



*The* **GOOD**  
**NEIGHBOR**  
**CHURCH**  
*in Society*

**A Research Project**  
of the Oregon Family Council  
Education Foundation

# The GOOD NEIGHBOR CHURCH

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A Research Project of

**THE OREGON FAMILY COUNCIL**  
EDUCATION FOUNDATION  
PO Box 13367 | Portland, Oregon 97213 | 503-257-0444  
[www.OregonFamilyCouncil.org](http://www.OregonFamilyCouncil.org)

*Dear Community Leader or Pastor:*

All too often the debate surrounding religion in public life centers on issues like allowing a nativity scene on public property or prayer around a public school flagpole. Yet, lost in this discussion is the critical truth that churches make a tremendous contribution to the lives of individuals, families and the greater community.

That's why the **Oregon Family Council Education Foundation** sponsored a research project called, *The Good Neighbor Church in Society Survey*.

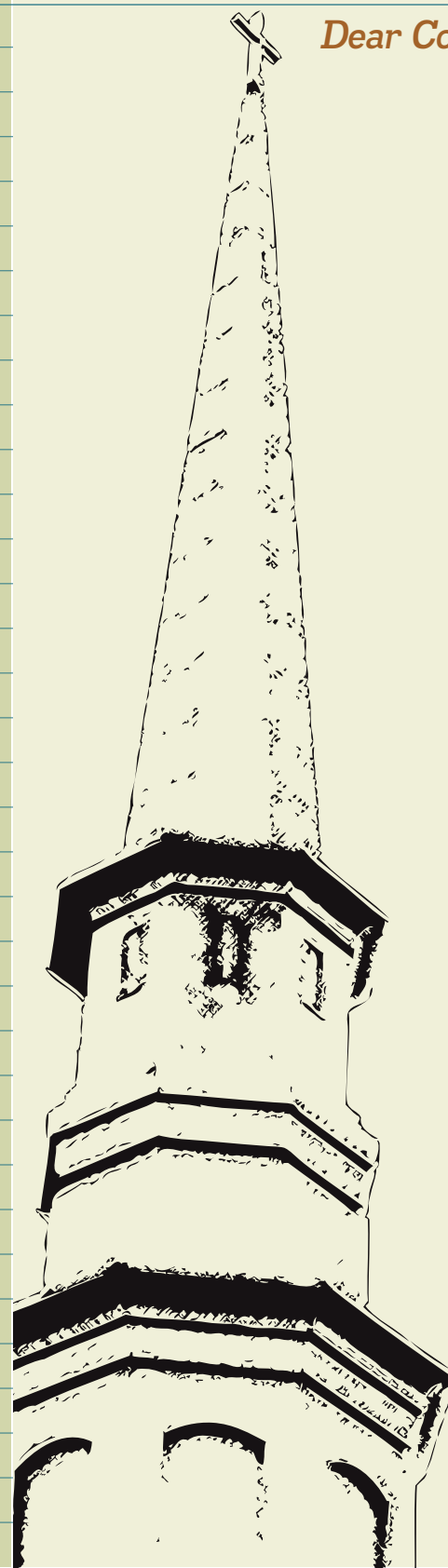
The goal of this research project was to help identify the many ways churches contribute to community life. As the pages that follow reveal, virtually every church in Oregon works to build healthier marriages, teach parenting skills and calls on their members to be people of integrity. Most churches provide food, clothing and financial assistance to families in need at the local level, and respond with sacrificial generosity during times of national or international crisis.

A growing number of churches offer recovery programs for those facing everything from addictions, anger, abuse or grief. Churches encourage prayer and respect for elected leaders, police, military and other public servants. They sponsor financial management classes, offer encouragement and guidance to those in prison and provide ESL classes to those not yet fluent in English.

Most importantly, churches help people begin and develop a life-changing relationship with God. And this is especially important because ultimately society is nothing more than a reflection of the individuals who make it up.

While this report contains just the initial phase of this research project, the results demonstrate that thousands of Oregonians, and people across the nation and world regularly benefit from the life-impacting ministry of our state's local churches.

*Very sincerely,*  
**The Oregon Family Council**



SECTION 1.

## Marriage and Family

96% of Oregon churches provide resources to strengthen marriages and families.

More than four out of every five adults (78%) will enter marriage at least once in their lifetime.\*

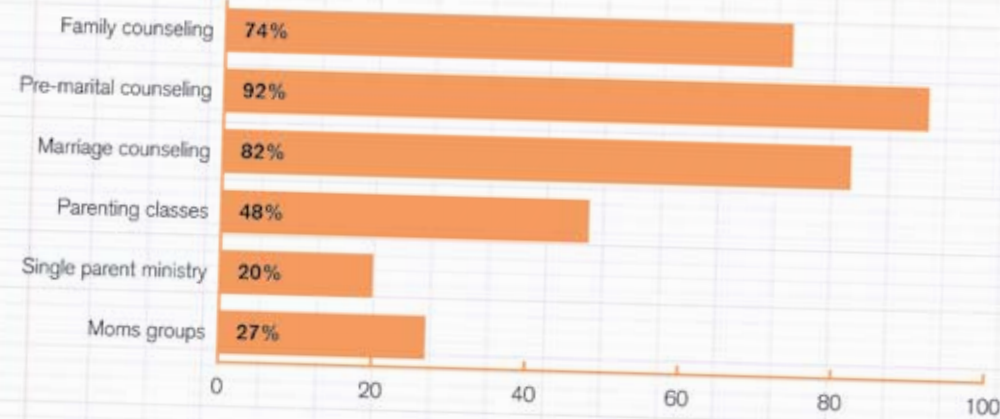
\*2008 Barna Group survey with a random sample of 5,017 adults selected from across the continental United States.

