

# Brethren in Christ Church Member Profile 2006

## About the study

The Church Member Profile 2006 is a cooperative research project involving three denominations: The Brethren in Christ, Mennonite Church USA and the Church of the Brethren. The project builds upon two earlier denominational studies (1972 and 1989) that involved five Anabaptist denominations. Using items from those earlier projects, it is possible to track changes in beliefs, values and practices over a 35-year period. A few new questions were added to the 2006 study in order to explore attitudes and concerns of members today.

## Survey responses and the BIC core values

The 2006 Church Member Profile provides a point-in-time snapshot of how we Brethren in Christ are living out the core values of the denomination as defined in *Focusing Our Faith*.

**1 Experiencing God's love and grace**  
We value the free gift of salvation in Christ Jesus and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

**99%** testify to having accepted Christ as Savior and Lord

**69%** describe their relationship with God as very close or close

**91.7%** believe Jesus died to complete God's plan of salvation

**62.7%** believe that salvation depends equally on one's beliefs and how one lives

**2 Believing the Bible**  
We value the Bible as God's authoritative Word, study it together, and build our lives on its truth.

**96%** believe the Bible is the inspired word of God

**36.2%** read or study the Bible on their own

**65.7%** ascribe equal authority to both the Old and New Testaments

**3 Worshipping God**  
We value heartfelt worship that is God-honoring, Spirit-directed, and life-changing.

**83.1%** attend church at least one or more times a week

In February 2006, an 18-page questionnaire was sent to a sample of 7,000 church members drawn from the three denominations (1,000 for the Brethren in Christ; 3,000 each for the Mennonite Church and the Church of the Brethren). Using a variety of follow-up strategies, a final sample for the Brethren in Christ was obtained with a response rate of approximately 73 percent.

Leadership for the Church Member Profile project has been provided by Donald B. Kraybill of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College. Assisting Kraybill are three sociologists each representing one of the denominations: Ron Burwell – BIC (Messiah College); Carl Bowman – Church of the Brethren (Bridgewater College); and Conrad Kanagy – Mennonite Church USA (Elizabethtown College). Support for the project was provided by the Young Center, the three denominations, MMA, MCC, and MDS.

(Worshipping God continued)

**94.3%** are inspired and strengthened by the worship services at their church

**83.4%** say that praising and glorifying God is very important to them

**94.1%** report that worship helps them feel connected to other believers

**4 Following Jesus**  
We value wholehearted obedience to Christ Jesus through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

**90.6%** believe that following Jesus in daily life is very important

**98.6%** say there was a time in their lives when they accepted Christ as Savior; 66.7% point to a specific moment of conversion

**93%** believe God has a specific plan for their life

**51.6%** believe the Spirit speaks to individuals directly

**5 Belonging to the community of faith**  
We value integrity in relationships and mutual accountability in the atmosphere of grace, love, and acceptance.

**94.9%** report that building strong bonds of community in the church is important or fairly important

**54.9%** mostly or completely agree that faith is a private matter between God and me

(Belonging to a community of faith continued)

**98.8%** say that expressing Christian love in all their relationships is important or fairly important to their faith commitment

**55.7%** participate in a small group or Bible study at least once a month

**94.6%** report that their relationship with their church is very important to them

## 6 Witnessing to the world

We value an active and loving witness for Christ to all people.

**92.5%** say that evangelizing non-believers is important or fairly important to their faith commitment

**29.6%** report that, at least once a month, they are involved in introducing someone to faith in Christ

**79.2%** invite non-Christians to visit their church on several occasions throughout the year

**31.1%** speak to someone outside their church or family about their faith at least once a week

## 7 Serving compassionately

We value serving others at their point of need, following the example of our Lord Jesus.

**86.7%** mostly or completely agree that their congregation has a strong commitment to serve the local community

**75.7%** feel that promoting social justice in the world is fairly or very important to their personal faith commitment

**49.5%** feel it is also important to serve others outside the church

**60.9%** assist neighbors in need several times a month

## 8 Pursuing peace

We value all human life and promote forgiveness, understanding, reconciliation, and nonviolent resolution of conflict.

**69.3%** point to Jesus' life and teaching as one of the most important reasons for pursuing peace

**40.7%** say peacemaking and nonviolence are very important

**24.9%** believe that it is wrong for Christians to fight in any war

**88.2%** identify peacemaking as a central theme of the Gospel

## 9 Living simply

We value uncluttered lives, which free us to love boldly, give generously, and serve joyfully.

**69.6%** give at least 10 percent of their household income to church and other charitable causes

**85.5%** feel that living a simple lifestyle is important or fairly important to their Christian witness

**62.2%** report having at least a fair amount of stress in their lives

## 10 Relying on God

We confess our dependence on God for everything, and seek to deepen our intimacy with him by living prayerfully.

**67.2%** believe God controls most of the events in their daily lives

**68.5%** selected fervent prayer as the most important of the denominational priorities as highlighted in the Impact 2010 plan

**76.2%** set aside time each day to pray

**55.9%** seek the Holy Spirit's guidance on a daily basis

**82.4%** appreciate the inclusion of personal faith testimonies as a regular part of worship services

### Demographics of the response group

#### Age:

≤ 35 years old	14.6%
36-45 years old	18.1%
46-55 years old	23.1%
56-65 years old	19.7%
≥ 66 years old	24.4%

#### Place of residence:

Rural setting	37.2%
Town of less than 50,000	44.8%
Medium city	12.9%
City of more than 250,000	5.1%

#### Annual household income

≤ \$25,000	14.1%
\$25,000-\$49,999	33.5%
\$50,000-\$74,999	29.6%
\$75,000-\$99,999	11.6%
\$100,000-\$149,999	8.0%
≥ \$150,000	3.2%