

WOMEN BY THE NUMBERS

Economic downturn's impact on general agency employment

by Craig This*



United Methodist general agencies felt the impact of the 2008-2009 economic downturn in the United States, according to audits by the General Commission on Religion and Race and the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women.

To view Tables 1, 2 and 3, and to read more information, click [HERE](#).

The agencies dropped from 1,751 employees in 2008 to 1,557 in 2009, a loss of 194 jobs (11% of workforce). Of the 194 job losses, 190 (98%) were laity and 4 (2%) were clergy (Table 1 [HERE](#)).

The data were self-reported by the agencies using an online collection form created by GCSRW. Data were aggregated into Categories 1-3 (executives/directors, professionals, managers/administrators) and Categories 4-6 (technicians, administrative and clerical support, service/maintenance workers).

Racial/Ethnic Changes

Whites, the largest racial/ethnic group, lost 109 positions, a 9% decrease. Still, with 1,003 persons, whites represent 64% of the total number of general agency employees in 2009. The number of racial/ethnic employees fell from 639 to 554, a loss of 85 persons (13%). Despite these losses, racial/ethnic groups continued to make-up 36% of the employees in 2009 as they did in 2008. African-Americans (59) and Hispanics (17) lost the greatest numbers among the racial/ethnic groups (89% of racial/ethnic job losses). African-American men and women made up 32% of the lay reductions (61 persons). Racial/ethnic clergywomen gained 3 positions, while racial/ethnic clergymen lost 3 positions.

Male/Female Changes

A total of 118 laymen and one clergyman lost their positions as did 72 laywomen and three clergywomen. Racial/ethnic women (26% of the workforce) lost 43 positions (60% of the job losses suffered by laywomen and 57% of job losses for all women). White males (22% of the workforce) lost 76 positions (22% of the total workforce in 2008).

Executives, professionals, managers

The number of persons employed in categories 1-3 (executives/directors, professionals, managers/administrators) dropped from 898 in 2008 to 857 in 2009, a loss of 41 positions. Interestingly, clergywomen and laywomen actually gained positions in these three categories (see Table 2 [HERE](#)).

Racial/ethnic persons made up 56% of the personnel losses in these categories with 23 positions eliminated. African-Americans lost 13 and Hispanics lost 9 for a total of 22 or 96% of the racial/ethnic losses; Native Americans gained two. As a result of the reductions, 55% of all employees are now in Categories 1-3 in 2009 compared to 51% in 2008.

Technicians, administrative support, service workers

Positions in Categories 4-6 (technicians, administrative and clerical support, service/maintenance workers) dropped from 853 to 700, a loss of 153 posts (79% of the jobs eliminated between 2008 and 2009 (see Table 3 [HERE](#)). Laywomen and laymen each lost 76 positions and one clergyman lost a job in these categories. Sixty-two racial/ethnic persons (32 laywomen and 30 laymen) lost positions; 46 of these were African Americans.

Conclusion

Eleven percent of the general agency's workforce was reduced after the economic downturn of 2008-2009. Despite these losses, racial/ethnic persons remained at 36% of overall representation. However, one must ask why racial/ethnic women (26% of the workforce) made up 22% of the total job losses and 60% of the job losses for laywomen?