

Specific Comments from AGO Members

[Note: Space was provided at the end of the long-range planning surveys for respondents to add comments. We have arranged these anonymous responses in random order by category. Several comments that seemed to fit into multiple categories were divided accordingly. Comments from the surveys of lapsed members and national leaders, included at the end of this document, are not divided by category, but are arranged in roughly the same order by topic. In addition, comments that were specifically directed toward one AGO officer or committee were placed in a separate document ("Comments for Committees") and forwarded to the appropriate official for action. Comments have been lightly edited for spelling and grammar. — Long-Range Planning Task Force.]

General Culture

I love my AGO. I donate annually, and I read my TAO cover to cover. I fear that we are too cloistered, and are relevant to ourselves only. We must make the leap to introduce ourselves to the greater outside world as an exciting source of music. We must be kind to the Miss Susies while still insisting on high musicianship. We must not be defined as religion-only oriented, while demanding respect from seminaries. We must not be ashamed of being smart and capable, but also be able "to work and play well with others," which may mean choking on a sappy anthem from time to time. We have to step up to the plate and forge our new place in this heathen society that does not value culture and education. We must make ourselves irresistible to those who have no trouble resisting us right now. In short, we need to reinvent ourselves *now*. We are wonderful, valuable, glorious. It's just that nobody knows it—yet.

I have been a regular member for over 30 years, but for a short period of time just receiving the AGO magazine. I've written the person in the National office for help in finding a local chapter, which I believe is in Jackson, Miss. Formerly I was organist at large churches in Lakeland, Fla., however, now suffer from a herniated disc, and do only occasional substitute work. At one time I held the adjunct professorship at Florida Southern College, and taught organ/piano and related subjects there. Our AGO chapter in Lakeland had disbanded for lack of interest. I subscribed to the magazine again because of my continued interest. As organist at First Presbyterian, Lakeland, Fla., I attended the Montreat Music Workshop yearly for approximately 15 years, finding it fantastic. What is being done with the Music Encounters is wonderful, for in the South, especially Florida and Mississippi (where I now live), organ is rarely taught at the college level. New interest must be sparked!

For many years I have enjoyed the TAO and in years past, some conventions. In the more recent years, I am finding, as are some of my organist friends, that the AGO has switched to a more sophisticated type of organization. The AGO fails to realize that not every organist is a music major and that many of us do not have access to more advanced teachers because of our location. I am a retired nurse by profession, and many weeks I was lucky if I could spend 30 minutes at the console for practicing. However, over the years, the congregations I have served have been happy and as far as I know have had few complaints. The AGO has to understand the for many of us, some of the works of Bach, Reger, Mendelssohn, Franck, and others are not within our reach, but I don't feel that makes us bad people or poor musicians. National headquarters would not believe the salaries some of us are receiving and happy to receive it. Some years ago I thought, perhaps, I would attempt to prepare for a Guild examination, but the more I looked into it I figured I would be about 110 years of age before I was ready. For a period of time I studied with a college professor teaching organ at a small college about 35 miles from my home. He never encouraged taking the examinations, telling me that some areas of the exams were very outdated and needed to be more with the times. In closing, I am not dissatisfied with the AGO but feel, and have felt for many years, that it is not geared for the

struggling organist who for many years has been dedicated and loyal to the church with just your standard basic education.

The AGO overall has done a good job with limited resources. I think the main thrust should be connecting more with the musical community and also denominations. It might encourage musicians serving in non-traditional worship communities, if a pastor from one of them was invited to talk about who they are and what they do at a chapter meeting. The AGO is still perceived by many part-time organists, or not traditional organists, as being a bit snooty. (Musicians are often insecure people and cover it up with trying to impress others with their ability, or feeling that others are not accepting them.)

I am proud to be an AGO member! I wish I had the time to do more with and for the organization, but this must remain my wish for now until I can figure out how to achieve this goal.

Exciting service playing has become a lost art, and its demise has contributed to the decline of interest in the organ. If the organ is ever to regain its stature as *the* instrument for worship, more recognition to this fact must be given, and more teachers, both private and in colleges/universities, need to offer inspired teaching of service playing: Exciting hymn playing, improvisation, and meeting the needs of the worshippers. We don't need to "educate" our congregations on what is good music. Our goal is to serve and enhance their worship. Frankly, the AGO has become to be viewed as an organization of musical elitists to many organists/choir directors/pastors. I am encouraged by the questions in this questionnaire!

I'm concerned that in recent years the AGO has tended to be going in a labor union-like direction and has gotten to be a little too churchy for many. I don't think we need to become a composers' protection society or an ethics review board. We are also going in the direction of political correctness, which I find disturbing.

In the 21st century, the name may be its biggest negative.

I hold down a "secular" job in addition to my job as a church musician which inhibits my availability for the many chapter events. Northeast Wisconsin AGO Chapter has many wonderful members and has offered several excellent opportunities. I truly regret not being more available for their activities. My goal in the next year is to place more emphasis on my membership and to continue to improve my skills. Online educational opportunities would certainly help that cause.

AGO national, regional, and local do a great job. Figuring out growth/outreach to younger generations is a big task for members of those younger generations especially in the face of non-paid/volunteer local/chapter leadership.

Although I am now a Guild member, I was introduced to the Guild when I was 12 years old by my organ teacher. However, at University and in the towns I have lived, the guild membership "culture" has always been very "high toned" with social/professional judgments made based on what college/uni/conserv you got your music degree in. "Ordinary" organists were accepted, but not really "in." After observing that many of the "ordinary" organists in such chapters played more meaningfully and appropriately in worship situations than the Credentialed Organists, I decided that Guild/chapter association was not for me. I joined the Guild two years ago (my church paid the very high dues) and have attended about 1/3 of the local chapter events, which with one outstanding exception (a program done by a visiting bell choir and organist) have been completely unhelpful to me. In receiving TAO, I noted that this publication is the same as it was 25 years ago: same layout, same people, same focus on the cultural esoterica of the Credentialed Organist. I am lucky to serve a small parish that has a very fine instrument (1925/2000), but all around me organs are fake or nonexistent save in the "big churches" and the university. The

Guild needs to launch a major national and local marketing campaign that 1) celebrates the instrument and its history—church and not church; 2) focuses on *serious* knowledge development regarding both church tradition/music and the organ as a musical instrument—could be done as online, printed, etc., and 3) brings in new writers and new article topics that are not concerned with general gossip, but rather educating the membership on basic meat and potato topics (after a period of attempted thoughtfulness, much organ stoplist design by major builders has once again reverted to 1950s standardized lists that impede performance of both hymns *and* the standard historical organ music—this is just one example, and these topics, about which both Professional and non-credentialed organists need to become intelligently informed about, should be actively pursued). Lastly, I believe that the AGO should advertise in the large group of “church music” magazines/catalogs that seem to descend into our church office. These magazines are read by many of the “emerging” church types, and with no presence at all or awareness of the pipe organ as an instrument of worship leadership, the continued decline not only of the organ as a worship leader but also the musical/spiritual forms of the music of the organ will accelerate.

I'm grateful that my present AGO chapter is very open and welcoming to those who currently are not professional performers. The real challenge for the AGO is its reputation (at least on the East and West Coasts) as a snobbish, stogy, intellectual, and mostly academically oriented institution. Within the Fine Arts communities—particularly the music world—there is a Great Divide between the Academic Purists, and those performers who solely are interested in making *music* as a *live* and Vital force of Uplifting Impact to Listeners. Within my experience as an AGO member for many, many years, the observation is that the AGO is 75 to 80% oriented toward the goals of Academia Purists and only 20 to 25% interested in promoting Greatness and True Music Making. Examine the question of “Where has the audience gone?” Mostly driven away by cold and/or otherwise sterile performances to promote the interests of Academic Purism and or to introduce an unfriendly cacophony of screeching dissonance to the audience. This survey participant Loves Huge Loud ensembles, and also expressive performances where the organist both subtly and masterfully performs a seamless and expressive crescendo from pppp to ffff and back again. Isn't it time to again embrace Beauty, spiritual uplift and expressive performance in our promotion of this repertoire for the greatest of all musical instruments?

