

Leadership Counts Executive Summary — Spring 2023

Project

In November 2021, the United Church launched Leadership Counts, a voluntary identity survey for ministry personnel and members of national committees. Because the United Church is committed to equity and the full participation of all peoples and identities, the survey focuses on seven specific identities related to those commitments. The survey also offered respondents the chance to share more about how they name their cultures, languages, races, genders, orientations, and disabilities.

The results help the United Church evaluate its strategic plan and anti-oppression work, to consider barriers to full participation, and to develop strategies to more effectively meet our commitments.

Response

To date, more than 1,750 people have participated in the survey, exceeding any past attempts to learn about the identities of United Church leaders. Further, it provides a wealth of information. Respondents included:

- 75% of national committee members (lay and ministry personnel)
- 51% of active ministry personnel and candidates (overall 29.3% of other ministry personnel, including retired ministers, admission ministers and those on medical leave).

Equity identities

Data received by March 31, 2023, shows:

1. the percentage of responding ministry personnel who identify with each of the equity-commitment identities.
2. how many of the national appointments are filled by members who hold equity-commitment identities.

(March 2023)	Indigenous	Racialized	Franco- phone or Fr. Ministry	Primary Lang. not En/Fr	2SLGBTQ+	Young Adult	Disabilities	Total with 1+ identities
1,429 Ministry Personnel	28 (2%)	132 (9%)	72 (5%)	127 (9%)	221 (16%)	29 (2%)	206 (14%)	582 (41%)
490 Committee Appointments	46 (9%)	122 (25%)	40 (8%)	73 (15%)	83 (17%)	11 (2%)	55 (11%)	222 (45%)

A table at the end of this summary compares this information with the closest comparable data of the Canadian population from the 2021 Canadian Census. Where available, it was also compared with those who reported an affiliation with the United Church in the census.

In focus: who are we?

Leadership Counts shows there is much diversity in the United Church's leadership, often greater than in the broader United Church population. More than 40% of ministers and committee members name one or more identities to which the church has made full-participation commitments. There is also diversity beyond "yes/no" in the ways we name our race/ethnicities, languages, gender identities, sexual orientations, and disabilities.

Indigenous Identity: Among people identifying as Indigenous, the vast majority identify as First Nations. Many people also identify Métis.

- Of those respondents who do not identify as Indigenous, 5% report participating in the Indigenous Church. People defined 'participating' in a wide range of ways.

Racial / Ethnocultural Identity: The most frequently named Racial and/or Ethnocultural identity is White (e.g., European descendant) as named by 78% of respondents. Several diverse racial identities were named:

- 5% identified as Black (e.g., African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent)
- 2% identified as being mixed race White along with other diverse racial identity options
- 2% identified as Korean

Francophone Identity and French Ministries: Around 3% of respondents identify as Francophone; an additional 3% who didn't identify as Francophone reported participating in French ministries.

- 14% reported being able, or mostly able, to participate in the life of the church in French.

Language: Collectively, respondents listed more than 50 languages spoken; the most frequently cited were Korean, Dutch, Spanish and Shona.

Gender and Orientation: Given nine options to describe sexual orientation, and seven to describe gender, respondents offered 95 unique identity combinations to describe themselves.

- Identities such as Asexual/Nonsexual, Bisexual, Polysexual and Pansexual were selected both by people who identified as 2SLGBTQ+ and those who did not.

Young Adults - 60% of Young Adult respondents hold at least one other equity identity.

Disabilities - People offered a variety of ways in which they identified as disabled; both those who did and those who did not identify this way noted varying degrees of relating to this identity.

Who is serving on committees?

The diversity on committees exceeds the diversity in the church and in ministry personnel, except, notably, in the category of disability. We also learn more about who is serving when we consider identities intersectionally, such as by racial identity, gender and ministry stream:

- Of Indigenous committee members: 70% are women (36% lay; 34% ministers);
- Of (non-Indigenous) Racialized committee members: the most prevalent identity is male ministers (54%)
- Of White committee members: the most prevalent identity is female ministers (36%)

Next Steps

We cannot tell this story alone. We need to tell it together. The conversation continues.

We would love to know what others notice about the data, and how these findings reveal opportunities and barriers for leaders in the United Church.

This project is not over. Ministry personnel and committee members can still participate through the “My Identity Data” tile on ChurchHub.ca, where they can also view and update their own data.

Appendix – Canadian and United Church of Canada Benchmark Data

	Statistics Canada: Canadian Census 2021		Leadership Counts (to March 2023)	
Equity Category	Canadian Population	United Church Population	Ministry Personnel	Committee Appointments
Indigenous identity	5%	3%	2%	9%
Racialized identity	27%	2%	9%	25%
Francophone OR Active in French Ministries	20%	-	5%	8%
Primary language other than English/French	21%	-	9%	15%
2S LGBTQA+ identity	4%*	-	16%	17%
Young Adult (age 30 and under)	25%	11%	2%	2%
Disability identity	22%	-	14%	11%
One or more equity identities	-	-	41%	45%
Gender				
Women	51%	56%	47%	50% **
Men	49%	44%	39%	36%
Gender-Queer or Non-binary	0.1%	-	2%	5%
No data			12%	9%
Population details				
	36,328,480 people	1,214,185 people	of 1,429 respondents (3948 ministry personnel)	of 490 appointments (346 responses)

* Data on LGBTQ+ identity in Canada is from 2018 Statistics Canada studies released in 2021

** Percentages for gender identity for committees is based out of the 346 responses.