At the heart of most every local church is an appreciation for and a commitment to the family unit. In fact, from the earliest days in our nation and continuing through today, most families begin their formal journey with the assistance of a pastor performing their wedding ceremony in a church setting.

Church ministries are often the first place families look to for support, guidance or counseling when desiring to strengthen family bonds, resolve challenges or heal wounds. As the responses from this sampling of churches reveal, no other category of ministries is more universally supported by churches with 96% dedicating staff and resources to strengthen marriage and families either to members of their congregations or the community at large.

Responses indicate that the scope of marriage and family resources offered through churches include pre-marriage counseling, marriage counseling, family counseling, parenting classes, single parent ministries, adoption assistance and adjusting to divorce or loss of a spouse or parent.

Percentage of Oregon Churches Offering Marriage and Family Services



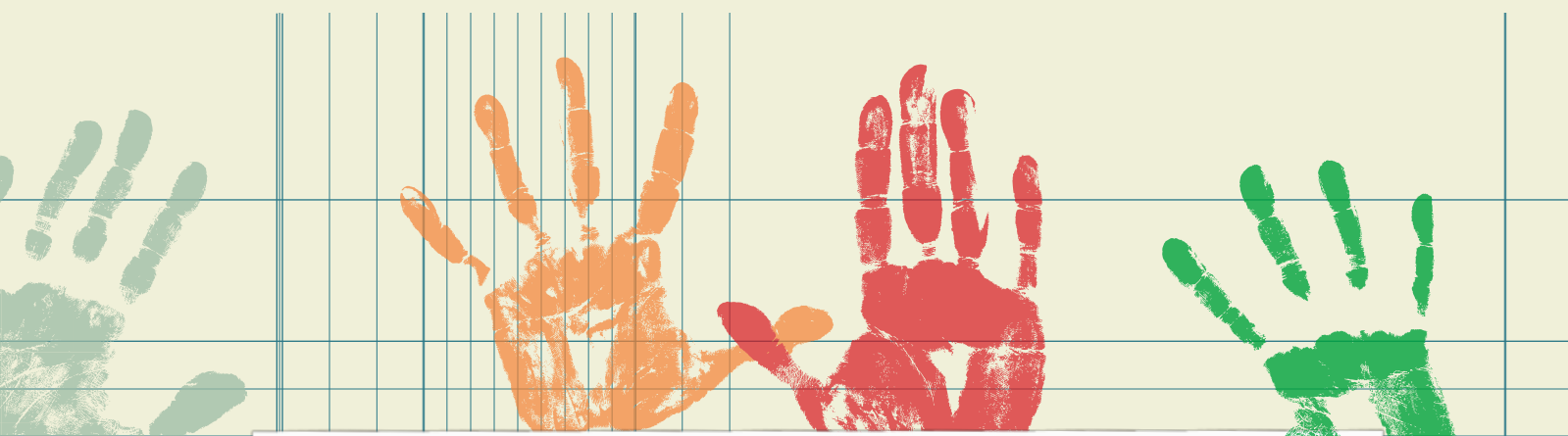
PROFILES IN SOCIETY:  
MARRIAGE/FAMILY

### The International Fellowship Family, Northeast Portland

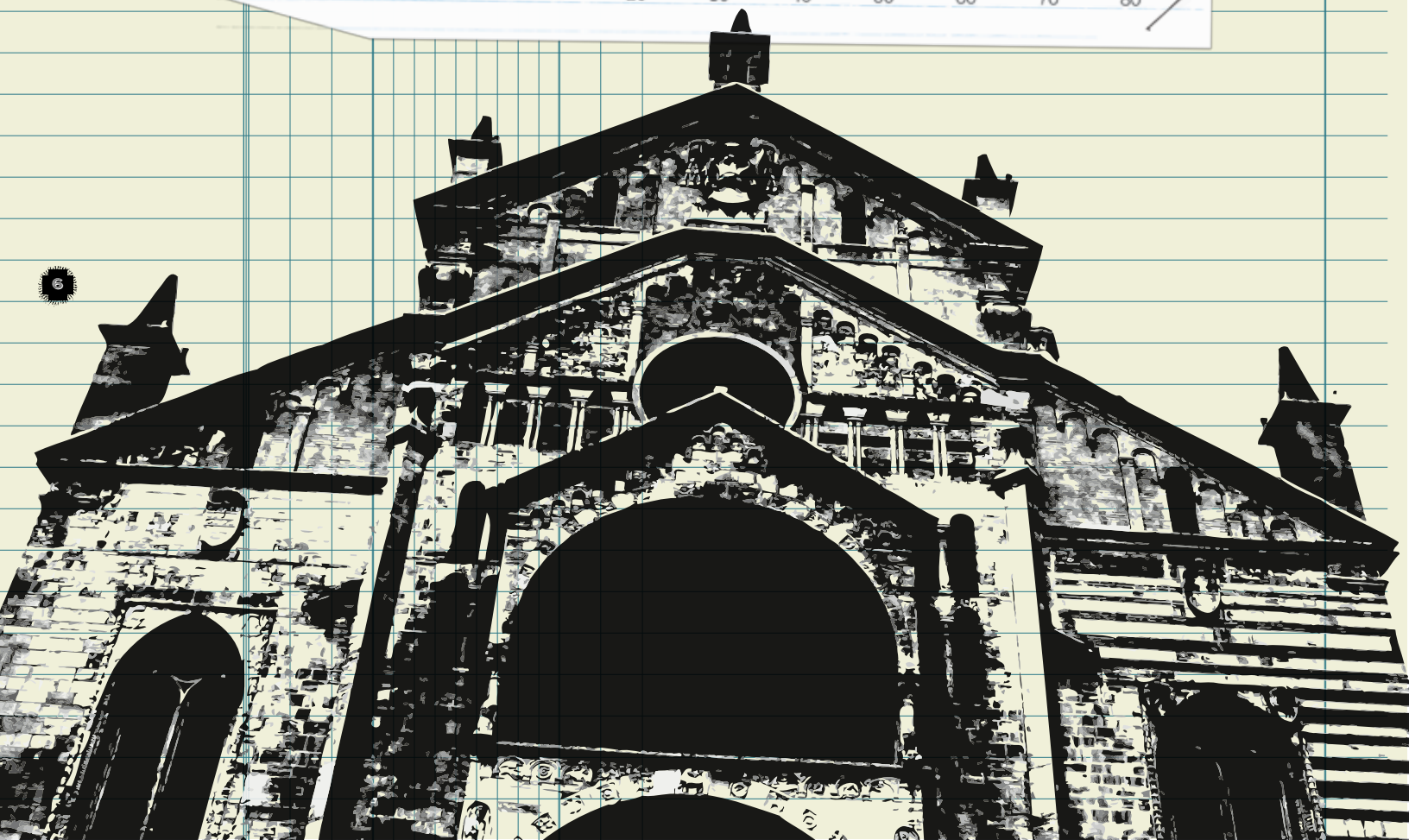
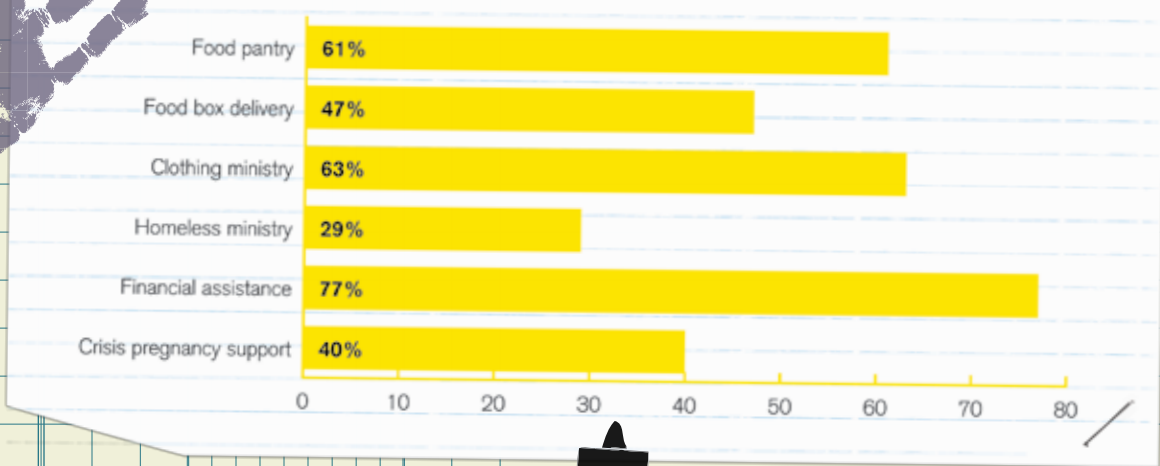
This church has a spacious facility just yards from the campus of Parkrose High School. To help teen mothers complete their high school education, International Fellowship Family provides no-cost day care for teen parents attending Parkrose. The church did some significant renovations to their building to create a more suitable space for these teen parents and their children.