I am thankful for AGO and to be a member and participant but struggle sometimes with the feelings of being an outsider looking in.

Belonging to AGO has been an enriching benefit to my life in many ways, including the people I've met, the wonderful organs I've heard and the outstanding organists and other musicians. The conventions have all been wonderful and inspiring. Thank you for all you've done to make this possible.

If you are going to reach younger people, we need to do more online. AGOHQ.org could benefit from a place to submit a question and begin a forum on a subject. The relationship to the religious bodies is based on our employment. However, the AGO is about organs and organists. We should teach solid technique (literature, hymn playing and accompanying), history, trends, developments, technology, employment, etc. *About organs*. We fill only one niche in the church and must be careful *not* to become a denominational body.

Most churches in our area do not use the AGO for substitutes and finding new organists. Many don't know the AGO exists or assume it is for esoteric organists. When I was Dean we tried to change that, but time is limited and cooperation with denominational organizations minimal.

I am 83 and I have been a regular member since I was 16. I learned a lot from AGO members when I was young. I was a dean at one time. I am proud to be a member of the AGO. My membership made me a better organist and a better person.

The key barrier to my participation in my chapter events is that I seriously do not like going into the city or urban areas for these or any other events. Crime, traffic, and parking make the city an unpleasant venue for me. Although I understand that urban areas provide centrality for culture of all kinds, many active musicians live, work, and thrive outside of urban areas and are tired of being made to feel that real music is only "happening" in the city. As churches close in urban areas, the AGO may want to consider that suburban areas are becoming population centers, and that the churches installing new organs will increasingly be located outside of dying urban centers, as will prospective AGO members.

I believe an important question for AGO would be: If you were just starting out, would you do it again?

The AGO has been very welcoming to me, as a new organ student. I have met some very nice people and received a lot of encouragement from a vast number of people. I would like to thank the AGO for everything they have done to inspire me, especially their support of POE.

Besides retention of present members with the many good programs already going, I feel AGO should make special effort to attract the young beginning organ students and the college students considering going into this field.

The AGO offers a valuable service to organists. Those of us living abroad enjoy what it offers although we cannot always enjoy the conventions, competitions, etc., owing to travel and costs.

My main reasons for membership are getting TAO, going to regional conventions when I can, local chapter performances, and participating in a POE+.

The AGO is a wonderful organization. It helps people in getting to know and learn about the organ as well as organ music. It also helps people gain information on ways to get a job as an organist.

AGO needs to think very carefully about its purpose. It is the only professional organization I know of in the USA that is committed to the pipe organ primarily. If it actively engages in other church music media ("praise band," etc.), it will compromise any commitment to excellence, skill, and support of an exceptional instrument requiring exceptional commitment and training. Other church music media should be supported by other groups, or by denominational church music organizations.

I believe the AGO needs to be more concerned with where the organ connects with the people—and that is in our churches. Not just in large churches with full-time organists (with formal training and degrees), but with all churches, regardless of size. Authentic ornamentation in the Orgelbüchlein might be interesting to some on an academic level, but it is of no significance to a largely self-taught organist who struggles to lead the hymn singing in his/her congregation. Connecting with these folks will give the AGO a huge potential membership pool to draw upon. But if we're going to be an attractive organization for them to join, we must offer them something. Right now, I don't think we do.

It is long past time to include "how to program a concert" as part of AGO certification. Far too often concerts by Doctors of Music with every AGO certificate in their possession send the audience fleeing for the doors vowing to never, ever attend another organ concert. We need

more organists like our past president, Fred Swann, who talked a good game and demonstrated that good game every time he sat at an organ console.

Over three states and four cities/local chapters, I have yet to overcome the bourgeoisie atmosphere that is so thick one feels it walking into the entrance to any meeting. With that, I have resigned myself to pay my dues for the TAO primarily and occasionally attend a concert/recital only.

I think the AGO leadership continues to do a magnificent job. The constant quest to address the issues of our time, to embrace new technologies, to face head-on the difficulties we face has been most impressive. Especially significant is the POE program. Thank you for all you do!

Do any choral directors subscribe to TAO? I think AGO should let choral organizations cover that field, and stick to the organ world, but go deeper.

I would like to see more of an emphasis on pedagogy. There are a myriad of resources for piano teachers, but very few for organ teachers, even online. My primary focus is on teaching and training part-time organists, since I belong to a denomination (LDS) which utilizes lay musicians. There is a huge untapped pool of potential AGO members. One of my students just finished hosting a training class for potential part-time LDS organists in her area and had 20 participants from about 7 congregations. My own congregation of 200 people has at least 4 members (including myself and one of my students) who have played for church services. A Lutheran congregation in our town recently struggled to find an organist. I was not able to take the job, but suggested that if they could identify someone from their congregation who could learn, I would teach them. They were not able to do so. But honestly, I think that one of the best ways to seek out organists and future organists would be for local congregations to find members of their own congregations and then sponsor those people for organ study.

A totally wonderful organization. I was a member 72 years ago! I just ask that you not spread out too much the main original thrust of the Guild. Never let it weaken!

I still belong to the Guild because I share its goals, but my actual experiences in four different chapters have been disillusioning. The politics, backbiting, snarkiness, and elitism have kept me at arm's length from Guild activities. In my early years of membership, I never missed an event. I now attend about one or two per decade. The purpose of the AGO is terrific, and it has lofty ideals. But it is sadly like the Church in that the implementation of those ideals has been problematic. I am sorry that my response is so negative, and I hope that it is not discouraging for you to read it. You are doing excellent work.

We need to be promoting the organ outside of the worship setting. With so many churches reverting to non-traditional instruments, the only way the organ can continue to be viable is to make it as important as the piano, or any other instrument. Our instrument is frequently not considered seriously by other classical musicians, and this needs to be addressed.

I am fiercely loyal to AGO and consider its work and purpose a priority in my professional life. I've served as Dean of two different chapters, and have made it my business to attend all meetings of my local chapter, no matter what the topic is. Keep up the good work!

I think that the AGO can beat itself up over what to do faced with the times, but (the AGO) seems to be able to reinvent itself to fulfill its mission(s) over the years no matter what has come its way. It is not a dying organization as some would have us believe, and will not be, for a very long time to come.

AGO must promote diversity and tolerance if it is to grow. The strong “white Christian ethic” promoted by the AGO (look at the photos in TAO; look at a typical AGO concert) pushes many younger organists away.

I would just like to give the suggestion of putting away a certain amount of money for young organists who need some financial help with expensive things like conventions, POE, and organ performance in college. These different things are expensive, but they are worth it, giving us the opportunity to mingle with other young organists, which is a rarity these days. Being a 17-year-old future organ performance college student in need of financial aid, I really think that the senior members of the AGO should take into account the fact that we are the future of the organ. Please support us, because not many colleges support the organ anymore, thinking that it is a dead instrument, which I know is completely ignorant. I love the organ, and I know many other teenagers who also love it, so please support us financially! Thank you!

Thank you for this very important and long-overdue survey! As a former National Council member and regional chair, I am keenly aware of the many issues before the Guild, and of the challenges of meeting members’ interests and needs at the chapter, regional, and national levels. I assume the results will be shared with Regional Councillors (by regional responses) to help guide them in their regional work. And I hope the Regional Councillors will share survey results with their entire membership, not just chapter deans. (Would it be useful to have a shorter, follow-up survey for regions, customized according to regional characteristics?) In any case, I *very* much hope that there will be some discussion of this survey and the implications for the future of the AGO at the D.C. convention. Our demographics do not support a continuation of the Guild as it has been, even in the last ten to twenty years. We will contract, and it’s far better to do so in carefully planned ways. This survey is a good step in that planning.

Thank you for a very thoughtful survey. I can see a lot of work went into preparing this, and I hope you get a good response. In general, I don’t think the Guild at the national level should take on the responsibility, workload, and expense of doing more of this or more of that for the entire membership; delegate to the regions and chapters and spend time and energy ensuring chapters are vital and active. However, keep in mind that most musicians are working more than one job and time is at a premium. Therefore, expecting chapter members to show up for more events is—in my opinion—wishful thinking. We would if we could, but we can’t. The networking and support is very important, therefore much can be achieved electronically. Again, as you will see from my replies, there are too many demands on us all in that direction. I think making TAO electronic would result in many chapter members hitting delete to get it out of the inbox rather than taking time to read it. This is one publication I welcome in my regular mailbox. Meanwhile, conventions should be a focal point, socially, artistically, and educationally. I say this as the co-chair of the recent Region III convention and as the newest member of CORC, but not because I feel I *have* to say this! I attended Baltimore in 2007 as well as my own convention and both were invigorating experiences.

