal and interest of prior years' indebtedness.
 - c) **Expenditures from borrowed funds are not reported, except to the extent that they are borrowed and repaid within the current year.** Example: Suppose a church pays \$200,000 upon completion of an addition to a building. \$50,000 is paid from an accumulated Building Fund, and \$150,000 is borrowed. The church makes payments of \$1,500 per month on the mortgage, beginning in May. For the first year, it would report \$62,000 on line 64 (\$50,000 from its Building Fund plus eight payments of \$1,500 each). In subsequent years it would report \$18,000 on line 63. (Twelve payments of \$1,500 each.) **This procedure will ensure that each expenditure from local church funds is reported only once, over a series of reports covering several years.**
- 8) Note that Table 3 (Receipts Report) is grouped in three sections. Please make sure that the totals for each section equal the sum of the numbers in the individual lines (67a through 67g=67; 68a through 68d=68; 69a through 69c=69).

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

The following are the more common situations that create special reporting problems, along with guidelines for dealing with them:

1. Newly Chartered Churches - Reports for the first year of a new church's chartered existence should show a beginning membership of "0" on line 1, with new members recorded on lines 2, 3 and 4 as appropriate. The space provided for the date in the

heading should show the date on which the church was organized.

2. Closed Churches - When a local church is closed, discontinued, abandoned or in any other way ceases to function as a United Methodist church, it is important that a final report for it be submitted at the end of the year in which it closed. This report should carry on line 1 the membership as reported on line 9 at the end of the previous year. It should then account for the removal of all members on lines 5 through 8 and should show "0" on line 9. Information should be reported in lines 10-69 reflecting activity in the congregation for whatever part of the year it continued to function. The space provided for the date in the heading should show the date on which the church was closed. On the Eagle system this date would be recorded in the date area, but the church would remain as Active Status until the beginning of the next year so that the historical information would be accurate.
3. Merged Churches - Reports for the first year of a church resulting from the merger of more than one previously existing church may be prepared in either of two ways:
 - a. The reports of the merging churches may be prepared in a manner similar to those for closed churches, with the report of the new merged congregation following the guidelines for a report for a new church. As above, the merged church would remain active until the next year.
 - b. A single report may be prepared showing the combined membership from line 9 of the previous year's reports on line 1. Using this method, the history of the closed church will not be shown in the year it was merged.

Whichever procedure is followed, a brief explanatory note on the copy of the reports sent to the Department of Records and Statistics is helpful; the note should state the names of the old churches and name of the new merged church. Be careful not to duplicate data reported in lines 10-69 of the reports for merged churches. **If you have a question regarding the appropriate GCFA Church Number to use for these churches, please contact the Department of Records and Statistics at GCFA.**

4. Federated Churches - Reports for these churches should record the United Methodist membership of the church and church school, all funds remitted to the treasurer of the United Methodist annual conference and, as far as practicable, a share of local expenditures proportionate to the United Methodist membership.

SUMMARIZING AND REPORTING

1. Recapitulation tables - The statistician will either need to prepare or to make arrangements for the preparation of recapitulation tables summarizing and totaling the data collected on the Local Church Reports. **It is important that procedures such as those outlined above for checking the completeness, legibility and**

accuracy of the reports be followed before beginning work on recapitulation tables.

Currently in all annual conferences, summarizing and totaling of Local Church Report data is now computerized, using either custom software or one of the many spreadsheet software packages commercially available. Data for some Table 2 items will already be in the treasurer's records and procedures may exist for transferring that information into the local church report data. Other items may need to be input from the local church reports, either by the statistician, by someone working under the statistician's supervision, or by a conference staff employee.

While computerization of this data clearly streamlines the task of recapping and totaling, the administration of formulas and cross-references also introduces another opportunity for errors to occur. You as statistician should take the time to **review carefully** printouts for all of the data for which you are responsible before they go to the conference journal printer and before the data is sent to GCFA's Department of Records and Statistics. Use the same tests for accuracy, completeness, and reasonableness in examining these printouts as were outlined earlier in this manual for use in checking the original reports. Remember that the fact that a computer printout looks neat and clear does not guarantee that it will be correct! Check totals for any lines which will be combined to calculate a total.