### Household of Faith, Gresham

Household of Faith is a medium-sized congregation of approximately 75 families. The congregation has taken seriously the biblical insight that God desires to set the lonely in to families. As a result, church members have adopted, or are in the process of adopting, over twenty children. Some of these children come from foreign nations, the majority are from the state foster care system. Many of these children were born into addiction and poverty, and now have caring parents and a strong chance for successful lives.



### Percentage of Oregon Churches Offering Services to People in Need



## SECTION 2.

### People in Need

94% of Oregon churches provide resources to assist people who lack basic necessities.

35.5 million people, including 12.6 million children, live in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger. This represents more than one in ten households in the United States (10.9 percent).\*

\*Household Food Security in the United States, 2005. USDA Economic Research Service. November 2006.

Regardless of denominational background or church tradition, helping people with practical needs is an emphasis of church life that dates to the earliest days of Christianity. As this survey reveals, churches still fill a crucial gap for people facing temporary or long-term material challenges.

Churches address these challenges in various ways including offering food assistance, clothing, temporary housing and emergency financial assistance to cover utilities or rent. Respondents offered a variety of other examples of helping people in need including assisting single parents with oil changes and vehicle repairs, providing Christmas gifts or school supplies for underprivileged children and assisting the families of deployed soldiers with yard and home maintenance.

In many instances, churches work in partnership with other community or government agencies to help meet needs. Not covered in the scope of this survey, but certainly a category of ministries worthy of recognition are those faith-based non-profit organizations that are dedicated to providing food, meals, clothing, hygiene supplies, medical attention and housing for people in need.

