

**United Methodist Communications:  
2004 Media Impact and Awareness Research  
for the  
Igniting Ministry Campaign**

Research conducted and report by:  
**Barna Research Group, Ltd.**  
Ventura, California

Research commissioned by:  
**United Methodist Communications (UMCom)**  
Nashville, Tennessee

June 2004

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	pages 3-4
<b>Summary of Findings</b>	
1: United Methodist Church Advertising Recall .....	pages 5-8
2: Assessing the Effectiveness of the Advertising Messages .....	pages 9-17
3: Impressions of The United Methodist Church.....	pages 18-19
4: Willingness to Visit a United Methodist Church.....	pages 20-21
5: Test Church Research .....	pages 22-23
6: How Pastors Feel About the Igniting Ministry Campaign .....	pages 24-25
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	pages 26-27

# Introduction

## **1. The Goals of this Project**

The research described in this report reflects the fourth year of media impact research and was conducted in April 2004. The research was designed to measure the effectiveness of the Igniting Ministry campaign.

The stated Igniting Ministry goals are three-fold:

- To increase awareness and recognition of the United Methodist Church's basic beliefs
- To foster among non-members (unchurched) a positive feeling and willingness to visit a United Methodist church
- To renew a sense of commitment in United Methodists

## **2. Research Description**

The research consisted of two phases:

**Phase 1.** Telephone interviews with 1,204 "seekers," to gain insight into their perceptions of the Igniting Ministry communications, their impressions of The United Methodist Church (hereafter, UMC), and their willingness to visit a UMC congregation in the future.

**Phase 2.** The second phase of the research included the responses of 164 UMC test churches. These churches measured and reported first-time and total attendance during weekend worship services for 12 weeks (March, April, and May). Test churches also provided attendance numbers for 2003 and 2000 as a baseline.

Additionally, the Pastors of test churches were asked to complete a six-question survey regarding their perceptions of the Igniting Ministry campaign. The responses help measure the final objective: *renewing a sense of commitment among United Methodists.*

## **3. Research Methodology**

The first phase included a sample of 1,204 individuals in the UMC target "seeker" audience – that is, someone (1) who is currently ages 21 to 60, (2) who does not attend a United Methodist church, and (3) who is a "seeker," described as:

- a. An unchurched or marginally churched person who feels like something is missing or who is searching for something spiritually **and** who is open to the idea that a church might be a reasonable option to answer those needs.
- b. A church attender who feels emotional discomfort or who is searching for something spiritually **and** who indicates his or her spiritual needs are not being met at his or her current church.

The research used a random sample of adults in five markets (Baltimore, Raleigh-Durham, Indianapolis, San Antonio, and Portland). The sample of 1,204 seekers means the research results for the total sample are accurate to within plus or minus three percentage points, at the 95% confidence level. The research was conducted from April 9, 2004 through April 25, 2004.

The second phase relied upon a random recruitment of United Methodist churches to serve as “test” churches. In all, 164 participated by returning information about their church’s first-time and total attendance. The majority of these churches were recruited from the same five markets as the consumer research. However, many of the test churches were selected from other areas, with a mix of metro and urban churches as well as representation from small, medium, and large congregations. Test churches were not recruited dependent on their participation in the Igniting Ministry campaign.

#### **4. Seeker Definition**

In addition to the elements described above, the seeker target audience description used in the 2004 study relied upon the following elements:

2. ***Having a “hole in the soul”*** – Each participant had to express some sense of discomfort with his or her current life status:
  - a. something feels missing from their life
  - b. searching for meaning or purpose
  - c. having emotional pain or frustration that they would like to resolve
  - d. seeking or striving for something better spiritually in life
3. ***Being dissatisfied with their church*** – Among churched respondents, people could qualify for the UMC target audience by saying they are not satisfied with or committed to their current congregation, or they would be willing to explore other church options.
4. ***Willing to try a church*** – Among unchurched adults (as well as infrequent church attenders), respondents could be qualified as part of the UMC target by indicating they were open to trying a church.
5. ***Self-description as a seeker*** – People could also identify as part of the seeker target by saying either that they “are searching for something different in life, there is some meaning not currently answered by their church experience” or that they “are not necessarily actively seeking, but there are needs not being met by their current church experience.” (These statements were used in 2001 to define a seeker; they were retained to facilitate greater comparability from year to year.)

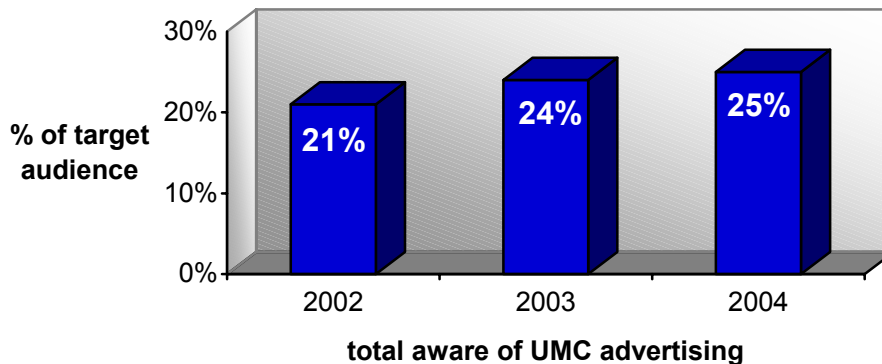
With this enhanced definition, and a refinement to the recall/awareness questions we asked this year, the total awareness of UMC advertising reached 25%.

# Summary of Findings

## 1. United Methodist Church Advertising Recall

### Total Awareness

Total awareness (all respondents who stated they were aware of UMC advertising) of the campaign increased in 2004 to 25%. Though not statistically significant, the awareness of the UMC advertising shows forward movement from 21% in 2002 and 24% in 2003.



---

---

### Comparisons to 2001

The awareness measurement used in 2001 was different than that used in 2002 through 2004.<sup>1</sup> But to provide an apples-to-apples comparison we continued to ask the same question in 2002 through 2004. In analyzing this indicator, awareness of UMC advertising also showed a percentage-point increase in 2004 compared to previous years: it was 14% in 2001, went to 15% in 2002, climbed to 18% in 2003, and is currently at 19%.