The AGO needs to disengage from its mainly religious (mostly Episcopal) focus as churches are becoming less “organ oriented.” The future is the concert hall, and it will be a slimmer, more vibrant organization. As David Higgs reportedly told a student: “Learn Chinese.”

There are excellent denominational organizations that service church/synagogue musicians. Likewise choral musicians. I don’t think AGO needs to put energy into those areas any more, but rather might best be focused on players and lovers of the pipe organ.

My involvement in AGO has been invaluable over the years. I do think it is very difficult to serve church musicians, academics and concert artists. I sometimes feel that tension in TAO and also at conventions, but I think the AGO has tried hard to serve all members.

The primary objective of the AGO should be to help stamp out the mediocrity of ignorance.

This organization *must* be made relevant to young musicians, and the organ *must* move out of being seen as a strictly ecclesiastical instrument (by most people), or the AGO and organs will eventually go the way of the dinosaur. Younger artists like Cameron Carpenter, while not appealing to everyone (myself included), are going to be crucial to the future of our art, as they push the envelope of the general understanding of the organ. New technologies will very likely be key in the survival of this art.

This survey is an excellent start in saving the AGO and the organ.

Unless we program for the general non-musical public (both inside and outside of the church service), and not just play for other organists' approval, we will become extinct. I have presented nationally known organists at my church, and guess who got the greatest attendance and response? Those who entertain and speak to the general public: Hector Olivera and Cameron Carpenter! Those who pay our salaries and support our programs are not one bit interested in authentic performance practices or historically correct instruments. We need to join forces more often with the theater organ crowd and not feel we have to apologize for it. Let's come down out of the ivory towers to where the real people live.

I think there need to be more resources available to young organists. We have hardly any instruments of worth to practice on, and if you ask an older organist to use the instrument at their church or synagogue, they often refuse. Not to mention not really having anyone to talk to about issues we face as young organists who haven't had a lot of experience in the field. Then there are the costs. I'm a full-time seminary student and just don't have the money for organ lessons, sheet music, conventions, etc. So I just can't participate or improve my skills as an organist very often. Bottom line, be more open and flexible. If we want our craft to go on, there need to be more options available.

AGO offers excellent services to its members and needs little "tweaking." My hope for all our professional organizations is that they will not fall into the trap of "going electronic." Social networks rise and fall with every two-year cycle. Despite the expense of print, professional organizations must continue to offer communication through *all* channels: print, e-mail, Web site, and time-consuming social networks such as Facebook. It has been estimated that in the present flood of information, a person must be "touched" seven times for one item of information to be effective.

The most important thing that the AGO can do is to reach out to people who do not yet love the organ and its music. If we don't start "selling" the organ, churches and synagogues are going to keep selling our instruments to the highest scrap metal bidders!

Graduates are not prepared to begin service in the church. Sight-reading skills are not up to par with the fast-paced demands. Hymn playing is weak. Leadership has not been developed in organists young and old, but it is expected when they search for employment. Unless non-denominational congregations cycle back to classical church music, the options will be fewer. The mainline church is declining. Salaries are smaller as resources dwindle. Other instrumentation for congregational singing will prevail even over the less expensive digital organs due to the deconstruction of worship by the baby boom generation. A rebound will depend greatly on a cultural shift or a renaissance of historical art appreciation and a return to the church.

The Guild should follow its stated mission, focusing on the organ and church music, and not devolve into an organization for left-leaning social change.

The handwriting on the wall is alarming regarding music and worship, organs and music, etc. The organ and its literature remains anachronistic to a large portion of the serious music world, entwined as it is with the church, from which many are becoming disentwined, or are moving into worship music experiences emanating from bands. Dead horse flogging has never appealed to me and I fear that the AGO is coming dangerously close to that in its persona. I'm afraid that Cameron Carpenter, et al., represents where we'll be in the future.

I would like to see more effort given to developing church musicians, without limiting emphasis only to organists, but then it wouldn't still be the American Guild of Organists. We keep starving the goose that lays our golden eggs.

I think the future success of the AGO, or any other organization, will lie in its creative use of the Internet. This is especially true in the case of young people.

Add a slogan to the name: "Serving the needs of organists, choir directors, pianists, and all keyboard players."

The AGO is failing, and it is because (at least in our chapter), older people who are really bitter control the programming and career-related positions available. The programming in our chapter is irrelevant to today's organist. One final reason that I really avoid going to chapter or national events, other than cost, is that organists today in this organization really have big ego issues. Many people are very catty and try to tear people down. Several people tear others down because they think they are "the best," but in reality, if this pettiness and cat fighting does not subside, the AGO along with the organ itself will fade into history (and it already seems to be doing so).

Good luck with all your endeavors. My dream for the AGO would be that it becomes more down-to-earth without being dumbed down. Also, who wants to pursue work in the field when one's name is followed by FAGO?

I think the AGO will have to be a little more progressive with the needs of organists of today. It still seems to be an organization that only wants to serve those who relate to highly liturgical worship.

Recently, the AGO has become way too heavy-handed. You cannot force people to do what you want! An example is password protection on the Web site.

This is an important survey, and I thank and congratulate the AGO for doing it. I am concerned that many questions raise issues that I have not heard raised in the past (moving of national headquarters, use of social networking sites, etc.) either in the magazine or in public discussions that I've witnessed at chapter or convention gatherings (regional or national). The nature of our profession is that we have many highly skilled and opinionated members doing something that ultimately must be witnessed live and in person (and everyone has witnessed that professional cordiality can take a swan dive in online situations). It is also important to remember while trying to attract new members to the organization that you already have 19,000 or so "already in the room" for conditions that might be opposite of what could be used to appeal to those not yet joined. We either believe that what we're doing is timeless and worthwhile, or we don't. Our methods of access may need to change, but the general content should not.

Thank you for offering this survey. I worry about two implications I see here: marketing to a broader range of interests and switching to the Internet at the expense of live events. I think what is needed is better, more pointed, and more accessible education about the organ and organ music—*not* a watering down of the subject or the AGO to include other interest groups. I

also think that trying to capture the “King of Instruments” in such a small box as YouTube may be difficult at best, and counterproductive at worst, though I admit I’m probably ignorant of many possibilities the internet offers. I personally would benefit from more adult POEs—I don’t think there have been any in my region, and I only remember seeing one advertised at all. Also, with regard to the AGO issuing policies on what is “appropriate for worship”: strong as my feelings are on that subject, I think it is the AGO’s place to educate, not preach—much like the position of the church organist. There are too many individual musicians and individual churches having too wide a range of success with too wide a range of instruments and music for the AGO to start stifling their endeavors now. The ship has sailed. Concentrate on making the organ (both pipe and electronic) more visible, audible, and accessible at the chapter level, and help organists discover and teach all its capabilities. Cultivate and promote better quality organ and choral music for smaller forces. Expose more people to what is possible at their level and with their instruments, and they’ll figure out what is appropriate.

I wish that organists could be more supportive of each other and not say uncomely things about other organists.

As a musician in a Baptist church I do get tired of the musical snobbery that is often found at AGO. People assume that I am what they read about in the news concerning conservative evangelicals, and I am not—neither is my church. You do not have to judge or make someone feel inferior in order to provide them with an educational opportunity. Commenting to someone that their music is terrible and they should try doing things another way is probably not the best approach to providing an educational experience.

There is too much emphasis placed on the academic achievements, awards, titles, exams passed. The public needs all kinds of good organists/directors in religious organizations, and there are more good non-degreed musicians doing a better job at leading worship with their humanity and skill than is appreciated by those with adoration for the measurement of skill level, which is really subjective.

Past practice still continues—look who attends conventions—almost retired. We’re not attracting the young organists for the future of the Guild. Yes, we can build magnificent and expensive instruments. Who will be there to play them one hundred years from now?

