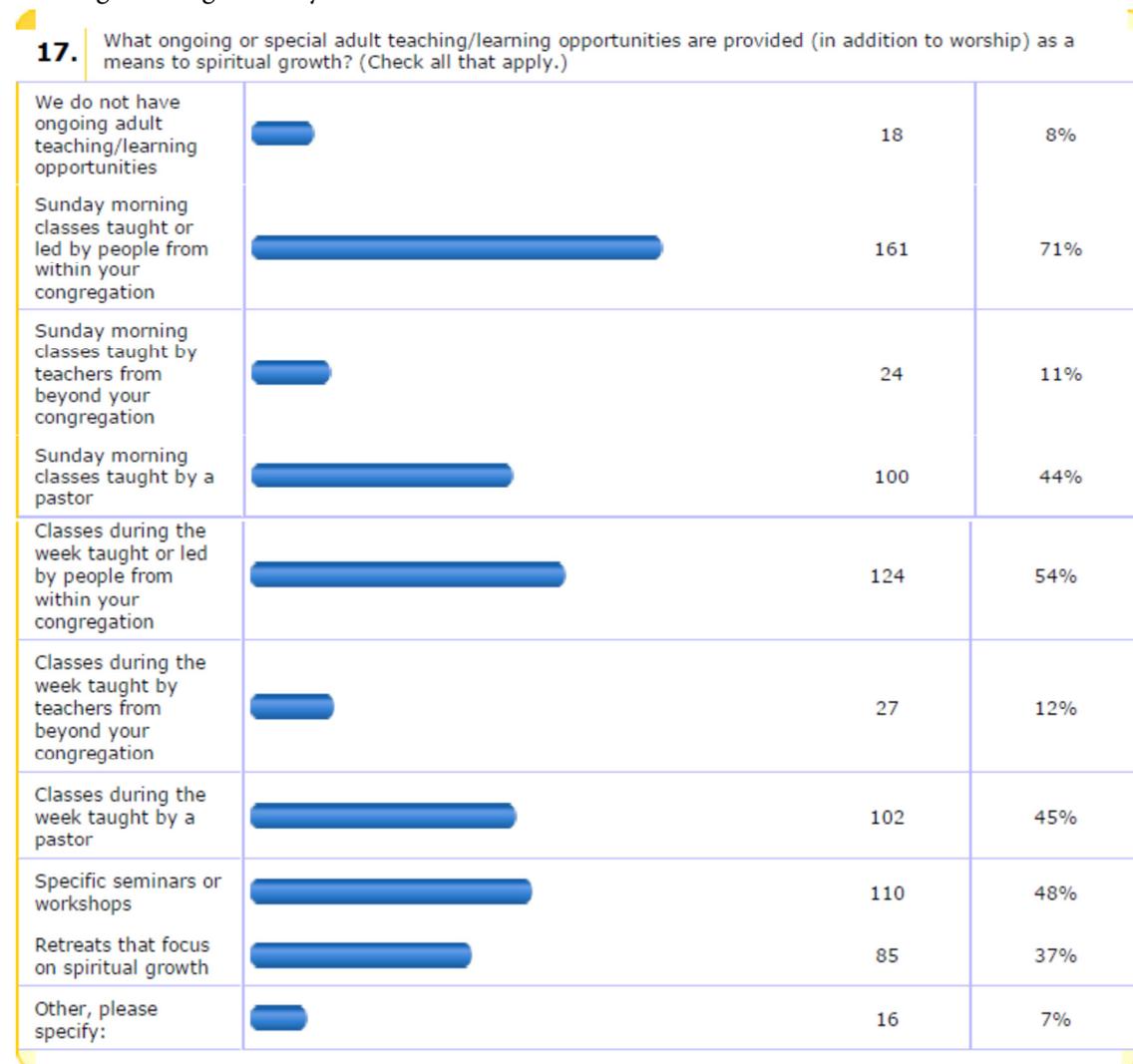


3.4 INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

Teaching/Learning: Covenant Church Survey Information

Adult Ministry Survey Results

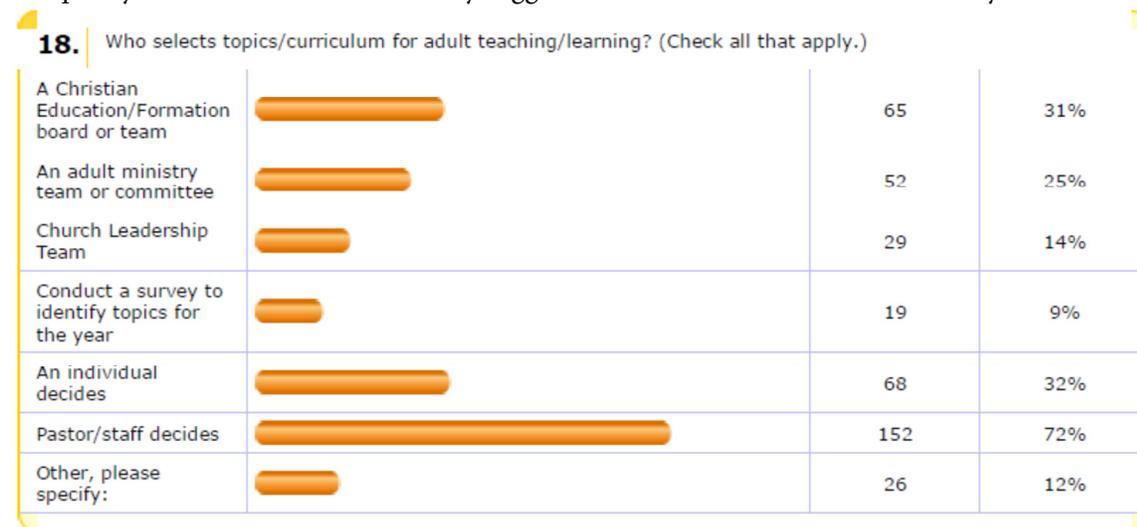
The Covenant Church's Department of Christian Formation collected the following information during the fall of 2009. The department sent the survey to Covenant Church pastors and received 221 responses. This survey data presents a glimpse of the Adult Christian Formation activities that Covenant churches find helpful. The survey included 25 questions, and the data presented here relates to the church's teaching/learning ministry.