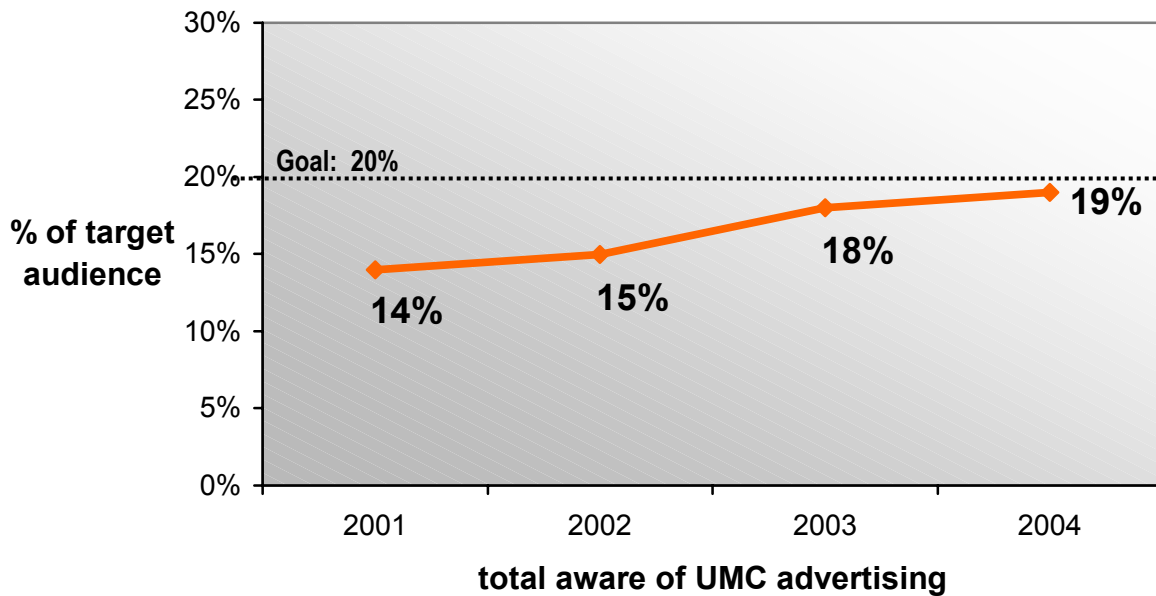
---

<sup>1</sup> In 2001, only those who said they saw “religious advertising” were asked about the UMC campaign. Since the Igniting Ministry campaign does not “feel” like religious advertising to many, some people who may have observed the UMC advertising were left out of the mix. Since 2001, we rectified this by asking *all* adults in the target audience about their awareness of the UMC advertising, not just those who recalled seeing religious advertising.

## Measurable Objectives - Total Awareness

(As Measured by Barna Research National Survey)

2001-2004 Quadrennial Goal - 20% Recall



### Media Penetration

Television was again validated in 2004 as the primary medium carrying the United Methodist message (62% of those aware of UMC advertising said they were exposed to television advertising). The other primary media were newspapers (11%), outdoor signs (9%), mail (6%), and radio (5%). No statistically significant differences emerged compared to 2003.

**Table 1: Where People Recall Seeing a UMC Advertisement**

There were no significant differences between 2004 and 2003.

	2001	2002	2003	2004
• Television .....	78%	63%	61%	62%
• Newspaper .....	2%	13%	10%	11%
• Outdoor .....	5%	8%	9%	9%
• Mail.....	1%	4%	4%	6%
• Radio.....	7%	10%	7%	5%
• Other .....	1%	2%	2%	1%
• Don't Know/Can't Remember .....	7%	8%	6%	4%
Sample Size .....	178	237	291	297

**Advertising Recall by Market**

The UMC advertising generated slightly more recall among residents of Indianapolis (29%) and Baltimore (29%) than the norm (25%). Portland experienced the lowest ad recall, at 18%, of the five markets assessed. Unaided awareness of the UMC advertising was statistically identical across the five markets.

**Table 2: Advertising Recall, by Market**  
 Arrows refer to statistically significant differences between markets.

	Total	RD	IND	BALT	SAN	PORT
2004						
• total awareness of UMC advertising .....	25%	23%	29%↑	29%↑	25%	18%↓
• unaided awareness of UMC advertising .....	4	5	5	5	3	3

Key: RD = Raleigh-Durham; IND = Indianapolis; BALT = Baltimore; SA = San Antonio; PORT = Portland (OR)

## Advertising Recall by Demographic Segment

Within the 25% of the total population who recalled hearing or seeing UMC advertising, the highest recall by demographic group (see Table 4) was found among African-Americans (30%).

The lowest recall rates were observed among those in their 40s (19%) and males (21%).

Upon comparing the awareness levels in 2004 to those of 2003, there were no statistically significant differences in awareness among the demographic segments listed in Table 4.

**Table 4: Advertising Recall, by Population Segment**

% aware of UMC advertising – no significant differences from 2003 to 2004

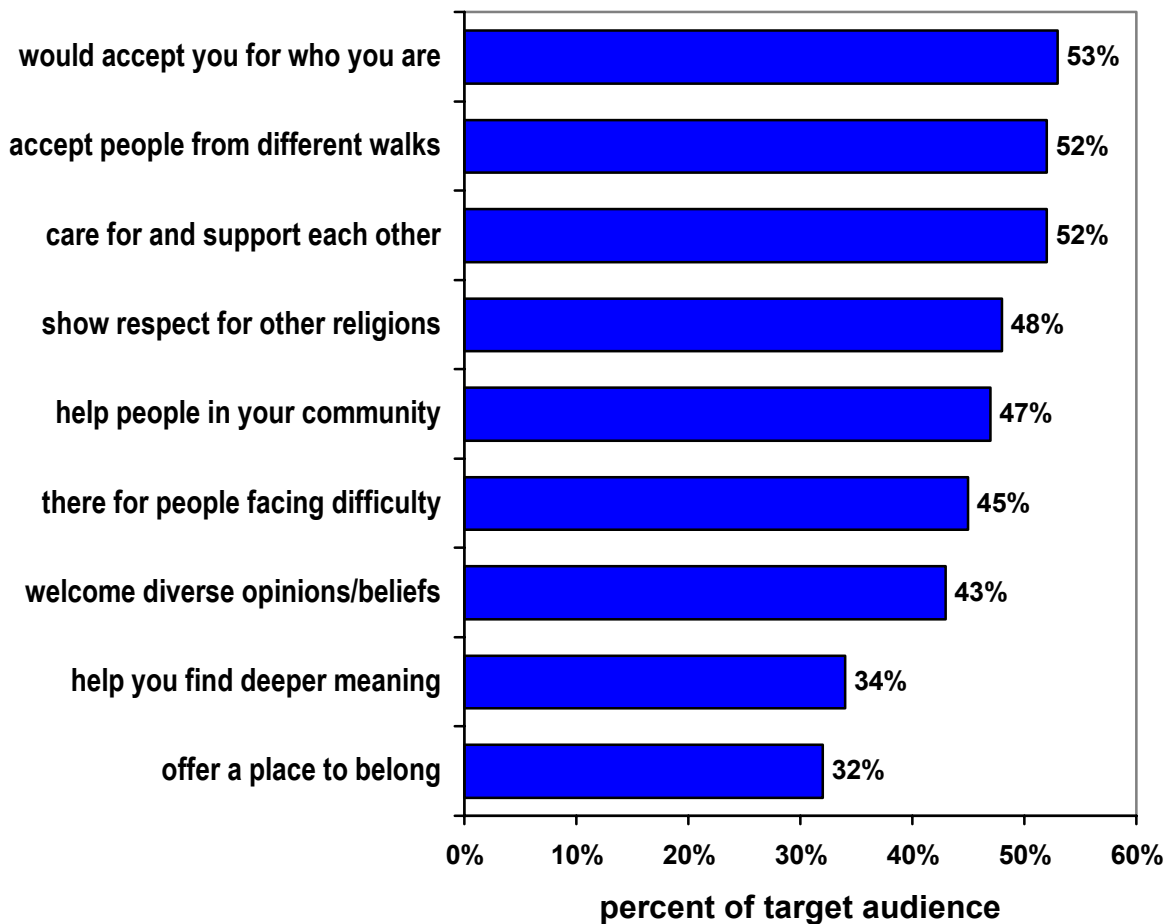
	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>21%</b> .....	<b>24%</b> .....	<b>25%</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
• male .....	19.....	23.....	21
• female .....	23.....	25.....	27
<b>Education</b>			
• high school or less.....	21.....	26.....	25
• some college .....	20.....	23.....	27
• college graduate.....	22.....	24.....	22
<b>Age</b>			
• 20s .....	18.....	28.....	25
• 30s .....	22.....	24.....	25
• 40s .....	26.....	22.....	19
• 50s .....	19.....	23.....	25
<b>Generation</b>			
• Busters .....	19.....	26.....	25
• Boomers.....	25.....	23.....	22
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
• white.....	22.....	23.....	22
• black.....	21.....	32.....	30
• Hispanic.....	24.....	20.....	24
<b>Have children under 18?</b>			
• yes.....	22.....	25.....	23
• have two or more kids .....	24.....	24.....	26
• no .....	21.....	25.....	22
<b>Marital status</b>			
• married .....	21.....	22.....	23
• never married .....	19.....	26.....	26
• divorced.....	23.....	24.....	28