AGO just needs to keep thinking of staying updated. Pretty easy to get in ruts and become “dated” quickly. Some of us are traditionalists, yet try to keep abreast of things; we evolve vs. jumping in with both feet.

There needs to be much more interaction with kids at a younger age to get them involved with the organ, and to know that they don’t need to be a music major to be able to successfully play one. With the number of church music/organ programs less than what they were in the past, we have to find ways to fill the ranks, just not in membership, but in organists in general.

I believe in the value of AGO and do realize how many other professional musical organizations exist, being a member of several (MENC, MMEA, MCDA). I feel that the AGO needs to keep its primary focus on the organ, but also to support the growing need for pianists who must assume “organist” responsibilities in churches and synagogues across the country. I do not believe any name or location change to be necessary, as the AGO has flourished for years and is still located in a highly prestigious music location. “If it ain’t broke, why fix it?” Want to get more members? Survey their needs and give the education online in blogs, web tutorials, etc. I love AGO and will be a life-member. Unfortunately I do not recall when I joined AGO, so the answer I gave is not accurate—but will continue to be a lifelong member.

I believe the AGO is a vital and important organization for all levels of musical skill. I often feel we face a “celebrity” challenge—by this I mean that people are often intimidated by the level of skill of some of our membership. I think one of our greatest challenges is helping organists understand that this really is for all organists—at all levels.

One of the perceptions outsiders have of the AGO is of an unfriendly group. Several of my friends are musicians in “Gospel” style of churches and have no interest in joining a group of “stuffed shirts.” Our roster lists 69 members with 13 showing Dr. with their name. Yes, if I had a doctoral degree I would flaunt it as well, but does it promote friendliness in the organization? In our area of mostly small towns, many of the churches are abandoning the organ in favor of “Gospel or Praise bands” partly because of a lack of available organists. Obtaining a master’s degree is good, but if the job available is to scrub the floors what has been gained? Likewise, if AGO pushes for higher education, certification, and wage guidelines for all positions, have we promoted the organ when a small church cannot afford to hire a person with AGO credentials? How many organist positions have been lost in the last 5-10 years? Before retiring, I had been a church pianist and organist for about 30 years in a Chicago suburb. I didn’t feel that I was an employee of the church, rather I felt an honor to serve and the \$25 per week paid for my travel expenses and some music. Make the organization more people-friendly. Thanks for letting me vent.

The AGO really needs to become snob-free. We have become our worst enemy because of the way we treat new members, and how we react to the existence of the electronic organ. Yes, the pipe organ is the best way to go, in some cases it is simply impossible and the fact that a person must play an electronic instrument should not serve as reason to be rude to a fellow AGO member. We need to be more welcoming to new (especially young/student) members. In my own experience, the first 4-5 years of being an AGO member, the members of my home chapter basically ignored me and my family, and showed no interest of any kind until, all of a sudden, I went off to school and became something. How much more I could have learned and progressed in my organ study had those people been more friendly? This should *never* happen in an organization such as the AGO—we all share the common element of being organists, don’t we? If this situation doesn’t improve we are going to ignore or insult ourselves right out of existence.

High quality music and programming drew me to the AGO. It took years to break through the social and clique barriers with members and leadership.

I believe the AGO has become far too interested in attracting a “quantity” of membership. I believe we need a higher “quality” of membership, of people who are genuinely interested in developing their skills as organists and who are working to that end. The AGO should advocate for higher standards, both for organists and for the institutions that employ them.

I think I’ve been an AGO member since college some 30+ years ago at the urging of teacher John Obetz. Never regretted the money spent and have always been grateful for the magazine and chapter contacts (am now a member of my third one).

I love the AGO, our local chapter, the conventions (both regional and national). But I worry about our future and drawing in new and younger members.

One of the best things the AGO could do to promote a more collegial atmosphere is to drop the pretentiousness of always listing degrees and certifications. While these are admirable accomplishments, they are simply that—an accomplishment. They have very little relevance to a person’s current ability to do a job or form an opinion. Why do I care if a member of the National Board is a BA or a PhD or an FAGO? All that matters is if they can do the job. The emphasis on this only serves to make the organization look elitist.

AGO is a wonderful organization that I've appreciated participating in over the last 50 years. Keep up all the good work. Lots of good ideas put forth in this survey.

I would be content to have only my local chapter involvement in AGO. The journal does not contain much that is pertinent to my work, and conferences are generally out of my budget (and I do not have a stipend affiliated with my music positions).

AGO is perceived as an organization of big-city professionals who are unaware of the realities of the small city/rural church organist world.

With most of the questions asked in this survey, I see some real opportunity for growth in the AGO's offerings to its membership. I hope that many of these ideas are put in place.

AGO is a great organization which I am proud to be a part of. Some of the specific things which would make it more valuable to me are:

1. Greater online presence—that is where social and professional networking takes place now.
2. Meetings worth giving up an afternoon for—a meeting in which I could either share my skills with others, or be the recipient of shared skills—targeted professional development.
3. A more interesting, readable TAO, or some online assemblage of articles, forums, information exchange.
4. Access to medical insurance that is both affordable and comprehensive. How sad will it be if I, and others in my situation, have to leave our organist positions in order to find a "real job" with benefits. Ouch! I'd hate to do that, but health care is expensive!

The AGO is a great organization, with a venerable past, and is basically doing a fine job, but needs to wake up from its old-fashioned narrow-minded educational and social structure. Embrace technology in its organization and in the instruments they claim to serve, the organ in all its permutations.

My local AGO is my favorite social organization. I have learned so much from my colleagues, and enjoy the support we give and receive from each other.

The AGO is perceived by some as being an "old boys club" consisting of persnickety old farts that is run under the auspices of the Episcopal Church. Fair or not, that is the impression that is conveyed. One symbol that strengthens that image is the national logo—very old-fashioned and club-like in its appearance, like a coat-of-arms for a private school. I think changing the image, and associated perception, would help in today's environment.

In my experience the AGO is outdated and dominated by retired/almost-retired musicians who are not professional and are locked into an opinion on organ/church music that is equally passe. I believe that, with many denominations now possessing their own professional-musical organizations that the AGO should be less firmly religious in its programming, even though most of its members works in religious institutions.

I would like to participate more, but I think people in my situation (organists from small, suburban churches outside of big cities) feel intimidated by the full-time cathedral scholar type of organist and that our work and needs are just not comparable.

I value AGO membership primarily for TAO and then for chapter access to local available placement opportunities. But I increasingly feel that AGO/NYC cares little about what goes on outside of big cities and college/university communities.

I think personal music-making, Christianity, and more particularly traditional Christian worship/sacred church music is becoming increasingly irrelevant in all but a few small circles within modern society, and I don't think there is much that can be done about it until there is a profound shift in cultural values. Like much of mainline Protestantism, AGO has many things running against it: antipathy, aging membership, declining role of the organ and traditional choral music in church because fewer people, including young pastors, have any appreciation for the traditional music of the church. Good luck.

Reaching out to the part-time is good. Maintaining integrity with the professional is good. Reaching out to other musical colleagues is good.

Thank you for asking for my opinion. Sometimes I feel too young to make a larger influence, as in the ways are set and any attempt to question or change them is seen as a threat. It makes me feel valued and important that you are asking for my feedback and insight, and it's encouraging to see an effort to bring the Guild to a larger public in the 21st century.

I am very enthusiastic about the AGO and am constantly nagging my non-member friends to join. I would devote more time to chapter events and such if I had it.

The AGO needs to change its image—how about “The Church Organists Association”? The word “guild” implies testing to belong.

Membership in the AGO has always been of highest value in my life. It has been always stimulating and rewarding, and it gets better.

I especially applaud the subject of the Guild's tie to (dis)organized religion. One can understand that the vast majority of houses of worship utilize the king of instruments as the main musical instrument. Furthermore, the majority of our members are church musicians. Therefore, it is understandable to unite religious music (hymns and choir anthems) with Guild activities. Outside of hymns and anthems we have organ literature. It seems to me we have placed organ literature on the same level as church music. That is, why can't the Guild emphasize the study of literature for the sake of performing literature, not being tied to church music?