#### PROFILES IN SOCIETY: PEOPLE IN NEED

##### New Song Community Church, Medford

New Song Community Church provides a complete and nutritious breakfast to underprivileged individuals and families every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Along with the meal, the present a five-minute inspirational thought for the day and strive to give each individual attending the meal the "respect and dignity that they deserve." Church members also help organize and staff church services at the Jackson County Jail to help inmates develop a connection to God and their community. Members of the congregation are active in youth mentoring and every Christmas the church delivers boxes of food to families in the Medford area.

##### West Salem Foursquare Church, Salem

West Salem Foursquare Church organizes and sponsors an adopt-a-block program. This program includes a free medical clinic with is open twice a month. On Saturday mornings, church members offer a variety of youth activities at Walker Middle School. The church also has assisted several hundred people at Marion Square Park through their James Ministry with provides food, clothing and other resources.



SECTION 3.

## Community Service

92% of Oregon churches engage in meaningful community service activities and support projects.

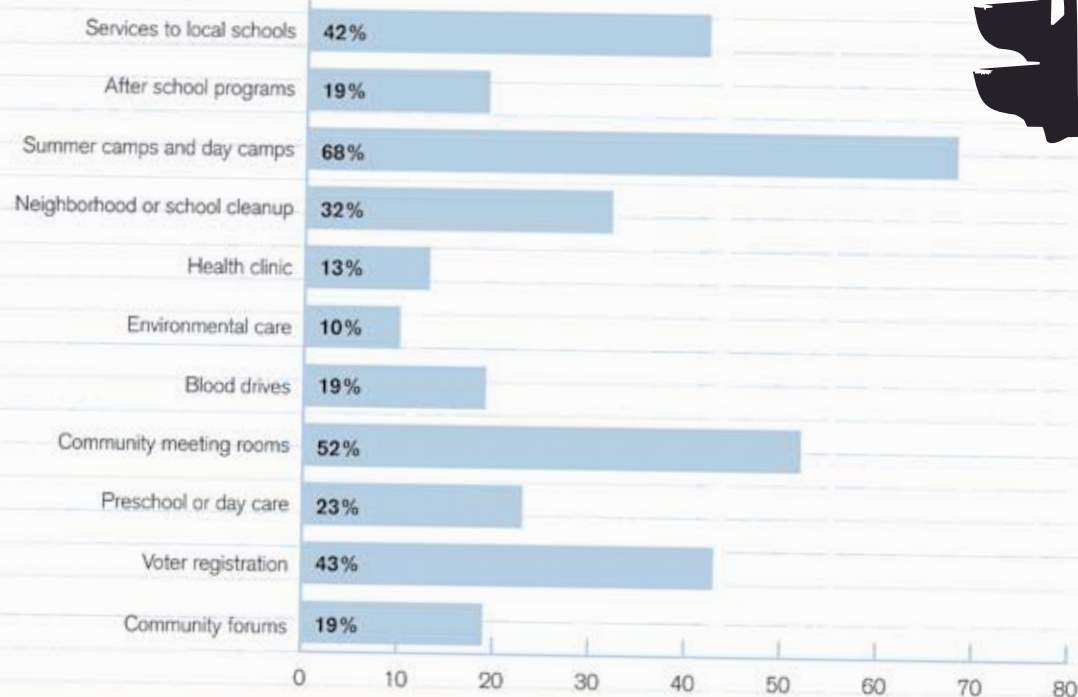
The Luis Palau Evangelistic Association organized church, corporate and civic leaders to help meet needs in the Portland/Vancouver area through an outreach entitled "Season of Service."

As a result, nearly 300 service projects were accomplished with the volunteer support of more than 27,000 individuals and more than 600 churches.

Churches have always been a central part of our nation's cultural life. In most early American settlements, a church was commonly the first non-housing building constructed in a community. Today, as it was during our nation's formative years, churches are still a primary source for community service. Response to this survey shows that church buildings are almost always available upon request for community gatherings. Blood drives, mobile health clinics and after school programs are frequently hosted in churches to benefit their neighborhoods.

Churches also report that they engage in community betterment through neighborhood and school cleanup projects. In some cities, churches are filling a needed gap in city, county and public school budgets by volunteering to provide yard and building cleanup. Church sponsored day camps, vacation Bible schools and community classes provide families with fun and fruitful leisure time activities and also offer a valuable contact point for people desiring a stronger connection with their neighbors and community.