## 2. Assessing the Effectiveness of the Advertising Messages

### Perceptions of The United Methodist Church

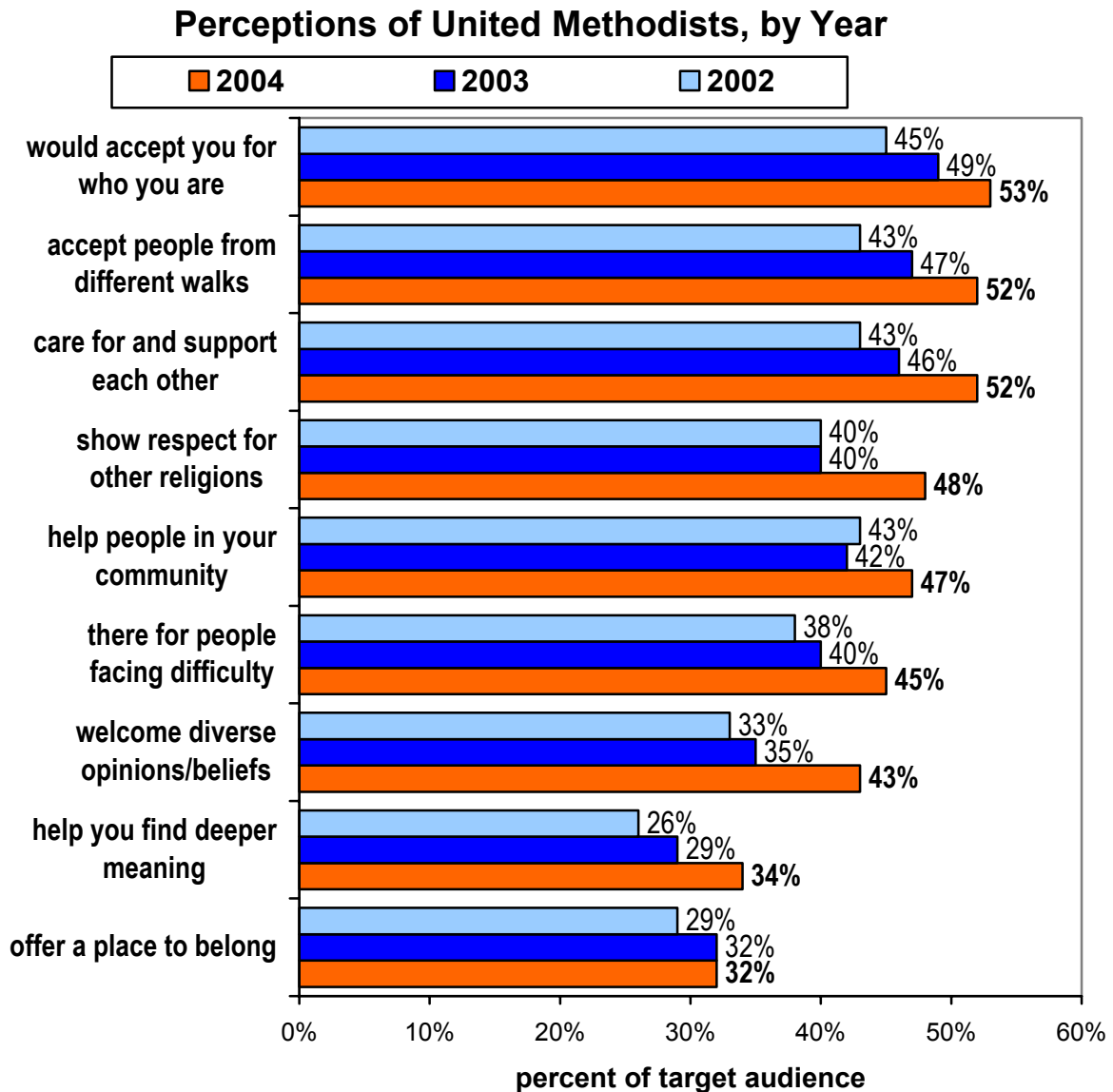
The study assessed nine different statements about The United Methodist Church in order to better understand how the United Methodist denomination is positioned in the minds of the target audience. These statements reflect the intended communications within the advertising messages developed for the campaign. **As noted last year, the advertising continues to work in communicating key UMC characteristics – for most of the statements the highest percentage of people agreed with the concepts. It’s also important to note that the advertising is working in part because it combats a typical challenge that denominations face: indistinct positioning.**

