

Condition of the Professorate

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President, 1995-1997

An Historical Perspective

The roots of the NAPCE can be traced back to the National Association of Evangelicals which began in 1942. Growing out of the Church School Commission of the NAE, the National Sunday School Association began holding meetings in 1946. In the 1950s and the 1960s, the work of the NSSA was reflected in several commissions. One of these, the Research Commission, had as its emphasis the study of Christian education for the purpose of bringing together leading professors, authors, and practitioners in the field. Eventually, this group subdivided into what we currently know as the Professional Association of Christian Education (PACE) for church leaders and the North American Professors of Christian Education (NAPCE) for professors in the academic discipline.(1)

Since our early history no attempt has been made to document the membership of the NAPCE to record their demographic characteristics and institutional distinctives. It is the intent of this first national study to examine these elements with the hope that further study may facilitate communication among colleagues and proactive planning for our discipline's future.

A survey consisting of 52 questions was sent to the entire NAPCE mailing list in early 1995. A reminder card also went out one month later. I received 175 completed surveys. It is not possible to know the exact number of faculty teaching Christian education in North America but an educated guess is that there are about 300-400 professors in the field. The survey results which follow are based upon the returned surveys.

(1) Dr. Eileen Starr, "The History of the NAPCE." A paper written for her Ed.D. coursework at T.E.D.S. This is an extensive document which illustrates in great detail the historical development of the NAPCE.

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The board of directors and members of NAPCE would like to express their sincere appreciation to **Marlene Le Fever**, Manager of Church Services, for her many years of continued support and leadership in the field of Christian Education.

General Characteristics

Gender: 76% Male **Age Range:** 30 to 77 years

24% Female **Average Age:** 49 years

Age Distribution: 30 - 40 27

41 - 50 76

51 - 60 49

61 - 70 18

70+ 5

Marital Status: 82% married **Have children?:** 80% Yes 20% No

12% single **# of Children:** Range = 1 to 7 Average = 2.65

As was expected, the majority of the membership of the NAPCE is comprised of white Anglo middle-aged men. Most are married and have several children. This raises questions about both gender and racial balance in our departments in relation to students within our institutions. Many of our institutions have CE departments with a considerable number of female students, yet have no female instructors to provide role models, mentor relationships, etc. Where are our female students going for the kind of spiritual formation and ministry preparation that they need? The same can be said for ethnic minorities who find few same-race mentors at their institution.

Academic Background

<p>Undergraduate Degree 7% BRE 68% BA 21% BS 4% Other</p>	<p>Masters Degree 33% MRE 43% MA 12% MDiv 11% Other</p>
<p>Is Your Masters in CE? 68% Yes 32% No</p>	
<p>Doctoral Degree 45% EdD 39% PhD 12% DMin 4% Other</p>	<p>Doctoral Degree 6% Bible/Theo Specialization 11% Christian Ed 43% Education 6% Psychology 34% Other</p>

NAPCE professors would appear to have excellent academic qualifications for their field of instruction. A very high percentage (96%) of the faculty had completed their masters degree. In addition 81% had completed their doctoral degree. In terms of their areas of specialization, there was a broad range represented. As the data indicates, most professors do not have their doctorate in the areas of Bible, Theology, or Christian education. A large percentage (43%) have their doctoral degree in the field of education or other (34%) academic discipline. The category labeled "Other" included specializations in Intercultural studies, Family studies, Sociology, and Management.

Work Experience

Full-time Church Min. Exp.	Range = 1 to 38 years Average = 12 years
Part-time Church Min. Exp.	Range = 1 to 40 years Average = 10 years
Currently on Church Staff?	27% Yes 73% No
Hours per wk. on Staff?	Average = 21 hours (for those who serve on staff)
Years Teaching C. E.	Range = 1 to 50 years Average 14 years

158 faculty (90%) have worked full-time on staff at a church or para-church organization. Of those who have worked full-time on staff, the average professor has served for approximately 12 years full time. 74 faculty (42%) have worked part-time on staff at a church or para-church organization. Of those who have worked part-time on staff, the average professor has served for approximately 10 years part-time. It was somewhat surprising to note that only 27% of the faculty currently serve on a church staff. Given the low salaries which are evident in the field of Christian higher education, a higher percentage of faculty serving on church staff for the purpose of supplemental income would have been expected. Besides, how are we staying current in our field if we are not practicing it ourselves?