Happy I can continue playing the organ, but back trouble keeps me from attending meetings or concerts. Use computer, YouTube, etc., and would love online AGO resources. Enjoy and look forward to TAO each month.

AGO is a remarkable professional organization. Its core mission of education in organ music as put forth in the TAO and chapter as well as national/regional activities I believe is one of its most attractive features.

My opinion is that there is still a place in worship and the recital hall for excellent instruments and organists. However, the malaise that afflicts the AGO, lack of energetic chapters, declining membership and funding, is truly a reflection of the gradual erosion of standards in popular culture. Churches which promote and use third-rate music are providing the same level of composition and musicianship as people are likely to experience elsewhere in everyday life. Regarding the alarming decline across the country of the organ as the principal instrument for leading people in worship, I believe such a development has been inevitable. The organ has served churches and synagogues for centuries, and a change of musical and worship styles seems to have finally overtaken the place of the instrument in a majority of worship communities. As recently as the era of the 1980s, a company such as M.P. Moller was producing over 1,000 ranks of pipes per year, the equivalent of a new 20-rank organ every week. The entire organbuilding industry may not far exceed that output in 2009. The owner of our local

Allen Organ Sales Company lamented recently about the current difficulty of selling Allen organs. The firm does receive occasional inquiries, though, from churches which acquired new Allen organs in recent years. The churches have decided to divest themselves of their organ entirely, and would like to discuss selling the instruments back to the sales company. Times change, as E.M. Skinner learned in the '40s and Moller experienced as long ago as 1991. What is to be done? Everyone who cares about the history and place of the organ in worship and recitals should encourage new organs and new players. A few weeks ago, I attended a recital on a rebuilt Casavant organ in St. Joseph, Mich. The church was full to capacity to hear Paul Jacobs, who played a sensational program, and I felt the people of the church and the community were as thrilled with the playing and the instrument as I was.

Thanks to all who love the organ and its music, and who make it as accessible as possible to as many people as possible.

The AGO needs to be a guild in the historic sense. It is not. (Dictionary definition: "An association or corporation of persons of the same trade, pursuits, or interests formed for their mutual aid or protection, the maintenance of standards, or the furtherance of some purpose." (American Heritage Dictionary, 1973)

I'm happy to be a part of the AGO. I joined at age 13 and have always been active in the chapters where I have lived—serving on the board, hosting events, and just attending programs. Continue the good work that you're doing by offering more electronic opportunities—electronic TAO, virtual AGO meetings, etc.

We need more student activities and outreach.

Being an organ teacher, I would love to see more master classes for high school organ students. I realize that there might not be as many high school students in organ; but, this might help. I really am excited about being a part of AGO. I hope to go to a convention someday.

While the AGO is doing a great job, I would like to see more development of young organists. I am worried about the deterioration of classically trained musicians in the church.

I think one of our main issues right now is reaching out to the younger generations of people. The really large chapters have some, however the majority is just older professionals. In the smaller chapters have few and most members are in the older stages of life. Why is this? We need to focus clearly on reconnecting with the younger generation as an organization or we will suffer soon. Best of luck.

I have been an organ student for 10 years and have been the chaplain of my chapter for 6 years. I thoroughly enjoy our meetings and the opportunities for fellowship and hearing excellent organ performances. I am concerned that we are not reaching many of the church organists in the city, especially in the very large African-American community. I would like to see our membership reflect more diversity without compromising the quality of music we expect from AGO.

Fred Swann tried hard to end the attitude of the "elite" to the younger folks and the blended folks—hoping to bring them on board. He also tried to lessen the attitude of the elite to using digital organs for local events, thereby attempting to make the Guild more accepting to those who don't play the biggest Skinner in town. The Guild wants churches to tolerate gay musicians and yet many are intolerant of blended churches and those with digital organs. The Guild has a long way to go to create an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance—only then will this organization attract others.

As a degreed organist, worship practitioner and admirer of instruments and repertoire, I am nonetheless unconvinced of the supposed centrality of the organ in worship music. Significant, yes; central, no. If and when the pipe organ ever has a place in marketplace (if not actually popular) culture again its claim to centrality may be fulfilled, in my opinion.

Some of these things are important to me, but I did not mark them because I have not found the steps the AGO has taken to be very helpful.

It ought not be the case that the AGO becomes a social organization or a place for enthusiasts. Its professional and artistic goals need to remain constant.

With organ music so very unpopular in both sacred and secular settings, we must realize that it will take much more than redesigning TAO or updating the website to revitalize the AGO. We must make every effort to educate children and young adults about the glorious instrument we all love. In my experience, all it takes to interest children in organ music is a little bit of exposure and a healthy amount of enthusiasm on the part of the organist.

Once I retired from playing the organ, I have no interest in AGO other than my own chapter's activities. I don't read the TAO and conventions are too expensive. I don't plan to attend any more (regional or national).

I applaud the AGO for a job well done. I am totally amazed that such excellent work is done my almost totally volunteer effort—and much of it by non- or semi-professionals. I know of no other professional organization that functions this way, and I am proud of “my” Guild. I appreciate this survey as a step in thinking toward the future.

The AGO is great! I support almost every other thing the AGO currently does (especially competitions). My chief concern: *the future of the organ in American churches*. I think the Guild can help, but that depends on its goals.

In general, I think the AGO is a great organization. However, as is the case with many organizations, it is time to rethink what it does to attract people to, and preserve the tradition of good organ playing. Good organ playing seems to be diminishing, and it's definitely time to stem the tide. Above all, chapters need to give concentrated attention to attracting young organ students to the organization. More Pipe Organ Encounters, more exposure, and above all, cheaper dues for kids whose parents are footing the bill.

I am pleased the national office is doing this survey. I hope that we can involve more younger musicians and musicians in general in the activities of the Guild.

Thank you for doing this. I am excited to see the AGO moving in a new direction.

This is an excellent tool, and I hope that many members take the time to complete it. You have raised some very important issues, even if I may be considered one of the more “conservative” respondents. The “online” ideas would be a huge benefit, while I have concern that the AGO be “dumbed down” to raise revenue via increased membership. This is the only organization of its kind in the U.S., and I believe we occupy a very necessary niche. We do not need to apologize for or dilute what we offer. Thanks for the opportunity to respond.

I thank God for the AGO, its members, organists, and support staff. Ever since I was 15 years old, I have played the pipe organ. I'm now 37. My favorite composer of all time is J.S. Bach. What the AGO has done for me, I am unable to repay. As a token, I have included the AGO in my will for financial support. The vision, dream, and festivities of the AGO have opened a whole new

world for me. Together, with God, my past life and hard times are a thing of the past. Today, I am successful in my dual career. The outlet of being able to play the pipe organ and look for activities with the local AGO chapters continued my inspiration of peace and happiness. We as a people, tend to forget about the past lives of others, including the famous composers and how it was to live in their time. In today's society, everything is a modern maze of technology. The AGO, its chapters, and sponsors have taught us many, many things, but has also reminded us that the past in organ and choral times will never be forgotten. We should be fortunate to have such a fine Guild of the past, present, and future. Together, we can make it better and better.

The AGO has a real problem with "cliques" among its members. That's why myself, and most of my colleagues hate meetings.

Delighted that there is a long-range planning process in place! Two quick comments: In my experience, in the communities where I have served (Rochester, N.Y., Syracuse, Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston) the AGO is viewed by the church community as academic, exclusive, and not very relevant. When I was a builder's rep I found the same perception among most of my small-church, part-time, suburban and rural clients. We've got work to do!

I am very pleased to see that the AGO is trying so hard to promote our organization and I think you have some great ways of doing it. *Thanks* for your efforts to make it more inviting to people like me!

Thanks for the survey. In general we need to work harder on hospitality. We have a rep for being "snooty."

I have found membership in the AGO to be a rewarding and educational experience. I find the social interaction with other organists to be very beneficial. I have learned much from the organists in my community. I especially enjoy the opportunities to expand the material I use in my own organ playing.

I think the AGO is a profoundly important organization for the craft and for the church. I applaud your efforts here.

Having been a long time member and supporter of the AGO for over 30 years, I am grateful for the resources and opportunities it has afforded me throughout my career. I am also grateful for this survey.