### Perceptions of United Methodists



## Comparisons to Previous Years

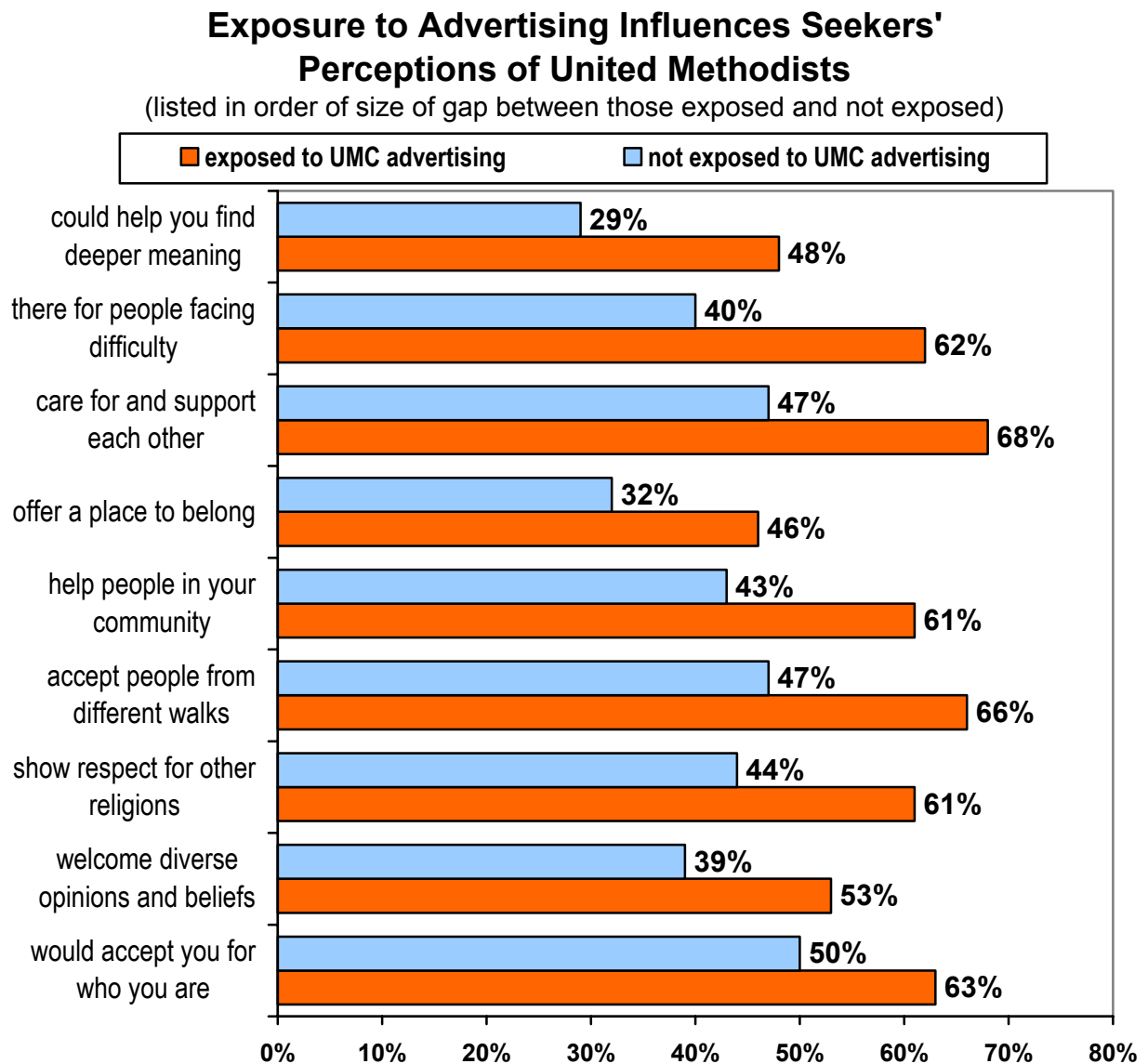
**Overall, there has been significant and favorable growth in the perceptions of United Methodist since last year and especially since 2002.** Exploring the differences between 2002 and 2003 we found that eight of the nine perceptions had become more favorable (well beyond the range of sampling error). The only statement that was unchanged from 2003 was that United Methodists “offer a place to belong” (32% in both 2003 and 2004). Furthermore, as shown in the chart below, the increases in the positive positioning of the United Methodists are even more substantial when compared to 2002.



## Ad Exposure and UMC Perceptions

Survey research is only correlative in nature, and correlations do not imply causation. With that limitation in mind, the data show that those who recall seeing or hearing the UMC advertising hold more favorable views of the UMC than is true of those who do not recall such advertising. **The Igniting Ministry campaign has helped many of those who know nothing or who are neutral about the denomination by educating them about the UMC's distinctives.**

As shown below, those who were exposed to the UMC advertising were far more likely than were those not exposed to be able to associate many of United Methodist's core attributes. **It appears the Igniting Ministry campaign is educating its audience about the core attributes of the UMC.**



For instance, compared to those who had not seen or heard UMC advertising, those respondents who saw the advertising were:

- 66% more likely to say that United Methodists *could help you find deeper meaning and purpose in life* (48% among the exposed versus 29% among the unexposed)
- 55% more likely to say that United Methodists *are there for people facing personal difficulty* (62% of those exposed to the advertising felt this way compared to 40% of those not exposed)
- 45% more likely to say that United Methodists *care for and support each other* (68% versus 47%)
- 44% more likely to say that United Methodists *offer a place where you could belong* (46% versus 32%)
- 42% more likely to say that United Methodists *help people in your community* (61% among the exposed versus 43% among the unexposed)
- 40% more likely to say that United Methodists *accept people from all walks of life* (66% versus 47%)
- 39% more likely to say that United Methodists *show respect for other religions* (61% versus 44%)
- 36% more likely to say that United Methodists *welcome people with diverse opinions and beliefs* (53% versus 39%)
- 26% more likely to say that United Methodists *would accept you for who you are* (63% versus 50%)

## Believability

**UMC’s 2004 campaign registered high scores for believability: in all 75% of those exposed to the advertising claimed that the advertising was believable.** That includes 38% of adults who said the UMC advertising was “very believable.” Only 9% felt the ads were not believable, which was on par with previous years, while 11% said they were “neither believable nor unbelievable.” In comparing the 2004 data to that of 2003, there were no significant differences in the perceived believability of the ads.

**Table 5: The Believability of the UMC Message**

There were no statistically significant differences when 2004 data were compared to 2003.

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
• very believable .....	40%.....	30% .....	37%.....	38%
• very or somewhat believable* .....	75%.....	70% .....	76%.....	75%
• neither believable nor unbelievable .....	5%.....	14% .....	7% .....	11%
• very unbelievable .....	1%.....	4% .....	3%.....	4%
• very or somewhat unbelievable* .....	4%.....	11% .....	5%.....	9%
• not sure .....	16%.....	6% .....	12%.....	5%
• <i>sample size</i> .....	178.....	237 .....	291 .....	297

Percent of those who had seen/heard UMC advertising \* aggregate percentages

## Importance

**Overall, 47% of respondents described the message as very or somewhat important to them, including 1 in every 5 respondents (19%) who described the advertising as “very” important.** The 47%-figure represents a 10-percentage-point increase from 2003 (37%). One-third of those exposed to the advertising (33%) said the ads were not important, while 16% were neutral.