When evaluating and choosing software for use in recording and summarizing local church report data, the following are some of the considerations to be kept in mind:

- 1) The capacity of the software to accept, store, and manipulate the comparatively large amount of data involved, keeping in mind any memory or other limitations imposed by the particular computer hardware with which it will be used.
- 2) The ability of the software to import or accept direct transfer of data which may already exist in other computerized records, such as the conference treasurer's records.
- 3) The ability of the software to produce reports for use in the conference, such as camera-ready copy for the conference journal, or diskette or tape output which can be used for electronic typesetting by the conference journal printer.
- 4) The ability of the software to produce files that will facilitate electronic transfer of the data to GCFA's Department Records of Statistics. (See *the first bullet under 3 below.*)
- 5) Compatibility with other software and/or hardware which may be in use in the conference and with which it may be necessary or desirable to exchange data.

2. Annual conference journal report - Since statistical data is now reported for the calendar year, many conferences are following the procedure of including the statistician's report with other printed pre-conference reports and then simply reprinting it in the annual conference journal.

The statistician should have clear understandings with the conference secretary, the editor of the journal (if someone other than the secretary), and the printer of the journal on the following matters:

- a. The deadline for submitting original copy.
 - b. The process to be used in printing the statistical report and the form in which the original copy is to be submitted.
 - c. Dates when proof copy will be ready and when checked and approved proofs must be returned to the printer to meet printing deadlines.
3. Report to GCFA Department of Records and Statistics - Statistical data from each annual conference is collected by the Department of Records and Statistics for two major purposes: 1) it is stored on electronic media for use by persons involved in research throughout the denomination and in ecumenical or interfaith institutions; and 2) it is printed in summary form in the *General Minutes* annually. In order to do its work, the Records and Statistics Department needs to receive from each annual conference, as early in the year as possible, the following:
 - a. Nearly all annual conferences submit Local Church Report data to the Department of Records and Statistics via electronic media. It is rare for GCFA to not be able to process a submitted file.
 - b. Beginning with the 2009 data, GCFA will only accept the Excel format which we include with the request letter at the beginning of the year.
 - c. We ask that the conferences submit data electronically. In the 2001-2004 quadrennium we began storing apportionment data on the GCFA database. In addition, we do archive the files as they are received from the individual annual conference for the purpose of future research.
 - d. Please be sure to submit a detailed and correct data description with each file so we know exactly what is being represented. This **must include** labels for data columns. If you are using formulas for calculation of some data – lines 9, 19, and 65 for example – please include the formulas in the data you submit.
 - e. **PLEASE DON'T USE ASTERISKS AS CHARACTERS IN FILES SUBMITTED TO GCFA.** They are the universal “wild-card” and, as such, cannot be eliminated from a

file except in an extremely labor-intensive manner. Negative numbers also cannot be read by our database and will require correction. Our policy is to replace negative numbers with a zero and add the value to the total of the line and the Grand Total Paid if appropriate.

Under normal circumstances this material should be sent to the Department of Records and Statistics no later than June 30. It is hoped that most conferences will be able to submit their reports much earlier than this deadline. There are always a number of conferences whose reports arrive between late February and mid-April. This is very helpful in expediting the work of the department