### Percentage of Oregon Churches Offering Community Services



### PROFILES IN SOCIETY: COMMUNITY SERVICE

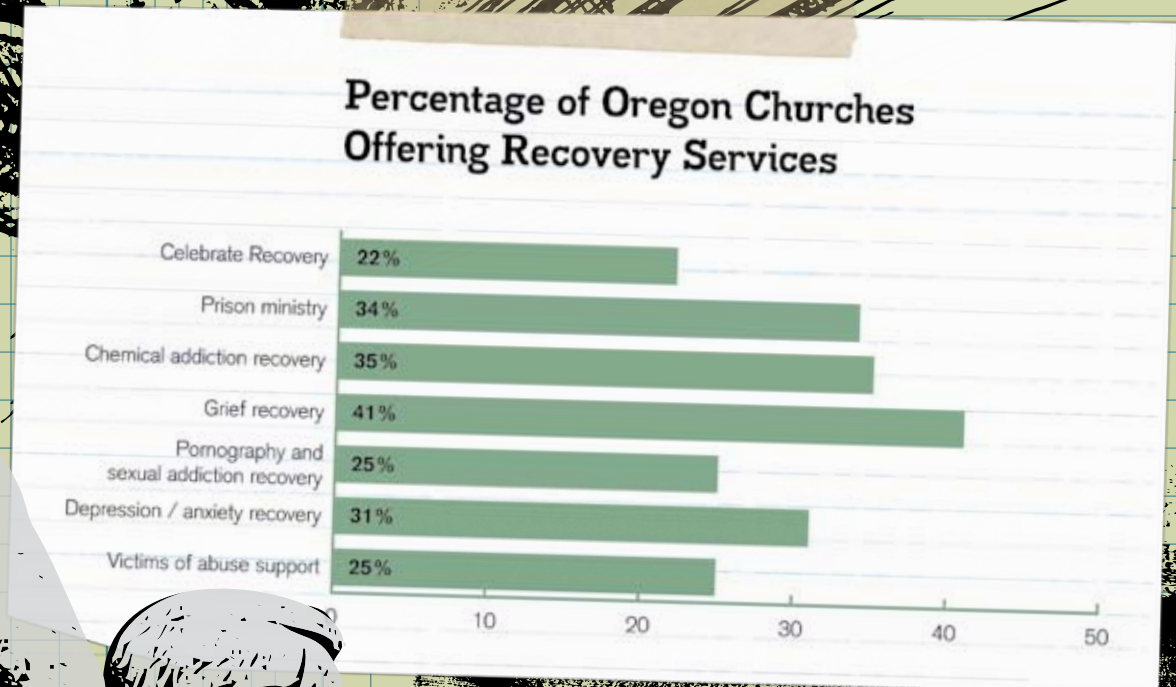
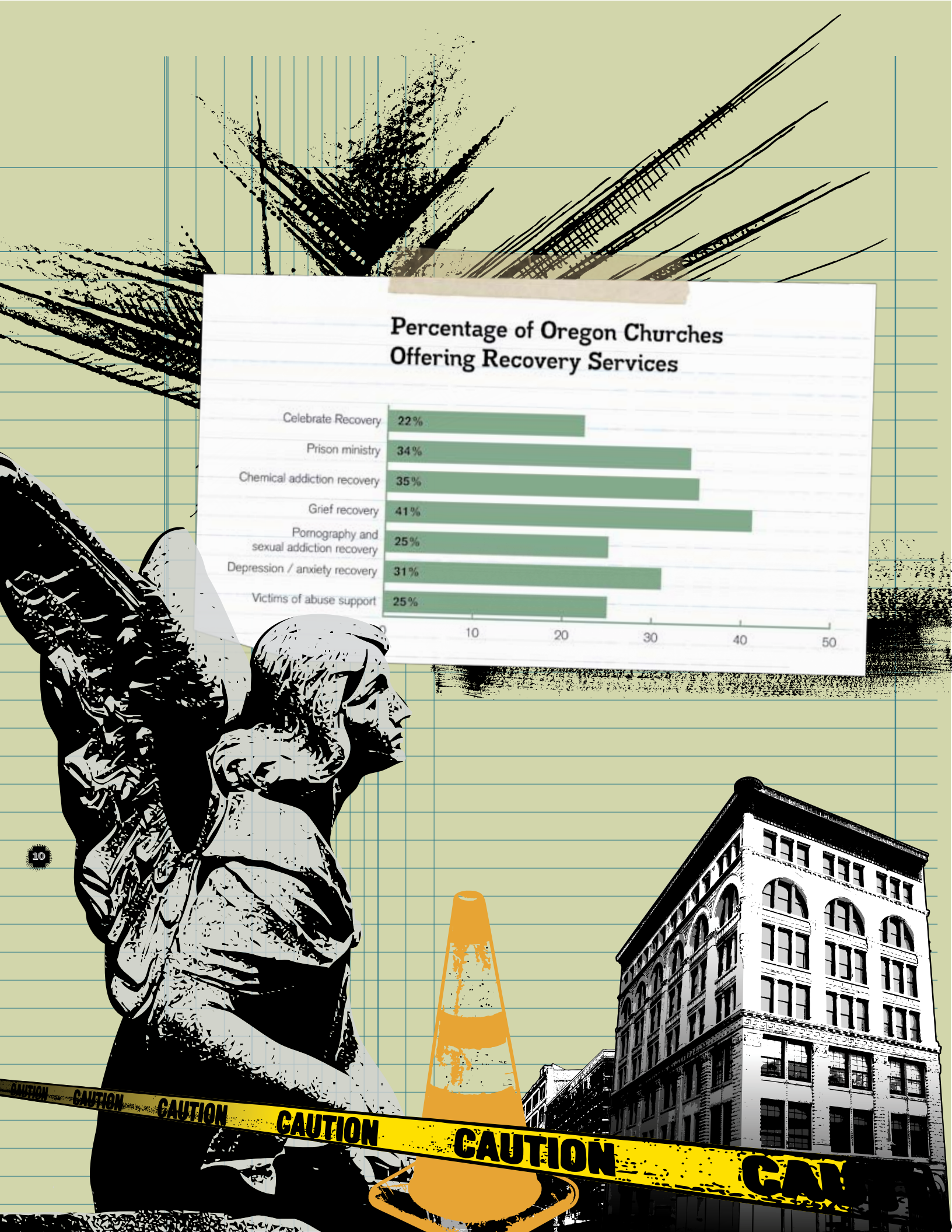
#### Westside Church, Bend

Several years ago, Westside Church began a church organized "adopt-a-block" program. This program organized church members to twice a month to visit specific blocks in local neighborhoods. Through their consistent relationship building activities, they connect many with their local church. Other individuals are helped in their efforts to become free of drug or alcohol abuse or escape from abusive relationships.