**Table 6: The Importance of the UMC Message**

Arrows refer to statistically significant differences between 2004 and 2003.

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
• very important.....	12%.....	13% .....	19%↑
• very or somewhat important* .....	42%.....	37% .....	47%↑
• neither important nor unimportant .....	19%.....	19% .....	16%
• not at all important.....	19%.....	21% .....	20%
• not too or not at all important* .....	34%.....	38% .....	33%
• not sure .....	6%.....	7% .....	4%
• <i>sample size</i> .....	237.....	291 .....	297

Percent of those who had seen/heard UMC advertising. \* aggregate percentages

## **Segmentation Analysis -- Demographics**

Table 7 (shown on next page) explores various demographic variables and how those factors correlated with perceptions of UMC advertising. The research revealed the following insights:

- **Importance:** People who gave the UMC advertising above-average marks for importance were seekers in their 30s and blacks. We also found that socio-economic status was correlated with perceived importance of the ads: those with less income and less education tended to ascribe more importance to the advertising than did college graduates or high-income households. Other groups who were less likely than average to say the advertising was important included men, those in their 20s and in their 50s, members of the Baby Boom generation, and whites.
- **Believability:** The advertising was rated as believable by a strong majority of all the demographic segments we explored. Those who were more likely than average to describe the advertising as believable were women, those in their 20s and 30s (i.e., members of the Buster generation), blacks, and those with two or more children under 18. The segments who were least likely to feel the advertising was believable were men, college graduates, and whites.
- **Comparisons to 2002:** In comparing the perspectives of demographic groups between 2004 and 2003, there were several intriguing patterns of note:
  - There were increases in *perceived importance of the advertising* across nearly every demographic segment we explored, which corresponded to the over rise in believability (from 37% in 2003 to 47% in 2004). The exceptions were as follows: Baby Boomers and those divorced exhibited the same levels of importance as they did in 2003.
  - When it came to *perceived believability of the ads*, the following demographic groups showed increases since 2003: incomes of \$50K to \$74K (from 71% in 2003 to 78% in 2004); Busters (from 74% to 85%); blacks (from 75% to 84%); and parents with 2+ kids (from 70% to 87%). The survey also found decreased levels of believability among men (from 70% to 59%); among college graduates (from 80% to 69%); among high-income households (from 84% to 75%); among whites (from 77% to 70%); and among divorced individuals (from 83% to 76%).

**Table 7: Importance and Believability, by Demographic Segment**

	very/somewhat <u>important*</u>	very/somewhat <u>believable*</u>
• Total.....	47%	75%
<b>Gender</b>		
• male .....	40%↓	59%↓
• female .....	51%	83%↑
<b>Education</b>		
• high school or less.....	54%↑	79%
• some college .....	46%	77%
• college graduate.....	36%↓	69%↓
<b>Household pre-tax income</b>		
• \$24K or less .....	53%↑	77%
• \$25K to \$49K.....	48%	72%
• \$50K to \$74K.....	42%	78%
• \$75K+.....	39%↓	75%
<b>Age</b>		
• 20s .....	38%↓	86%↑
• 30s .....	58%↑	80%↑
• 40s .....	45%	73%
• 50s .....	33%↓	79%
<b>Generation</b>		
• Busters (ages 20 to 38).....	49%	85%↑
• Boomers (ages 39 to 57).....	40%↓	73%
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
• white.....	38%↓	70%↓
• black.....	59%↑	84%↑
<b>Have children under 18?</b>		
• yes.....	50%	79%
• no .....	43%	72%
• have two or more kids .....	51%	87%↑
<b>Marital status</b>		
• married .....	47%	78%
• all unmarried.....	46%	72%
• never married .....	46%	71%
• divorced.....	44%	76%

\*aggregate percentages = reflects those who said advertising was very/somewhat important / believable.

## Segmentation Analysis – Psychographics

Table 8 (shown on next page) explores various “psychographic” and lifestyle variables and how those factors correlated with perceptions of UMC advertising. The research revealed the following insights:

- ***Importance:*** The UMC advertising generated above-average importance ratings among unchurched individuals who felt that a church could help them find fulfillment in life; among those who were looking for a church to participate in; and among those who said they might consider attending a church more regularly someday. The survey also pointed out that those who “rarely” attend church were more likely than average to find the advertising important. **Each of these psychographic characteristics is perfectly aligned with the campaign’s target audience, further demonstrating that the campaign “speaks” effectively to its target audience – unchurched adults who are open to attending a church.**
- ***Believability:*** Above-average ratings of believability were found among people who: are “not very committed to their church,” those who are “willing to try a new church sometime,” those who “want a better church,” and those who “frequently” attend church (though these frequent church attenders describe themselves as spiritually seeking despite their church attendance). Also, Baptists resonated to the believability of the ads in better-than-average fashion. On the other hand, those who “never” attend a church were less likely than average to say the ads were believable.
- ***Comparisons to 2002:***
  - In terms of *perceived importance*, the advertising generated better ratings overall in 2004 than was the case in 2003. This was particularly true among unchurched seekers (as opposed to those seekers loosely aligned with a congregation). The only segments that rated the importance of the advertising the same in 2003 and 2004 were churching adults who were not very committed to their church and those who said they were willing to try a new church sometime.
  - The *perceived believability* of the ads was very consistent from last year to this. The increases were observed among those who want a better church (from 71% to 86%) and among those who frequently attend a church (from 76% to 84%). The only decline in believability was among those who never attend a church.

**Table 8: Importance and Believability, by Psychographic Segment**

	very or somewhat <b><u>important*</u></b>	very or somewhat <b><u>believable**</u></b>
• Total.....	47%	75%
<b>General psychographics</b>		
• seeking or striving for something better in life .....	50%	79%
• something feels missing from [your] life.....	52%	76%
• searching for meaning and purpose .....	52%	78%
• have emotional pain or frustration in [your] life .....	50%	79%
<b>Psychographics of churched adults</b>		
• not very committed to [your] current church .....	42%	81% ↑
• willing to try a new church sometime .....	41% ↓	83% ↑
• want a better church.....	50%	86% ↑
<b>Psychographics of unchurched adults</b>		
• feel a church can help you find personal fulfillment ....	62% ↑	76%
• looking for a church where [you] can participate .....	61% ↑	76%
• might consider attending a church more someday .....	57% ↑	75%
<b>Church attendance</b>		
• never .....	42%	54% ↓
• rarely .....	54% ↑	76%
• sometimes .....	51%	74%
• frequently.....	42%	84% ↑
<b>Denominational affiliation (if any)</b>		
• Baptist .....	47%	82% ↑
• Catholic .....	47%	72%
*aggregate percentages = reflects those who said advertising was <u>very/somewhat important</u>		
**aggregate percentages = reflects those who said advertising was <u>very/somewhat believable</u>		

### 3. Impressions of The United Methodist Church

#### Overall Impressions

In total, 36% of all respondents said their impression of The United Methodist Church was very or somewhat favorable. That is statistically unchanged from 2002. Half – 54% – were either neutral or not sure. Only 10% of respondents said that their impression was unfavorable.

