

**BACKGROUND**

Session formed a special committee at the September 30 meeting to study the size and structure of the current Session. The members of the special committee were Mary Rainey, Paul Wolfe, Earl Flower and Maxine Robertson, with Dan Williams serving *ex officio*. (*Minutes, September 30, 2009, Pastor's Report item #8*)

The committee discussed issues related to the following section of the bylaws in the Session Manual:

**OFFICERS****B-1.0300**

The Session shall be composed of eighteen (18) Elders, divided into three equal classes. One class of Elders shall be elected each year at the October meeting of the congregation, ordinarily for a three year term.

B-1.0301  
Session:  
Composition

The following rules shall apply to service on the Session:

B-1.0302  
Rules limiting  
Service on  
Session

- a. Only one person from a household may serve on the Session at a given time.
- b. Members of the Church Staff are not eligible to serve on the Session.

Also, this section of the Manual is affected:

**COMPOSITION****M-2.0200**

The Session shall consist of 18 Elders, plus the Pastor, who shall serve as Moderator. Members of the Session shall be elected in October, in equal classes of six for three year terms. [*For rules governing the election of Elders, see Bylaws, B-1.0300.*]

M-2.0201  
Membership

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Special Committee recommends that the size of the Session be reduced from the current 18 members to 12 members, over the next three election cycles. (18 members 2010; 16 members 2011; 14 members 2012; 12 members 2013). *Making this change to B-1.0301 and M-2.0201 requires congregational approval of this recommendation at the January 31, 2010 annual meeting.*
2. The Special Committee recommends no changes to the Standing Committee structure of the Session at this time. The same six program committee will remain, eventually filled by two elders on each committee, instead of three.
3. The Special Committee recommends no change to the rules limiting service on the Session in B-1.0302, particularly 'a', which limits service on the Session to one person from a household.

**RATIONALE**

These recommendations are made with the following factors in mind:

1. Supporting factors:
  - The congregation is smaller, which argues for a reduced size of the Session.
  - It sometimes is a challenge for the Nominating Committee to secure a slate of six nominees.
  - We use 18 elders currently not necessarily because we need 18 elders, but because we have followed the pattern of one elder from each class year on each of the six program committees.
2. Opposing factors:
  - Reducing the size of the Session reduces the size of the congregation's leadership pool.
  - Reducing the size of the Session will require more volunteers from the congregation to serve on Session Committees, especially if we maintain the same committee structure in 2013 and beyond. Some committees currently have few members of the congregation serving on them.
  - Reducing the size of the Session will have an impact on serving communion, as current elders will have to serve more frequently. However, elders not serving on the Session may be used to serve, and alterations could be made to the way we serve communion. (Example: six elders can be used, where these elders serve both the bread and the cup. This would lengthen the time to serve the elements somewhat, but would also provide more flexibility in how the elements are presented.)