The church also helps block residents with other practical needs, including neighborhood cleanups and school supply giveaways. The church has a food truck that delivers food and hot coffee to the area's transient population staying in low-cost motels. Today, nearly 1,000 congregation members volunteer through religious and non-religious organizations throughout the community through a program called "I Heart Bend."

#### Clear Creek Community Church, Gresham

In 2005, a team from Clear Creek Community Church went on a short-term outreach to Mexico, where they provided free medical and dental care to need families in this developing nation. The traveling church members were so inspired by the help they were able to provide to our Mexican neighbors that they asked themselves, "Why can't we help needy families in our own community?" Thus began an effort where Clear Creek Community connected with other area churches and community organizations to launch Compassion Rockwood which offers free medical, dental and chiropractic care to members of their local community.



SECTION **4.**

## Recovery

74% of Oregon churches offer recovery ministries for people confronted with addictions or emotional pain.

One of every eight Americans has a significant problem with alcohol or drugs, with 40 percent of the group having a "dual diagnosis," or concurrent mental/nervous disorder.\*

\*SAMHSA (US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).

Healthy communities are the result of healthy people. In other words, society thrives on people who for the most part are physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually whole. One of the most recognized missions of the local church is to help people move toward wholeness by establishing a vital relationship with God, and adopting the values and practices He espouses in their personal lives. Fulfilling this mission, particularly in recent decades, has opened the door to a whole new set of church ministries.

The growth of alcohol, chemical, gambling and sexual addictions, the emotional scars of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, the pain of losing loved ones through death,

***One of the most recognized missions of the local church is to help people move toward wholeness by establishing a vital relationship with God, and adopting the values and practices He espouses in their personal lives.***

divorce or abandonment and an increasing prison population have caused churches to respond with a blend of impacting recovery ministries.

Responses to this survey show how a majority of churches offer a level of counseling, classes, support and accountability to people ensnared with addictions,

dealing with emotional issues including anger, grief, abuse and anxiety, and helping people transition from prison or dysfunction back to productive living.

PROFILES IN SOCIETY:  
**RECOVERY**

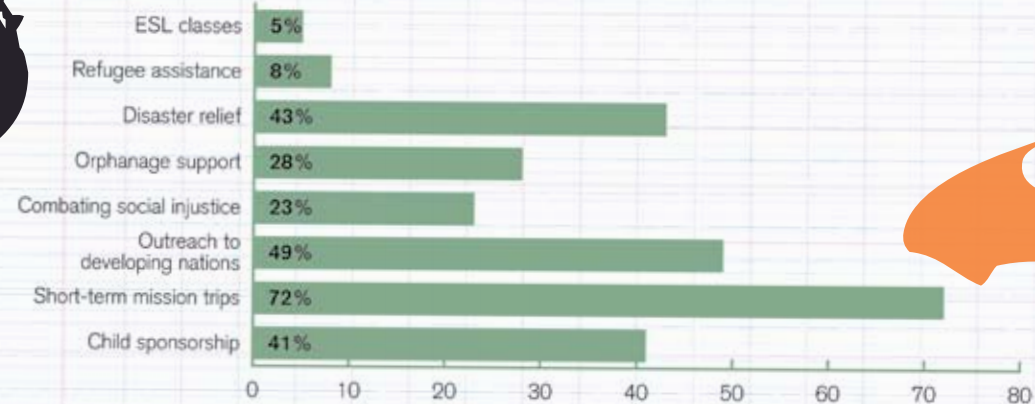
### East Hill Church, Gresham

East Hill has a recovery ministry that is recognized and modeled across the nation. A partial list of recovery ministries available at East Hill include groups and counseling for anger issues, sexual addictions, chemical and alcohol dependency, victims of violence or abuse, and divorce recovery. Another aspect of this ministry is their re-integration program to help those recently released from prison to transition back into society. The church also provides support for the family who is left behind when a loved one goes to prison.

### Living Word Christian Center, Mt Vernon

Living Word Christian Center is deeply committed to helping people rebuild their lives. They hold Sunday services, and lead a choir at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institute, and offer a wide variety of recovery classes and counseling at the church. They also support the cost of substance abuse counseling at the local county jail after budget cuts left no recovery program for female inmates.

## Percentage of Oregon Churches Offering National and International Services



## SECTION 5.

### National and International Outreach

*87% of Oregon churches respond to national and international needs, crises, and social justice issues.*

Portland's Imago Dei Community partnered with Living Waters International through the Advent Conspiracy outreach to drill eight fresh water wells in the Mount Barclay region of Liberia in 2008.

Through Advent Conspiracy, 30 wells are being drilled in this region where many have died from lack of access to clean drinking water. These wells will provide thousands of gallons of clean water daily, improving community health in a war-torn region.

Imago's project partner in Liberia, Saah Joseph, reports, "It is as if heaven has come to earth. Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

Churches are one of God's primary avenues for expressing His love and compassion to the world. This is why churches routinely engage in a variety of ministries that assist people beyond their local communities and reach across the United States and into foreign nations.

The response of churches to national disasters like hurricane Katrina or international crisis resulting from war, famine or poverty is inspiring. Tens of thousands of volunteer hours and millions of dollars are sent each year by Oregon churches to assist with national and international needs.