**Table 9: Impressions of The United Methodist Church**

Percent of all respondents; no statistically significant differences from 2003 to 2004.

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
• very favorable.....	11%.....	12% .....	11%
• somewhat favorable .....	28%.....	25% .....	25%
• neither favorable or unfavorable .....	38%.....	36% .....	39%
• not sure .....	14%.....	18% .....	15%
• unfavorable.....	9%.....	10% .....	10%

#### Ad Exposure and United Methodist Church Impressions

Those who had seen the UMC advertising were nearly twice as likely as those who had not to hold a favorable view of The United Methodist Church (50% to 31%, respectively) – a 19-percentage-point gap. Overall, 3 in 5 of the non-exposed group possessed non-substantive views of the UMC (59%), compared to just 1 in 3 (37%) among those exposed. **The correlation suggests – and strongly so – that the advertising effectively shifts people’s attitudes about The United Methodist Church. Especially, the advertising influences people who have limited awareness of the denomination to feel more favorable.**

**Table 10: Views of The United Methodist Church, by Advertising Exposure**

Percent of those exposed, (n=297)

	<i>exposed to UMC advertising?</i>	
	<u>yes</u>	<u>no</u>
• very favorable.....	19%.....	8%
• somewhat favorable .....	31%.....	23%
• neither favorable or unfavorable .....	31%.....	41%
• not sure .....	6%.....	18%
• unfavorable.....	12%.....	9%

**Overall Impressions of the UMC by Market**

Indianapolis (40%) and San Antonio (40%) were tied with the largest favorability ratings. Raleigh-Durham (39%) and Baltimore (36%) were a close second and third.

Portland seekers showed the lowest favorability scores of the five markets, with 25% favorability. Also the survey showed that just 5% of seekers in Portland rated the UMC as very favorable, compared to 12% among the other four markets. Those lower-than-average percentages are at least partly explained by the fact that Portland also generates the highest neutral/not sure positioning (66%).

There were no statistically significant differences when it came to unfavorable positioning. The percentages ranged from 8% unfavorable among Indianapolis respondents to 12% among San Antonio residents. Notice that seekers in Portland were no more likely than average (10%) to possess unfavorable opinions of the UMC. This emphasizes that the challenge in Portland in 2004, much like other markets, relates to non-substantive perceptions, not negative ones.

**Table 12: Overall Impressions of the UMC by Market**

Arrows refer to statistically significant differences by market.

	Total	RD	IND	BALT	SAN	PORT
• very favorable.....	11%.....	13% .....	11% .....	14%.....	12% .....	5%↓
• total favorable (very and somewhat)* .....	36%.....	39% .....	40% .....	36%.....	40% .....	25%↓
• total neutral/not sure* .....	54%.....	52% .....	52% .....	54%.....	49% .....	66%↑
• total unfavorable (very and somewhat)* .....	10%.....	9% .....	8% .....	10%.....	12% .....	10%

\* aggregate percentages

Key: RD = Raleigh-Durham; IND = Indianapolis; BALT = Baltimore; SA = San Antonio; PORT = Portland (OR)

## 4. Willingness to Visit a United Methodist Church

### Willingness to Visit a UMC

**Half (49%) of the 2004 target audience said they would be either very or somewhat willing to visit a local United Methodist congregation.** That is slightly higher than 2003 – 47% – though within the range of sampling error. Still, it represents a 14-point increase since 2001. Overall, 12% of respondents said they would be very willing to visit.

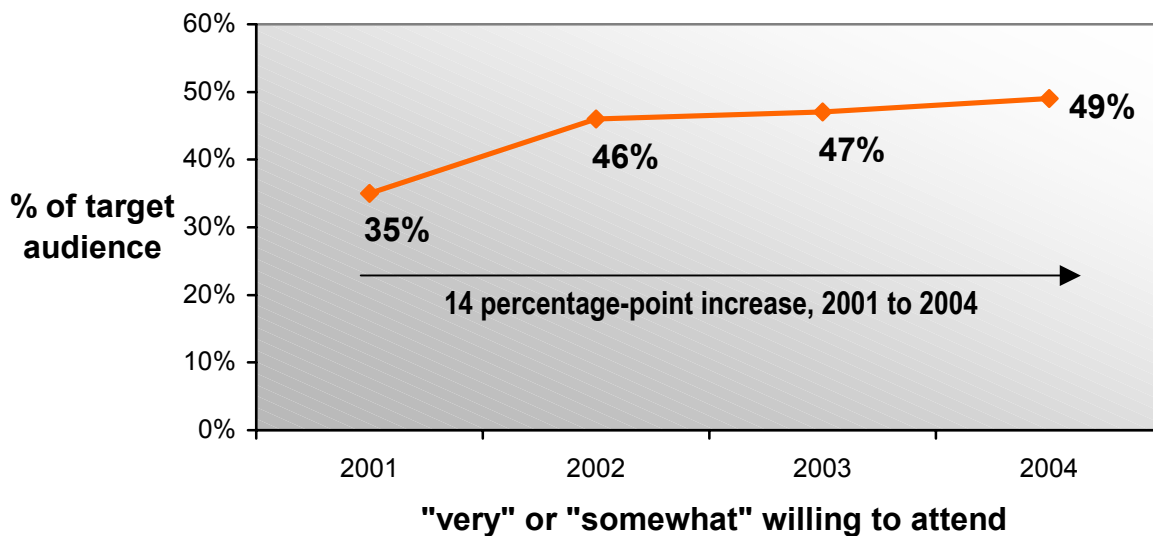
**Table 13: Willingness to Visit a UMC, by Year**

There were no statistically significant differences in 2004.