Scholarship Completed

Published an Article? 67% Yes 33% No
of Published Articles Range = 1 to 199 Average = 13 articles
Published a Book? 38% Yes 62% No
of Published Books Range = 1 to 30 Average = 4 books

What Prevents Publication?

11% Fear of writing
70% No time to write
4% I don't know how to write for publication
3% I don't feel that I have anything significant to say
2% I have no desire to write
11% Other: not my calling, dissertation burnout, lazy

Given the demand of many institutions among professors to "publish or perish," it would appear that faculty within our field are actively engaged in publishing. The vast majority of the faculty (67%) have written articles which have been published and nearly forty percent have published a book. The total number of books which have been published by faculty in our discipline is 242 books. Faculty are prepared to write even more if their schedules permitted time to write. Even in spite of these large numbers of faculty publications, it must be noted that one-third of our faculty have never published one article. Here is an obvious area for faculty development within our membership.

Career Distinctives

Are You Currently Tenured?	42% Yes	58% No
Academic Rank Structure Present?	87% Yes	13% No
What is Your Rank? 40% Full Professor	40% Full Professor	
	29% Assoc. Professor	
	17% Assist. Professor	
	13% Instructor	
Full Professor Salary	Range = \$22,000 to \$75,000	Average = \$42,600
Associate Prof. Salary	Range = \$25,000 to \$60,000	Average = \$36,000
Assistant Prof. Salary	Range = \$22,000 to \$47,000	Average = \$32,150
Instructor Salary	Range = \$ 2,000 to \$48,000	Average = \$21,700
Average CE Prof. Salary	Range = \$ 2,000 to \$75,000	Average = \$35,000
Considered Leaving?	41% said they had seriously considered leaving their position within the past five years	
If you Were to Leave, Where Would You Go?	52% teach at another institution	
	14% return to full-time church ministry	
	14% enter administration at another institution	
	11% embark on the mission field	
	3 % pursue secular employment	
	1% continue my education	
	4% other: either retire or select one of the above	

When one considers the cost of purchasing a medium priced home and providing for a family of five, the salaries which are being paid are quite low. This comes as no surprise to those who are struggling to balance their family's needs with take-home pay. The data indicates that 70% of our members are receiving salaries between \$22,000 and \$75,000.

With entry level salaries in the low \$20,000s it will be difficult to attract qualified individuals into the field in the future. It is no wonder that so many faculty have considered moving to another institution. However, what is surprising is that many of them would remain in the field, but simply move to another institution. The perception is that salaries increase with a new job. Recent experience indicates that when a faculty member leaves his/her institution to teach at another one, it creates a domino effect felt throughout a number of schools. Faculty move from bible institute to college/university and then on to seminary. The end result is a constant need for faculty at the bible institute level of instruction.

Institutional Relations

Your Institutional Category	CE Housed in which Department
42% Seminary	56% Christian education department
28% Liberal Arts University	29% Other (Christian min., Prof. studies, etc.)
27% Bible Institute/college	8% Bible/Theology department
2% Other	7% Religion department

What Academic Levels are Offered at Your School?

59% Undergraduate

57% Graduate

26% Doctoral

Number of Undergraduate Students

Range = 3 to 325

Average = 60

Compared to 5 Years Ago

67% We have more UG CE students

33% We have less UG CE students

Number of Graduate Students

Range = 1 to 1500

Average = 198

Compared to 5 Years Ago

58% We have more graduate CE students

42% We have less graduate CE students

Number of Doctoral Students

Range = 2 to 85

Average = 38

Number of CE Faculty at Your School?

Full-time: Range = 1 to 36 / Average = 4.2

Part-time: Range = 0 to 16 / Average = 2.7

In regards to the number of majors in Various Fields at Your School, How Does CE Rank?