But international assistance is not limited to disaster relief. It frequently takes other forms. Many churches support orphanages and send teams on short-term missions for construction, teaching or labor projects to help those less privileged. Churches are a significant source for child sponsorship by encouraging congregation participation. Outreaches to developing nations include efforts to improve water, nutrition, education and employment opportunities. And churches are offering an important response to tragic social injustices like human and sexual trafficking, forced labor, children soldiers and dump dwelling. Locally, responding churches describe offering help to immigrants through ESL classes, translation and providing ethnic church services and events.

#### PROFILES IN SOCIETY: NATIONAL/INTL.

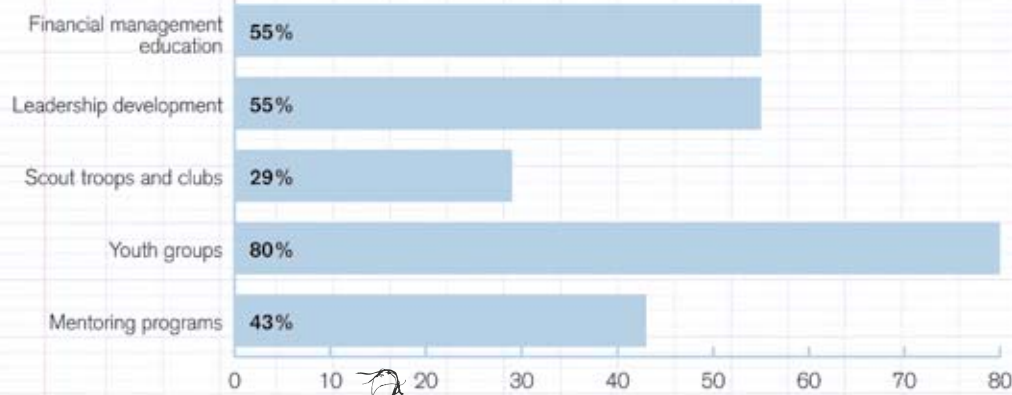
#### City Bible Church, Portland

City Bible Church has been offering ESL classes for more than a decade to give immigrants chance to improve their English skills and job prospects and to better connect with the community. In addition, church volunteers provide in-home reading and tutoring for low-income and immigrant students. The church also translates its English services into seven different languages and offers non-English ethnic services that are led in Spanish, Lao, Russian and Burmese. They also have an additional variety of non-English small groups to help international families better communicate, connect, and preserve their heritage.

#### St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Forest Grove

St. Vincent de Paul, is a charitable outreach of St. Anthony's Church. This ministry provides services for families in crisis including food, clothing, transportation, temporary housing and rent or utility assistance. In addition, they provide space at a dramatically reduced rate for Adelante Mujeres which educates and trains Latino women to complete their GED or equivalent and job skills training.

### Percentage of Oregon Churches Offering Growth and Development Services



This way up

## SECTION 6.

### Personal Growth and Development

93% of Oregon churches provide opportunities for personal growth and development of life skills.

A study in the Journal of Family and Economic Issues assessed how financial assets and consumer debt influence the frequency of marital conflict. Assets indirectly decrease marital conflict by decreasing feelings of financial pressure. Although consumer debt adds to feelings of financial pressure, it also directly relates to increased frequency of couples' arguments.\*

\*Dew, J. (2007) "Two sides of the same coin? The differing roles of assets and consumer debt in marriage." Journal of Family and Economic Issues, 28(1), 89-104.

It's one thing to tell someone to pay their bills, get out of debt and save for the future. It's another to come along side that person with proven financial management practices and help them apply these principles to their own limited budget and unique set of financial challenges.

This research reveals that this manner of life-skill development takes place in Oregon churches every week. They range from the financial management example mentioned above to youth ministries, scout troops, parenting skills, leadership development, health and weight loss classes and mentoring programs to name just a few. Some churches utilize their staff and facilities to sponsor youth recreational activities that include instruction in sportsmanship and provide opportunities for older athletes to instruct young participants.

Many growth and development programs take place in small group settings or classes off the church campus to better accommodate the schedules or lifestyles of program participants. Gatherings can occur in homes, restaurants and coffee shops or office lunch rooms. Others take place in outdoor settings through nature hikes, outdoor schools and environmental appreciation and cleanup adventures.

#### PROFILES IN SOCIETY: PERS. GROWTH/DEV.

#### Mt Olivet Baptist Church, North Portland

Mt Olivet Baptist Church has a thriving after-school program. Here North Portland children from Rosa Parks and Portsmouth elementary schools receive help with homework, reading and computer skills four days a week. In addition, Mt Olivet sponsors a one-on-one mentorship ministry designed specifically for youth who "slip through the cracks." These youth often lack the support, skills and resources necessary to excel in life. During the summer, the church hosts day camps to keep kids occupied in educational, recreational and productive ways. The camp is co-sponsored with the University Park Community Center. The camp meets 5 days a week for 8 consecutive weeks during the summer vacation.