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
• very willing.....	9%	9%	10%	12%
• <b>total willing (very and somewhat)*</b> .....	<b>35%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>49%</b>
• neither willing nor unwilling.....	23%	22%	20%	18%
• not at all willing.....	29%	22%	20%	19%
• <b>total unwilling (very and somewhat)*</b> .....	<b>39%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>29%</b>
• not sure .....	3%	2%	4%	5%
• sample size .....	1256	1220	1202	1204

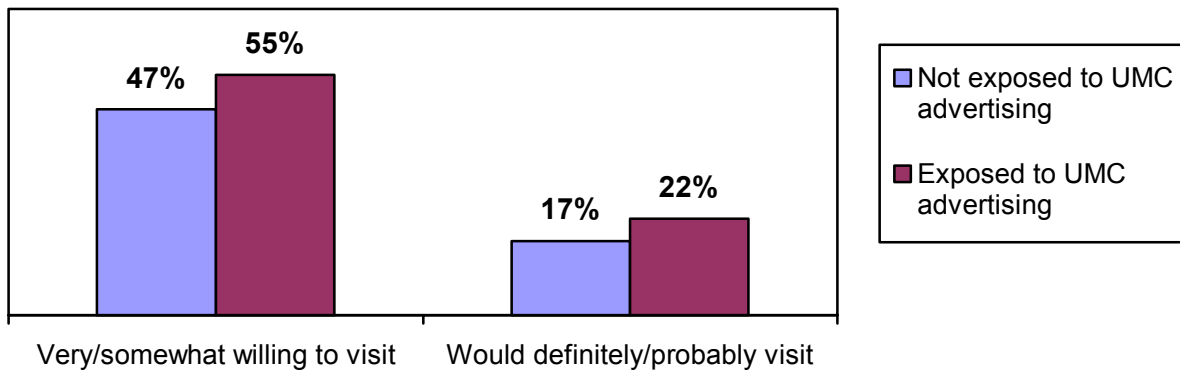
\* aggregate percentages

### Measurable Objectives - Willingness to Attend (As Measured by Barna Research National Survey) 2001-2004 Quadrennial Goal - 10 Percentage-Point Increase



**Ad Exposure and its Correlation to Willingness to Visit**

The data show that being exposed to the UMC ad campaign translates to a greater willingness and likelihood to visit. In fact, among the exposed group, more than half (55%) said they would be very or somewhat willing to visit a United Methodist church, compared to 47% of the non-exposed group. In terms of those who say they would definitely or probably visit a United Methodist congregation, 22% of exposed respondents said they would be inclined to do so, compared to 17% of non-exposed adults. **Thus, the communications seem to be altering people’s willingness to visit a United Methodist Church. Among those exposed to UMC advertising, their willingness and likelihood to visit a United Methodist church is significantly higher than that of the non-exposed group.**



**Willingness to Visit, by Market**

The top three markets in terms of willingness to visit were San Antonio (54% expressed willingness); Indianapolis (54%); and Raleigh-Durham (52%). Baltimore (46%) and Portland (40%) were lower than average. Nevertheless, willingness to visit, even in under-performing Portland, was at 2 in every 5 seekers.

**Table 14: Willingness to Visit, by Market**

	Total	RD	IND	BALT	SAN	PORT
• very willing.....	12%	12%	13%	15%	15%	5%↓
• total willing (very and somewhat)* .....	49%	52%	54%	46%↓	54%	40%↓

\* aggregate percentages  
 Key: RD = Raleigh-Durham; IND = Indianapolis; BALT = Baltimore; SA = San Antonio; PORT = Portland (OR)

## 5. Phase Two - Test Church Research

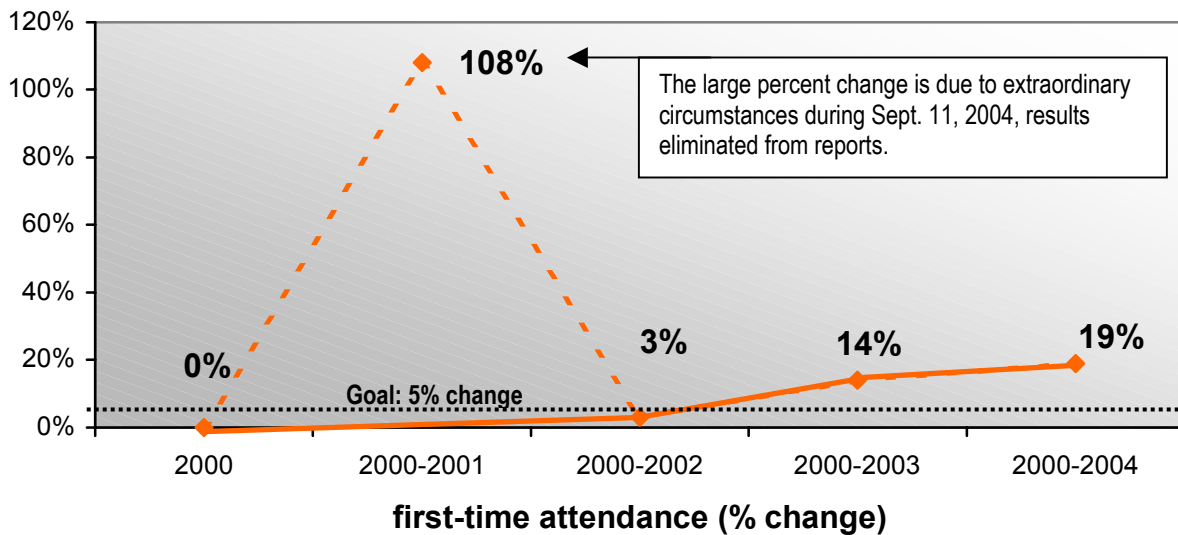
### Test Church Data

In total, 164 churches, across the 5 jurisdictions, participated in the Igniting Ministry research by keeping records of *first-time* and *total* worship attendance. For trending purposes, this information was measured alongside similar reporting for previous years.

In 2004 first-time attendance increased by 19% from the level originally measured in 2000. This increase is based on first-time attendance results from the baseline year, 2000. The chart below shows the historic trend for first-time attendance beginning in 2000.

Results from 2001 are shown in these charts for historical reference, but have been disregarded from a trend standpoint due to the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the events of September 11, 2001.

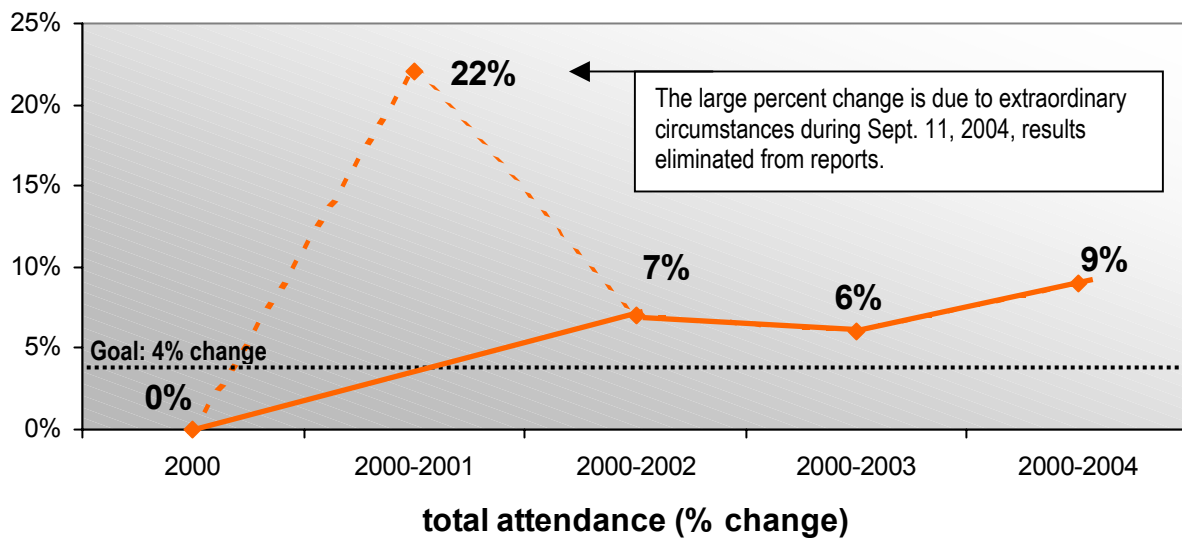
### **Measurable Objectives - First-Time Attendance** **Test Church Data - Measured as Percent Change Over 2000** **2001-2004 Quadrennial Goal - 5% Increase**



