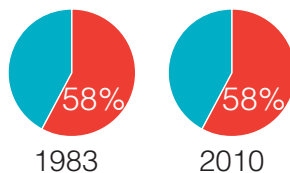


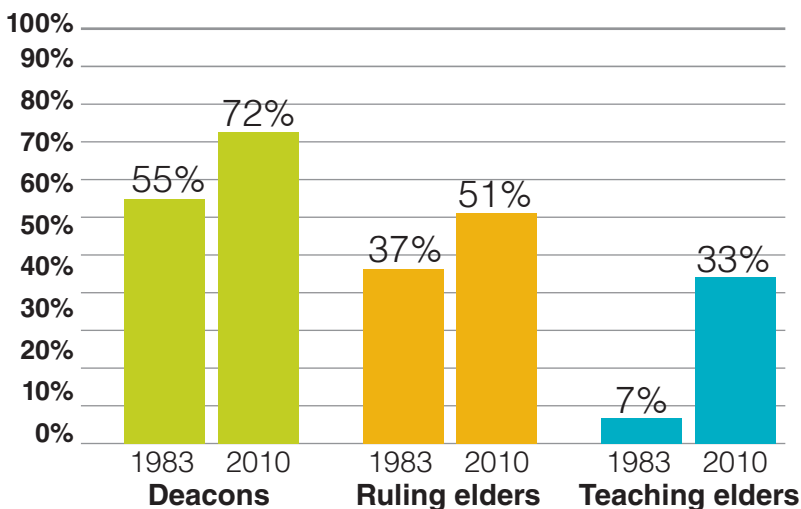
# Women in church leadership

## At a glance

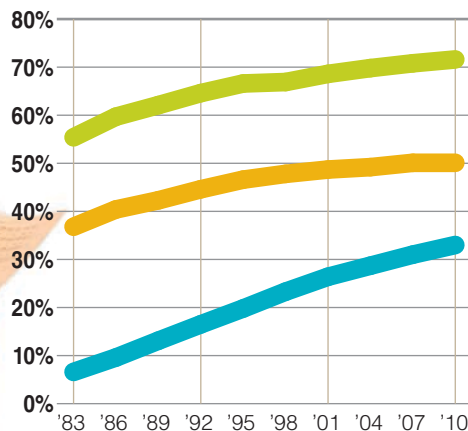
A majority of members are women



## More women are in leadership roles ...



## ... but the upward trend is leveling off.



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## What the research shows

Women are steadily increasing their share of church leadership positions—as teaching elders (ministers), ruling elders and deacons. Yet a discerning eye can see in the trend lines a slowing rate of increase. As the graphic shows, the average annual percentage-point increase in the share of women in each office is smaller for the most recent years (2001 to 2010) than for the immediately preceding period (1992 to 2001), which in turn is smaller (or the same, for teaching elders) than for the comparable period before that (1983 to 1992).

Given this decelerating pace of change over time, the shares of women who are ruling elders and deacons seem likely to level off soon. Under the same assumption, women will level off at about 43 percent of teaching elders in around 20 years.

But if the percentages of women in leadership are stabilizing, why are the percentages at which they stabilize so different for each office? And why are they so different from the percentage of members who are women, which has long remained stable at 58 to 59 percent?

Is this evidence of gender discrimination? Gender stereotyping? Different abilities or interests between men and women? Whatever the cause, the challenge of explaining the significantly different percentages of deacons, ruling elders and teaching elders who are women should not distract us from celebrating the dramatic shift toward gender equity in PC(USA) leadership.

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