3.4 INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

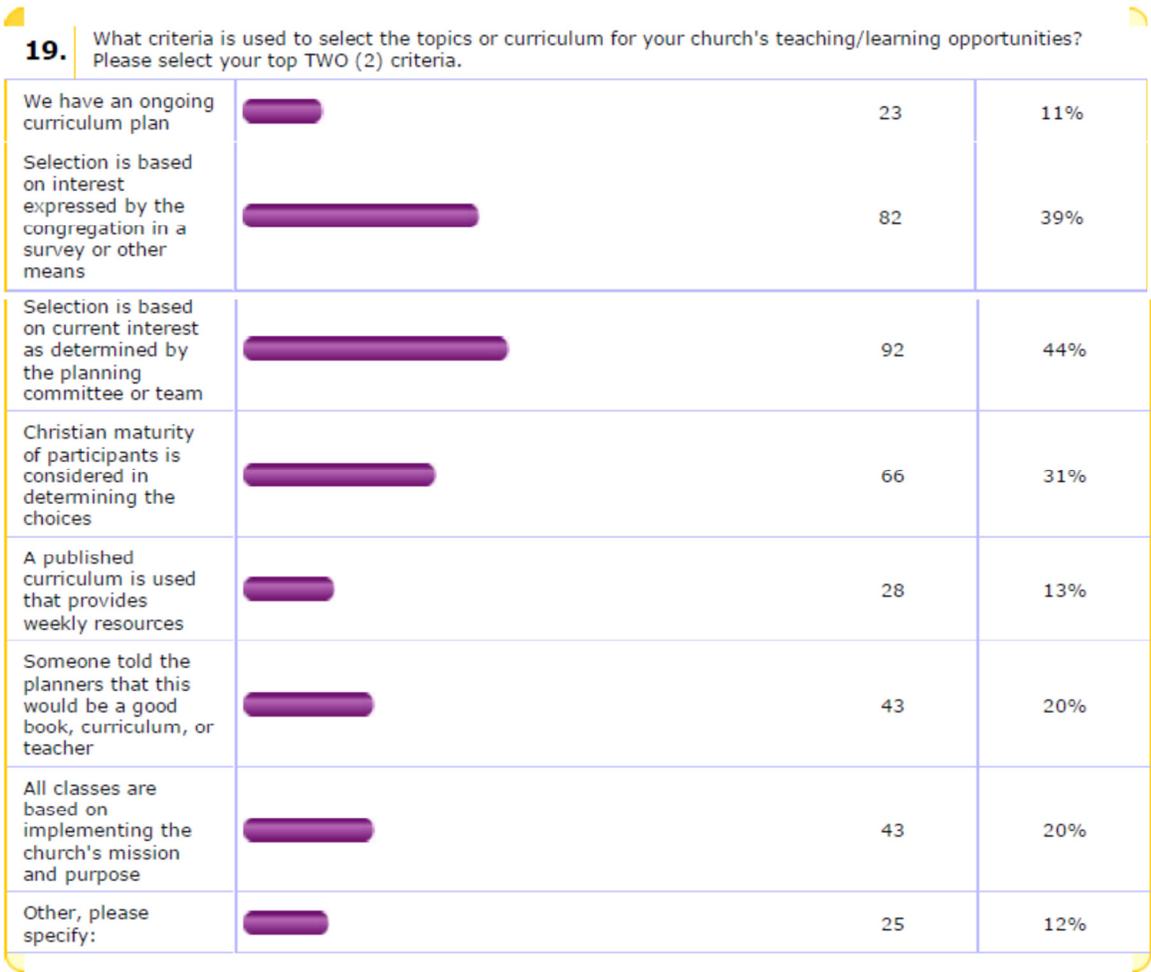
According to the survey, most churches (92%) provide a variety of teaching/learning opportunities. Sunday morning seems to be the time when most churches schedule these sessions, but a significant number of churches also provides midweek sessions, specific seminars (48%) and spiritual growth retreats (37%). In another part of the survey, churches indicated that 80% provided Sunday classes and 63% provided midweek classes.