4. Other Reports to the annual conference and its officers - In the course of tabulating reports and preparing the regular statistician's report for the conference journal, an observant statistician will usually become aware of certain trends in the data from year to year and of various relationships within the body of data for any given year. Such observations can be suggestive of tabulations that might be prepared. These special studies can be reported either as supplementary written or oral reports to the annual conference itself or to specific conference officers or agencies, such as the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, Conference Council on Ministries or the specific program agency to whose work the study relates.
 - a. The statistician should keep up with long-term trends on a conference-wide basis in such basic categories as: professing membership; church school enrollment; worship attendance; church school attendance; members received and lost by various means; baptisms; property value; indebtedness; expenditures in various categories; expenditures for all purposes; and other items for which data is collected. Any reverse in the direction of a long-term trend in any of these items is significant and should be reported.
 - b. In some cases the trend for certain geographical areas within a conference may run counter to the trend for the conference as a whole on a given statistical item. This information may be of interest to the conference and useful in some aspects of its planning.
 - c. Relationships may exist between membership growth or loss and other items reported such as enrollment in confirmation preparation classes and the number of baptized members who have not yet joined the church on profession of Christian faith and the constituency roll. **However, be careful about the conclusions you draw from such observations.** For example, the fact that few persons are involved in confirmation preparation classes may not be the cause of declining membership; it may be that a church is located in an area of declining population and that this fact explains several related statistical observations.

Your observations of such relationships in the data can be valuable if you are careful not to draw improper conclusions from them.

- d. The following are examples of other kinds of information available in the data that might yield interesting results. These examples are intended to be suggestive, but not exhaustive.
- 1) Church school -- Church school attendance, relationship between reported short-term and other non-Sunday church school activities and Sunday church school enrollment.
 - 2) Worship attendance -- Relationship between church school attendance and worship attendance, between worship attendance and total expenditures for all purposes.
 - 3) Membership gain or loss -- Comparison of the number of members received on confession of faith or restored and those removed by charge conference action or withdrawn; comparison of members transferred in and transferred out.
 - 4) Financial information -- Proportion of local church money spent for various categories, such as buildings, clergy support or benevolences; amount spent per member for these same categories. Does such a profile of churches' use of money vary with church size or location?
 - 5) Other factors not included on the Local Church Report may be drawn in. For example, a relationship between the length of time a congregation has been in existence or the type of community in which a church is located and some item of statistical information.
- e. Your own imagination will suggest more ideas than you have time to pursue.
- f. Much of the information you may gather on questions such as these lends itself to presentation in the form of charts, tables or graphs. Computer spreadsheet software usually has graphics capability, and most public or college libraries will have books that can give basic information on the preparation of charts and graphs. There are also statisticians in other annual conferences or persons within your own conference who may be able to assist you with this. Remember that presenting statistics in a meaningful way may help to convince the local churches within your annual conference that statistics are relevant, consequently making your job easier.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE TO DO THIS?

By this time you may have concluded that this manual assumes that being a conference

statistician is a full-time job. It is recognized that the overwhelming majority of statisticians in annual conferences are pastors or lay persons with full-time jobs, who are asked to do the work of the statistician "on the side". Each statistician will have to make a personal decision regarding the allotment of his or her time between many pressing responsibilities. Much will also depend on the specific interests of the individual statistician.

One possible suggestion -- there may be others, lay persons and clergy, who would have the time, ability and interest in assisting the statistician on a volunteer basis. Whether the statistician is clergy or lay, there should be no hesitancy in trying to recruit volunteer assistants. The main requirement is that they be persons whom you as statistician can trust to do careful and accurate work.

CHECK LIST FOR YEAR END STATISTICS REPORT

In preparing your statistics for submission to the General Council on Finance, here is a check list of what is needed.

Conference Name	
Permanent GCFA church number	
District Name or Number	
Conference church number (If applicable)	
Church Name	
Pastor's Name	
EIN (Employer Identification Number supplied by the Federal Gov)	
Table 1 All lines filled in, including Gender and Ethnic	
All totals verified. Values checked for appropriateness.	
Table 2 All applicable lines filled in (Breakdowns are tracked, but totals are used to calculate the Grand Total Paid (Line 65))	
All totals verified. Compensation checked for appropriateness.	
Line 65 Grand Total Paid verified.	
Table 3 All applicable lines filled in. Each section is totaled separately.	
All districts included on one file	
Summary of districts included on file	
Line definitions included on each line along with line number	
Conference name or number included in file name, i.e. <i>Conf Name yyyy Statistics.xls</i>	