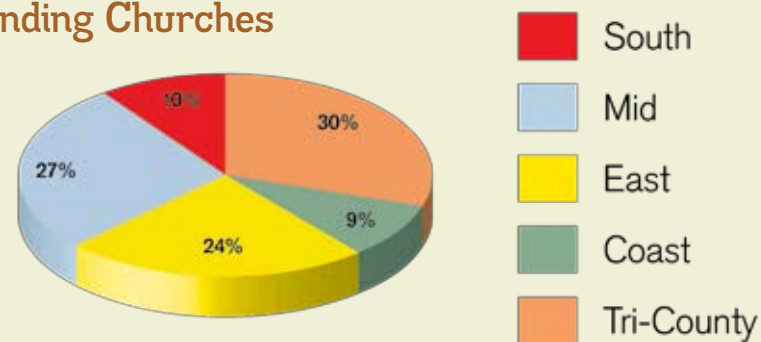
#### Capital Park Wesleyan Church, Salem

Capital Park Wesleyan is home to the Southeast Neighborhood Community Center. During the school year there is an after school program where kids come to play games, get help with homework, have a nutritious snack and here inspirational teaching. Activities continue at the center throughout the summer. The church also partners with Chemeketa Community College to provide GED or high school equivalency programs to the local community.

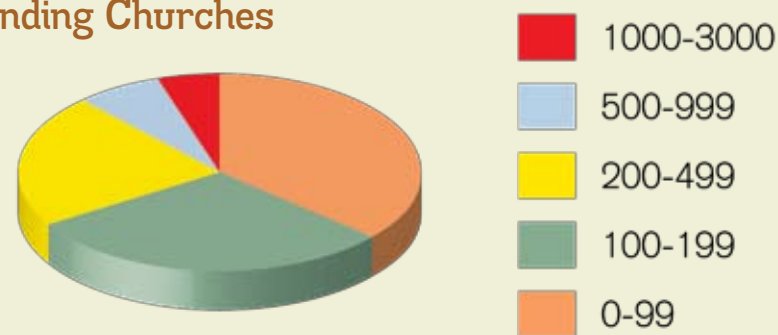




## Regional Breakdown of Responding Churches



## Average Weekly Attendance of Responding Churches



## Churches From 60 Denominations Participated in This Survey

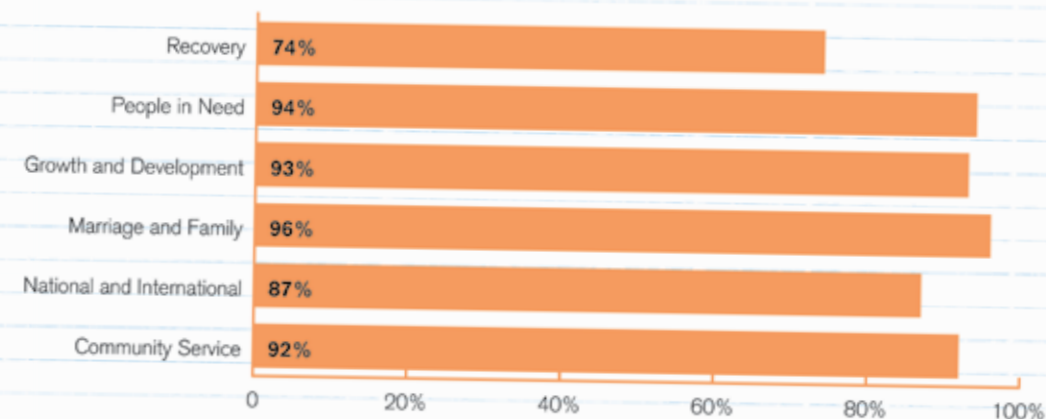
- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| ABC USA                                     | Free Methodist                 |
| American Baptist Churches                   | Friends                        |
| American Missionary Fellowship              | Full Gospel Community          |
| Anglican                                    | GARBC                          |
| Apostolic Christian Church                  | Independent                    |
| Assembly of God                             | Independent Bible Church       |
| Baptist                                     | Independent Christian Church   |
| Baptist General Conference                  | Inter-Denominational           |
| Catholic                                    | Interdenominational            |
| Christian                                   | LCMS                           |
| Christian & Missionary Alliance             | Lutheran                       |
| Christian Church                            | Nazarene                       |
| Christian Church (D.O.C.)                   | Non-Affiliated                 |
| Christian Reformed                          | North American Baptist         |
| Church of Christ                            | Northwest Conservative Baptist |
| Church of God, Anderson, Indiana            | Open Bible Churches            |
| Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints | PCA                            |
| Community Church                            | PCUSA                          |
| Confed. of Reformed Evangelical Churches    | Pentecostal Church of God      |
| Conservative Baptist                        | Presbyterian                   |
| ECNA  | Reformed Baptist               |
| Episcopal                                   | Roman Catholic                 |
| Evangelical                                 | Salvation Army                 |
| Evangelical Church of North America         | Seventh-Day Adventist          |
| Evangelical Covenant                        | Southern Baptist               |
| Evangelical Free                            | United Church of Christ        |
| Evangelical Friends                         | United Methodist               |
| Evangelical Methodist                       | Village Missions               |
| Evangelical Presbyterian Church             | Vineyard                       |
| Foursquare                                  | Wesleyan                       |

# ABOUT *the Survey*

## Survey Methodology

The Good Neighbor Church in Society Survey was a research project paid for and authorized by the Oregon Family Council Education Foundation. A survey questionnaire was mailed on March 2nd to 2,218 Oregon churches. From that mailing, 352 churches returned responses. This report reflects the compiled data from those responses. While these responses do not represent a scientific sampling, it does contain a broad cross-section of regions, denominations and congregation sizes.

## Oregon Churches Broad Category Summary



## The Oregon Family Council Education Foundation

The Oregon Family Council Education Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to providing information to Oregon leaders and its citizenry about public policy issues effecting the family, marriage and parenting. The Oregon Family Council Education Foundation has also been active in sponsoring voter registration activities in local churches, schools and colleges. Funding for the foundation comes primarily from individual donations.

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