I so appreciate the Guild and am thankful we have James and most of his team in leadership.

Keep up the excellent work, uphold the Guild ideals, and improve publicity and communication, with all levels and types of organists, in as many ways as you can think to do. Good job!

The AGO has done a tremendous job in keeping current with membership needs, and I sense that the National HQ is always striving to improve. This survey is just another indication that you continue to work hard on our behalf. Many thanks for all that you do!

The AGO has the reputation of being a "snotty" organization for a reason. It's time to join the 21st century.

I know the trend is moving toward more online services, but a recent discussion in our chapter stressed the need for mentoring and personal contact whenever possible. The face-to-face meeting is the most effective way to increase participation in both the chapter and national level.

I would caution against eliminating or restricting opportunities for gathering in person as a group. The "guild" name should mean something!

National staff is doing a great job. Bravo to everybody.

In the past, organists have had the reputation of being "stuffy." I don't find that true in most cases, and we need to change our image. We should appear inviting and open to any who want to join our organization. We can still maintain our high standards without appearing exclusive to others.

The AGO is important for social and professional networking and educational programs. I realize that it has to move with the times.

I am not a member of either the AGO or a chapter thereof, but I have subscribed to TAO for several years, as an appreciator and aficionado. I have also organized organ recitals in our church.

I find that the AGO is a great organization but doesn't really address what we are going through in the trenches. It has little applicability to our real-world experiences and churches give little or no regard to anything regarding the AGO.

All of my answers are influenced by the belief that the AGO should first be about the organ, an instrument that happens to be used mostly in religious institutions. While it is good and appropriate to afford educational and other opportunities related to choir direction and church music leadership in general, we should never lose sight of what should be the primary role of the Guild, which is to promote the organ and those who play it and enjoy it. To summarize, the AGO should continue to focus on the organ as an instrument wherever it is used both religious and non-religious settings. To delve too far into other areas of church musicians' work and careers serves only to diffuse our focus.

In my opinion, we have to *stop the elitism!* Organists have an unfortunate reputation as being old-fashioned, snooty, dismissive of anything modern or new, clinging to bygone days, disdainful of other instruments used in church, and worst of all critical of each other! Let's open up the organ to all of its possibilities, not just Bach and Buxtehude but also gospel, jazz, symphonic, popular, even rock and roll (cf. Arcade Fire). Mainline denomination churches are undergoing a slow, painful demise, and pipe organs are threatened to go down with the sinking ships. To save the organ and the organist profession, let's somehow keep up with times! They are a'changin'!

Stop living in a vacuum. Stop feeling so special. Become more aware of the entire musical world around you. Become more secular and stop pretending the AGO is really important to the world of music.

I've expressed concern about "cliquishness" in one of my responses and I'm reminded about Mr. Thomashower's article on this topic in a past issue of TAO and have expressed that concern to the local chapter leadership. Thank you for the survey, which is very broad in its coverage, and I hope the responses you get from the membership are helpful in moving into the future.

AGO—very vital; cannot imagine the organ world without it. I do think it important to continue stressing our role as one primarily of supporting music in worship, and thus embracing choral and other directors, as well as organists

I belong to the AGO because I'm a professional organist. The AGO is a remote and somewhat

unfriendly organization, though the Brooklyn Chapter with which I have a dual membership is very friendly indeed.

I've never considered myself an active AGO member although I've paid dues for many years, and have hosted local chapter meetings when asked. This survey has helped me realize the importance of the AGO to me personally, and for that I'm grateful. My preference has always been to serve behind the scenes, which will obviously become a stronger option if and when headquarters begins to develop online possibilities. Thanks for this!

It is a good thing that the AGO is putting out this survey because it indicates that it recognizes its need to remake itself.

Would prefer more of a true professional orientation. Don't forget about the needs of the serious, full-time professional members while trying to please everyone else.

I joined to further support our local chapter of organists, organbuilders, choir directors, and to help encourage more support of choral opportunities. I am not a keyboard player by training but hold a BM in choral ed, MM in voice, and MLS (library science). I spend up to 10 hours per week during the "season" with choral music, worship planning in conjunction with other members of the staff, and in actually conducting rehearsals and services. AGO is interesting mostly because I also love organ music and because of its support of good choral music.

We need an organization that means something to the professional full-time church musician, but can also inspire and assist the growth of the many who faithfully play/direct for their churches week after week.

My chapter is a minimum of a 30-minute commute, usually 45 minutes one way to activities planned. Often these meetings conflict with my teaching schedule. I work part time for the church, don't have the best organ in the world, and have always felt the programs slated are strictly for the "upper" crust of AGO membership. Between 40 students, a church job (albeit "part time") and raising three grandchildren I don't have the time to travel to hear about something I should learn to play (say, the Bach Wedge fugue) instead of something that will help me in church the next week (meshing volunteer brass players of various levels for All Saints' Day). If we want to keep organ playing alive—and I do—it must be of vital importance for AGO to help those of us down in the ranks. The only reason I have kept my membership is attending the regionals when they are within driving distance and, I hope, to attend one national when it is in Washington, D.C. With the worship services at these conventions alone I can gain enough support to renew my playing and work through the next couple of years. The educational workshops at conventions are icing on the cake. I feel so left out by my "local" chapter, that a few of us have even talked about starting a new chapter in our town that will be more "welcoming" to those of us who are just trying to survive each Sunday.

Millions of young people in rural America are growing up without ever hearing an organ. Why? Because Aunt Susie can't play any longer and there is (1) no one to take her place or (2) her replacement is a well-meaning pianist who plays organ poorly. Under these circumstances, what incentive does a small congregation have to keep up its organ? This situation is totally ignored by AGO. Something must be done to encourage adults to undertake organ study to serve their own congregations. Student scholarships are fine, but do nothing to address this grassroots problem. In addition to adult scholarships, perhaps AGO could organize a mentoring program to encourage better playing in small congregations.

Hard task: continue to encourage excellence but diminish the impression of concert-pipe-organ snobbery. Thanks for your efforts.

I get about 150 regular people at my recitals. They are not organists, but they *love* organ music. How can the AGO appeal to them for membership? I put my copy of TAO out for free and nobody ever takes it. I have no answer. Turn someone like Cameron Carpenter into a rock star. Virgil's light show got me.

Thank you for taking the time to prepare this survey. I currently serve as Dean of my local chapter, and am always looking for ways the Guild can have more of a presence in the community in order to reach a wider audience. Our chapter recently hosted a POE last summer—with great success. Our challenge as a chapter, in my opinion, is keeping the attention of our POE participants after they are given their one year membership. I look forward to seeing the results of this survey in the near future.

To be viable, the AGO must make known to the general public the importance of the organ and organ music. There are too many recitals that attract only other organists, and local AGO chapters are very insulated. The National AGO also needs to emphasize the importance of organs in worship services as more churches are using praise bands (with “keyboards”).

Let me assure you of one thing: AGO, and organ playing will only expand when there is more access to organs, for people who want to play. Organs are expensive, and there are many, many of us who love the organ, would love to play, but have no access. This organization will only grow only if organs become more and more accessible for playing by those who wish to play this wonderful instrument. Inaccessible means irrelevant, and organs and AGO will become irrelevant if populated only by elite “professionals.” There are more who love the organ and would love to have access to one, than those who play professionally, and if only “professionals” have access, then the organ, and AGO will remain as distant, inaccessible and irrelevant as pipe organs.

I shared this observation with Mr. Thomashower and former Dean Fred Swann. The Guild needs to be transformed into the 21st century. Not many people today know what a “guild” is. The logo is out of date and stodgy. New logo is a must. Make it exciting. Take a leaf from Susan Slaymaker marketing *and* Cameron Carpenter. I am old, but I recognize the importance of *change*.

AGO needs to clarify its mission. Sometimes the Guild seems to be more about the performer than the instrument. Are we going to be an organ guild, or an organ performer guild, or a church music guild? I'm all for Church music, but, I get what I need for that out of the NPM. I think that AGO should focus just in the instrument (perhaps a healthy balance of instrument, performer, builder, pedagogy, etc.).

Key to increasing number of organists in the future is exposure and availability of practice instruments. Most churches are very strict with letting people practice on their instruments, resulting in a low numbers of recruits to the profession.