Total worship attendance in test churches is up 9%, exceeding the 2001-2004 Quadrennial goal of 4%.

Here again, results from 2001 are shown in this chart for historical reference, but have been disregarded from a trend standpoint due to the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the events of September 11, 2001.

### Measurable Objectives - Total Attendance Test Church Data - Measured as Percent Change Over 2000 2001-2004 Quadrennial Goal - 4% Increase



In measuring the difference between 2004 and 2003, the test church data showed an increase of 16% in first-time attendance from March 2003 to March 2004. Similarly, the data indicated an increase in first-time attendance during Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, with the 2004 first-time attendance being 38% higher than it was in 2003.

## 6. How Pastors Feel About the Igniting Ministry Campaign

### **Pastors' Reactions**

Pastors of test churches were asked to evaluate six questions regarding the Igniting Ministry campaign. The most commonly embraced was “at the conclusion of the four-year Igniting Ministry campaign, you would recommend that The United Methodist Church allocate funds to continue the initiative.” Overall 72% agreed with that statement, including 56% who agreed strongly. (In 2003, just 40% of pastors agreed strongly with the statement, so there has been significant growth in the percent of pastors who firmly support the campaign.)

Overall, more than half of the pastors interviewed (52%) stated their church “directly participated” in the Igniting Ministry campaign.

Another common perception of pastors is that “as a result of the Igniting Ministry campaign, their congregation has experienced a renewed sense of commitment to welcoming new people into their congregation.” Overall, 25% agreed strongly, while two-thirds of pastors (67%) agreed strongly or somewhat.

Nearly one-quarter of pastors (22%) firmly believed that “the members of their congregation actively and regularly invite unchurched people to attend events or services at their church.” In total, 66% of pastors agreed (strongly or somewhat) with that statement.

Other perceptions about the Igniting Ministry campaign were as follows: about half of pastors (53%) agreed that their congregants are more committed to the UMC as a result of the campaign. Also, 2 in 5 pastors (41%) believed that their congregants are more committed to their church as a result of the Igniting Ministry effort.

**Table 16: What UMC Pastors Say About the Igniting Ministry Campaign**

n=104

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u> <u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Not</u> <u>Sure</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
2004				
• recommend UMC allocate funds to IM .....	56%.....	16%.....	13%.....	15%
• congregants have become more welcoming .....	25%.....	42%.....	15%.....	17%
• your church directly participated.....	25%.....	27%.....	14%.....	33%
• congregants active in inviting unchurched.....	22%.....	44%.....	14%.....	20%
• congregants more committed to UMC.....	11%.....	42%.....	30%.....	17%
• congregants more committed to your church .....	10%.....	31%.....	45%.....	14%

**Table 17: What UMC Pastors Say About the Igniting Ministry Campaign**

n=104

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
• recommend UMC allocate funds to IM .....	64%.....	72%.....	72%
• congregants have become more welcoming .....	70%.....	69%.....	67%
• your church directly participated.....	52%.....	55%.....	52%
• congregants active in inviting unchurched.....	61%.....	63%.....	66%
• congregants more committed to UMC.....	48%.....	53%.....	53%
• congregants more committed to your church .....	42%.....	47%.....	41%

# Conclusions

This research clearly demonstrates that Igniting Ministry is working.

- Awareness of the campaign is excellent – 19%, statistically on par with the four-year goal of 20%. This represents steady forward progress since 2001 (14%), with each year – 15% in 2002 and 18% in 2003 – showing incremental growth in campaign awareness.
  - Television remains the driving medium behind the campaign.
  - Recall is high, especially among key demographic and psychographic groups. In other words, the advertising is effectively communicating with those who are either dissatisfied with their current church experience or looking for a church to belong.
- The messages being communicated are understood, and better still, are believable and important to the audience. These messages also appear to be effectively shifting people’s attitudes about the United Methodist Church. Those who were exposed to the UMC advertising were, on average, 44% more likely to embrace favorable impressions of the UMC than were those who had never seen or heard the advertising.
  - This is the exact same “perceptual lift” that was achieved in the 2003 advertising (with the average difference between those exposed and not exposed being 44% in 2003 as well). This strongly suggests that the advertising leaves the audience with a consistently favorable impression of the UMC.
  - Eight of the nine statements related to UMC image were higher than they have been in the four years of the campaign (with the ninth statement being unchanged from last year). This suggests that the effect of the advertising is cumulative, with each year building upon the success of the last.
- The campaign appears to be making inroads with those who are actively thinking about a change from their current church – that is, many of those who said they “want a better church” were more likely than average to resonate to the advertising. The research also demonstrates that those who are not in the practice of going to church are more difficult to influence to attend a church; however, the campaign seems to be effectively building the UMC image among these type of unchurched adults as well as chipping away at their unwillingness to attend. In other words, the campaign speaks to people on different levels based upon their current church experience – or lack thereof.

- Half of the target audience (49%) expresses willingness to attend a United Methodist church, with 12% being very willing.
  - This surpasses the 4-year goal of generating at least a 10-percentage-point increase. In 2001, the willingness to attend was measured at 35%, so that represents a 14-percentage-point increase.
  - The current research continues to demonstrate that those who are exposed to the UMC advertising (55%) are significantly more likely than the non-exposed (47%) to be willing to attend a United Methodist Church.
- The test churches demonstrate consistent growth in both first-time attendance (up 19% from 2000) and total attendance (up 9% from 2000). Because correlation does not imply causation, we cannot conclude that the Igniting Ministry *caused* the increases in attendance. But, based upon all of the other indicators measured in this study, the data suggest that the Igniting Ministry campaign played an important and favorable part in those increases.
- The feedback from within the denomination, through pastors, indicates strong support for the campaign and its effect on welcoming skills and commitment among current members of the United Methodist Church. Perhaps the most compelling piece of information from pastors is their widespread support of continuing the campaign (77% support its continuance; 15% oppose it; and 13% were indifferent).

END.