11% Seen as the top 5% of majors

39% Seen as top 10 to 33% of majors

15% About the 50th percentile of majors

36% Seen as the bottom half of majors

What is the Current Institutional Attitude Toward the CE Dept. at Your School?

13% Downsizing our department

57% No change taking place

30% We are increasing our department

What is the General Perception of CE Students on Your Campus?

19% Very Positive

62% Positive

16% Neutral

2% Negative

0% Very Negative

What is the General Perception of the CE by the Institutional Administration?

23% Very Positive

54% Positive

21% Neutral

2% Negative

0% Very Negative

How many of our NAPCE members also have an administrative assignment:

57% have administrative responsibilities in addition to teaching

Research reflects a balance between those teaching in a seminary (42%) and those teaching in other institutions (57%) within our membership. Even among non-seminaries there is a relative balance between those in Christian liberal arts institutions (28%) and those in a Bible college/institute setting (27%). Likewise, there is a balance between those teaching in graduate programs and those in undergraduate programs. Some teach in both, which I may represent those teaching in a university context.

There has been some debate in recent years about the overall condition of the major across North America. It would appear that Christian education is relatively strong and will have a vibrant existence for the foreseeable future. The majority of our departments are experiencing more undergraduate students (67%) and graduate students (58%) compared to five years ago. In addition, only 13% of our institutions are downsizing their Christian education departments. In fact, 30% are increasing their departments while 57% are remaining constant. It would appear that those schools which downsized or restructured in the late-80's were the exceptions and were not the ones setting the pace for the rest of us.

Half of our faculty consider their Christian education students to be in the top 33% of their student population rankings. In addition, it would appear that institutions are looking favorably on both Christian education students and Christian education departments as well. Christian education students are perceived in a positive light (81% combined) on their campuses and Christian education departments enjoy a 77% favorable rating by their institutional administrations (as perceived by the CE faculty themselves).

On a final note, it was interesting to see that nearly 60% of our NAPCE members hold some form of administrative assignment on their campuses. This included positions such as President, Vice President, Provost, Associate Provost, Dean, and Divisional/Department Chair, Undergraduate Coordinator, etc. In many respects, we have moved into positions of leadership at our educational institutions and this can only continue to strengthen our future status and institutional influence in the years ahead.

Personal Reflections

1. Would you encourage a young college student to major in Christian education at this time?

The general consensus is that Christian education would be a worthwhile major for students entering a college program today. However, there were some concerns expressed about the feasibility of a woman entering the field.

2. What are your strongest predictions about the future of Christian education as a field of study or a vocation? A summary of varied ideas includes:

- There is a move toward more specialized areas of service away from the generalist role
- We are gaining more of a reliance upon technology and computerization
- There will be greater emphasis upon Men's Ministry
- We must adjust our mindset toward living in a post-modern, post-Christian cultural era
- We will move away from an emphasis upon Sunday School toward small groups instead
- Seminaries will lose their appeal as more churches prefer to "grow their own" pastors
- Ethnic representation in the field will increase
- The needs of urban ministry must be addressed in the future

It was interesting to note that those above the age of 50 had a more negative view of the future compared to those whose age was below the mean.

3. What trends have you observed in the teaching of Christian education in the past five years? A summary of the general trends includes:

- Far more students are coming from blended and broken homes
- Students are coming to class with a great deal more personal "baggage"
- Much more emphasis upon research in the field

- More of an emphasis upon mentoring relationships as a means of ministry training
- Churches are moving toward computerization at a quicker pace than ever before
- This new generation of students are not willing to work as hard as the previous one
- There is a growing sense of professionalism in the position
- There is a strong emphasis upon the social sciences and their contribution to our field
- Young faculty seem to have a greater commitment to scholarship

4. What issues would you like to see addressed in future NAPCE conferences? A summary of suggested topics/themes includes:

- Professional faculty development areas
- Writing for publication
- More theological integration topics
- More missions-related topics (e.g. taking CE cross-culturally)
- Training CE professionals for leadership in the Christian School Movement
- Multi-ethnic perspectives of Christian education
- Joint meetings with APRRE and PACE on an alternating basis
- Better dialog with senior pastors

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