The two biggest reasons that people don't join the AGO are 1) membership costs too much and 2) AGO is perceived as an elitist organization. We need to reach out to *all* organists and lovers of organ music. We all have the same goals and the word Guild implies that we all will work together to reach our goals. Unfortunately the reality is that this doesn't happen in most chapters. It is nearly impossible to change the attitudes of people in these areas.

Thank you! This was an excellent idea. As I grow older I lament the decline in positions for qualified organists and the lack of young people majoring in organ and choral conducting. Utilizing the Internet is a wonderful idea.

I feel that many of my responses will not be overly helpful and beneficial to you. I am currently a full-time PhD student in a non-music department. I also work at least 50 hours a week between three jobs. As a result, I am not able to attend many area or national events, conferences, or conventions due to the scheduling of these activities and I rarely have time to read *The American Organist*. Thus, the importance of my membership is minimal to me at this time. Many of the suggested ways of keeping up with my generation (born since 1980) would probably work extremely well as I have seen many of my colleagues at other music-based seminars and conferences use them. I would encourage you in this process of evaluation and examination of the Guild to also look at other similar musical guilds, such as ATOS (American Theatre Organ Society) and AGEHR (American Guild of English Handbell Ringers). I have either been or currently am a member of both of those organizations. I have attended the national seminar of one of these organizations and have found it very beneficial and I have attended a summer camp through the other organization.

It seems to me that adjustments/changes in the AGO might be best made with these difficult financial times we now have, considering that they will not be long-range or permanent. Then when things get better, do a longer-range plan which could be more utopian. Just a thought.

Was student AGO-er in 1970s while in college. Joined again as an adult only recently. Love TAO magazine and chapter-sponsored recitals. Love the idea of more discussion on service music—both sung and played.

As in any multiple-choice survey format, the true answer sometimes falls between the cracks of the answer options or varies as one interprets the intention of the questions. However, some data is better than no data. All best wishes, *Soli Deo Gloria*.

I joined the AGO over 50 years ago to have an opportunity to share in the musical experiences of others in the Guild. I have benefitted over the years from associations and lasting friendships made in the Guild. My first national convention was in Detroit in 1960, and I got to meet E. Power Biggs and hear Virgil Fox. Living in Southeastern Massachusetts all my life, I have been in a region of small churches with many antique and charming pipe organs. There are less than a handful of full-time organists in this area. But there are many who share our enthusiasm for the organ and its music.

Thank you to headquarters for opening discussion about the Guild's future. I anticipate seeing the results of this survey. Well done!

I value AGO, but have been too busy with public school teaching, 40 private students, and two church organ/choir jobs to attend meetings or to network with other organists. Many years ago I attended national conventions and enjoyed them immensely. (Used to attend with my mother who was a college organ professor.)

In our region it is difficult to attract AGO members from our small churches because the dues seem to exceed most salaries. I can understand the membership in the Boston area and in metropolitan areas in general, but I also can understand why a person making less than a hundred dollars a week in a church job won't shell out for AGO dues. And we have many in that category. Our goal here has been to visit all the small churches, especially those with significant pipe organs in order to celebrate those churches for maintaining and cherishing their fine instruments. We make ourselves known by frequent organ crawls and member programs throughout our region. This has attracted most of our membership. It has also resulted in the saving of many fine organs. But churches in this area also continue to close, especially in the Catholic faith. Successful congregations in which a diversity of music is offered do flourish. By a diversity in music, I do not mean a trashing of the organ. A fine guitar player was invited to

participate in a recent service at my church. When he played a hymn (of his own composition), I accompanied on the organ. I wanted him to know that the guitar and the organ are not mutually exclusive, but rather inclusive and that one can actually enhance the other. We are often hidebound by liturgical beliefs and customs that shut people out. Many organists are rather unyielding in rather rigid ideas. Unfortunately, these stand in the way of AGO growth and church growth in general. We are part of a wide world in which the organ is a vital part. As organists, we must continue to play the music that engages our congregations, helps them to grow, but also aids their worship. I have children in my youth choirs who listen to organ music on YouTube because they heard it here in church. These may be our successors. But we must keep the candle burning with our weekly offerings. The AGO has been a wonderful part of my life, not for its magazine, which is OK, not for its massive conventions, which I can no longer afford, not for its continual requests for money, of which I have little, but rather for the fine associations and friendships which have enriched my days and days to come.

I have been organist at large churches until retiring and now substitute. I believe that a portion of our future organists lie in *piano studios* and high school pianists. I operated a large piano studio, and often provided biweekly organ lessons to weekly high school piano students. At one time, I taught biweekly lessons at two churches, alternating locations and students. Pianists are automatically trained to teach. Organists are *not*. I have developed programs which I present to entire piano studios at the pipe organ for purposes of attracting future organists. I also have a 4-session 2-hour weekly group session for four adults or children of *any age*, which was very successful in a large city area. I also believe that *piano teachers* and their students should be targeted at the junior high and senior high school level. I was adjunct organ teacher at a community college for many years and occasionally taught piano majors who had an interest in organ. Most were very adept and interested. I also have taught and do teach adult organ students, some of whom play, and some of whom want to play for their church. Included in the basic organ playing skills, I teach the liturgy or format of *their* own church service and repertoire appropriate for weddings and funerals. I believe AGO is missing out on many educational opportunities! I'd be interested in your response. I am passionate about teaching and education of future organists!

In my view, the future success of the profession of organ playing depends on the recruitment of the tremendous pool of students of classical music. There is a glut on the market of virtually every area of classical music but ours. We must encourage talented teenage/20-something pianists (and others who might have some keyboard skills) to consider the organ as a viable possibility. I don't know exactly what percentage of piano majors in college actually succeed as piano performers, but it must be quite low; the percentage of organ majors working as professional organists must be higher. Efforts by music schools and universities to keep students' expectations realistic are desperately needed, as far too many students are permitted to focus their studies exclusively on an area in which they will never succeed, but this is largely out of the control of our organization.

AGO needs to take a good look at its role in today's church, *and* in today's concert world. Maybe working with more symphonies to get organ concertos on the programs is another way to reach an audience that already likes good music, but may not know organ music outside of church. I know that is the purpose of this survey. I have also enjoyed greatly the people I have met in AGO. That is a big plus.

Due to an erratic work schedule, I am unable to attend the local AGO chapter events. However, I read the e-mails the chapter sends, and I study TAO with great interest. I appreciate the survey, but I do not consider myself to be an accurate example. Perhaps I'm an accurate example of an organist in a small rural town blessed with a Casavant organ—only one of two pipe organs in our county.

I love the AGO, and especially TAO and conventions. I am drawn to, and respect, high standards, and hope that the AGO will continue to strive for excellence and not spend too many resources promoting mediocrity. I see the need to encourage those with more elementary levels of ability, but this only happens when there is a high-standard goal and promotion of the equivalent high-end skill. So much of conventions are aimed at unskilled persons; the rest of us drift away if not engaged at least some of the class time. Thank you for listening!

I am a regular AGO member and dual member of three other chapters. Chapters have ranged from "professional development" groups to primarily performance emphasis. The first is most important to organists like myself and must be promoted if you want to maintain growth in church organists as opposed to church musicians. Increase emphasis on choral music and musician/pastor relations.

The AGO cannot be all things to all church/synagogue musicians. Maintain focus on organs, repertoire, history, building, performance, performance practice.

A word on general civility within the guild, especially at the local level. James Thomashower and Fred Swann both tried to address this issue, for which I am grateful. The guild is a relatively small organization; we should be encouraging, kind, and receptive to *anyone* who happens to express an interest in the organ. Speaking from my own experience, when I first joined the Guild at age 13, the members of my chapter didn't want to know me or my parents—for what reason, I don't know. But once I went and "made something of myself," then my chapter showed some interest in what I was doing. This kind of attitude toward new, young, or part-time organists must stop—otherwise any kind of new membership to the Guild will be nonexistent because current members scare or intimidate new organists away. I am also tired of the relentless arguing over the use of digital organs, and the ridiculing of organists who play them. Of course, the pipe organ is the ideal. But, they are also expensive, and in some cases not feasible. Let's just accept that fact. I would really like to see the higher leadership of the AGO address these two items, and make them a focus of the Guild's efforts. If the membership cannot support each other, what is the point of all this?