It is pertinent to note that most teachers for these teaching/learning opportunities come from within the membership of the church. The pastor is, at times, the teacher in nearly half of the churches for both Sunday morning and midweek learning settings. Others from the church provide leadership in 71% of Sunday morning classes. Some churches feel the temptation to find “outside experts” to come and “raise the quality” of education, but the survey suggests that Covenant churches do not rely on outside experts.



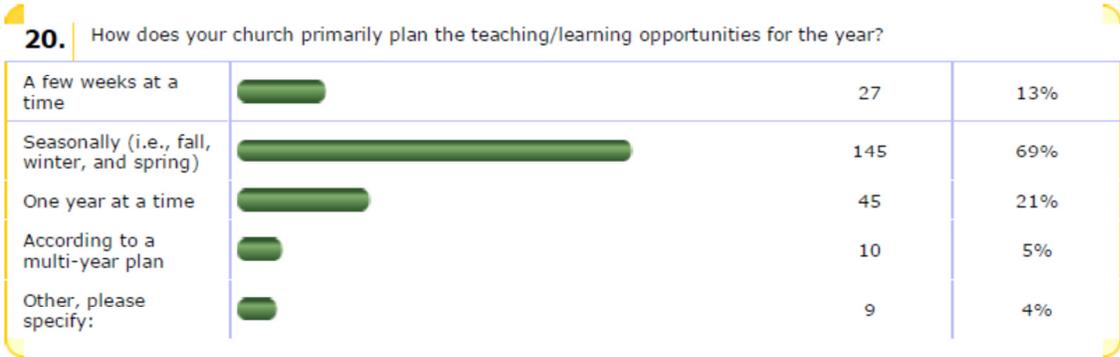
The responses to this question suggest that most churches have a team of people involved in guiding the teaching/learning area. In some cases, a Christian formation board or commission provides guidance and for others, a committee or team that focuses specifically on adults fulfills this role. It is helpful to note that, in 72% of the churches, the pastor/staff was involved in deciding the topics/curriculum. That is a remarkably high percentage and confirms the importance of this ministry and the role of the pastor in guiding it. In 32% of the churches responding to this question, an individual decides what topic or curriculum to offer.

3.4 INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP



Does this chart suggest a lack of intentionality when it comes to planning the topics to be included in the curriculum? In one third of congregations, an individual decides (see question 18). An ongoing curriculum plan guides only 11% of congregations. Only 31% of churches consider the Christian maturity of participants in selecting curriculum, and only 20% select it based on implementing the church's mission and purpose. It is encouraging to see that some effort is made to hear from the members of the congregation regarding their needs in 39% of the churches. It seems that this area could be enhanced by some strategic thinking regarding the desired outcomes for the teaching/learning ministry, and a greater intentionality regarding the purpose of the adult teaching/learning ministry and helping people mature in Christ.

3.4 INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP



Insights from Written Comments

In the comment section of the survey, several mentioned that they struggle with keeping interest in Sunday school high. This has been a growing concern for the last few decades. Is it possible that this symptom is a result of the lack of intentionality referred to earlier? A candid reply asks “What role does the Sunday school play in developing mature Christians or disciples?” and “Do the people in the congregation see Sunday school as a resource for their spiritual formation path toward Christ-like living?” Forming congregations who intentionally select curriculum and strategically help people grow toward maturity in Christ are the goals for the planning guide.