It is gratifying to see the AGO taking steps to address several longstanding issues of concern for the organization. This survey certainly reflects well on the depth of thought being given to the various issues facing members today. My hope is that the majority of the members will take the time to seriously consider the exciting new possibilities for the organization. Thank you!

Interesting and thought-provoking questions. We must move ahead and expand our horizons beyond our current, almost cloistered existence.

The AGO should do whatever is possible to foster and promote the organ and organ music, especially as it relates to worship.

The AGO is what keeps me going when I experience burnout! Nashville Chapter—National 2012!

Need to get with the program and not just be a stuffy group of organists—get in the 21st century. Realize that most denominations are changing and go with the changes. Give more practical resources for the church musician with a non-professional choir—music for the real world, not a make-believe one. Become useful to the average church musician—become more than just the organization for Episcopal and swanky Presbyterian musicians. Commission music that is more practical for an average church. If we are to change and grow we have to become something that every church musician needs.

I have always found the AGO to be helpful and supportive.

Keep up the good work. In general I am pleased with the Guild. Our local chapter could use a shot in the arm, but almost all the members are part-time and have regular day jobs, so it's hard to devote lots of time.

Detach AGO from the church and religion. We *must* begin to build a new audience for the organ. If Harry Potter had loved to play the organ, our lives would be better. Offer a competition for the best screenplay for a film about the organ, sell it to Hollywood. Combine AGO with ATOS and OHS for a real powerhouse organization with more influence.

I belong to AGO because I love the organ and its music. I wish I could play well enough to be useful, but such is not the case. I love reading about great instruments and their locations. I listen to Pipedreams all the time on computer. I consider my friendship with several organists as a great joy. They are special people delivering God's love through their talent.

Overall, I think the AGO HQ are doing a good job transitioning into the 21st century. It is of utmost importance that we (the AGO) embrace modern tools such as Twitter, Facebook, etc., to reach younger generations, as that generation does not communicate like older generations—as generational studies have shown. Teenagers will not look into a brochure or newspaper to find out what's interesting (unfortunately). Instead, text messaging and other electronic sources are used. The youth pastor at our church communicates mostly by e-mail and texting (with the youth, that is).

Thanks for the good work in putting this survey together—we are an interesting organization with a wide variety of interests and needs—hard to find what is central to the majority of us. Good luck!

I think that most of the programs are very dull. I think we need something quite new. Unfortunately, I know that my tastes do not match the tastes of most of the membership. Over the years, the most interesting organists, composers, and improvisers that I have known have been generally ignored by the AGO chapters to which I have belonged. There is too much politics—trading favors, and networks of people jockeying for influence. I guess it will probably always be this way, but it has made things very dull. The truly interesting people seem to be marginalized. This leads to generic playing, composition, and improvisation. The arbiters of taste are too stodgy and they do not have a sense of music as it exists today in the music world as a whole. I would love to attend some really unusual events at chapter meetings or the conventions. I would love to see the organ really making its way into the future with some interesting outreach and programming.

Thank you for all you do for us “in the field” as you work behind the scenes! Keep up the good work! God bless you!

The AGO has no business complaining about the shortage of organists, when organists currently employed at churches shut other organists out, turn them away when they need a place to practice, or are trying to establish themselves in a new area following a move. I've never seen such arrogance, pettiness, and disrespect within an organization that supposedly is in need of organists and is always making known what a shortage there is. For a group of people who are supposedly so talented and gifted, many of you have a lot to learn about professionalism and how to deal with people. I am an organist who does substitute playing. I am very good at what I do, but not in an arrogant, “here I am world” sort of way. I am grateful for my gift and all I ever wanted was to utilize it, share it, and enjoy it. When I go to a church to practice and they hear

me and find that I can play all the great classics, the current organist invariably feels threatened and it isn't long before I no longer have a place to practice, let alone a church to call me to substitute. I don't want anyone's job. I don't think I'm better than anyone else. Are your organists so low on self-esteem or so high on it that they cannot deal with the reality that there are others who are talented too?

The AGO Web site pretty blatantly shows there is a problem amongst you when, at the top of the website are: Code of Ethics, Code of Professional Standards, Grievance Procedures, Discipline, and Dispute Resolution. The fact that those last three items are on the AGO cover page speaks volumes. AGO Guidelines state "organists dedicate themselves to the highest standard of professionalism, integrity and competence." There are organists who do have high standards of professionalism and integrity, but many don't. I've seen organists set one another up to fail; I've seen aspiring organists turned away because the "professionals" didn't want anyone else on their turf, phone calls unanswered, music stolen, pages stolen from music left on the organ by someone playing for a wedding, pistons changed before a concert so that it caught the performer off-guard. I only have three words for organists who do such things and treat one another this way: *shame on you*. Until I see some changes within the AGO, I will not contribute so much as a nickel from here on in.

Thank you for providing the valuable services to musicians and music lovers that you do. I hope to utilize these resources more fully!

As a life-long church musician and organist, I have found the AGO to be, indeed, a marvelous inspiration to my profession. Through chapter events, regional and national conventions, I find it to be the best for my own professional growth. TAO is an awesome publication. I tell members in my chapter that the dues alone are worthwhile just to be able to receive the magazine, if for no other reason. I am the sub-dean of CFAGO at the present time, and am looking forward to being the dean in May, leading the local chapter in exciting programs, concerts, etc., for the members to fully experience all that is available locally, regionally and nationally through the AGO. We need the AGO to fully connect. I am happy to participate in this survey.

Having a professional organization of this stature is important to me, even though I do not attend chapter meetings often. Although the organ was my instrument for my master's degree, I appreciate having the certification programs. Studying for and taking the exams in my mature years have provided assurance of my ability to continue as an up-to-date church organist. I also enjoy and appreciate TAO.

I like what the AGO is doing in all areas. There are many positive helpful new things since I became a member almost 40 years ago.

I am strongly supportive of the AGO, and think this survey is very well thought out and very important.

We need the AGO and its membership to be perceived as "hip," "cool"—organs are one of the greatest instruments we have.

Overall I think this is getting to the core of the "issue" with the AGO. It'd be important to make the organ more relevant to the broader audience, and not just to the Bach enthusiasts or liturgical church musician's interest (as in, get less stuffy and broaden to other genres of music). It doesn't need to necessarily include hobbyists, but there needs to be encouragement of new blood and people who don't care much about certification because it isn't relevant to them or what they may like to play. I have several other thoughts but am willing to share them outside the survey. [Following are his additional comments received by e-mail:]

I've been involved with AGO for several years now, and have also been involved with the American Theatre Organ Society for many years. While they are two distinctly different organizations that serve the purpose of two distinct sets of people, there is something that can be learned from similar experiences on both "sides of the aisle" as it were.

The AGO has a distinct advantage in that it serves many church musicians. The use of the organ for services has been on a decline, but I don't think it is terminal to the point that liturgical and traditional churches will all stop using them. I think there would be great benefit to bringing a new (or renewed) relevancy to the organ by encouraging players to broaden horizons beyond typical classical pre-1800s literature and church-style setting towards a more contemporary/popular music genre. Of the AGO events I have attended in Denver and been aware of in Seattle, I do not find overwhelming support or encouragement to play much beyond Bach, Vierne and Dupré—maybe one piece that was written by a contemporary neoclassical artist. But I say there is a world of music out there that could be performed on these mighty instruments, and I would argue that performing them takes just as much skill, if not more, than playing "regular" Bach preludes and fugues.

I bring this up because the ATOS has the same "problem." For several events, the artists are not encouraged to break away from the 1920s-1940s Jesse Crawford/George Wright styling, and are often criticized for playing too much "pizza parlor" music. Quite frankly, the selections in the pizza parlors, while cliché and sometimes overplayed, are modern and familiar to the audiences. They attract a younger crowd, and interest is there where it wouldn't be playing old Crawford arrangements. ATOS (I include all theatre organ artists in this) has had the pizza parlors available to "jump start" the trend of playing modern music, and I know that the AGO circuits haven't exactly had the same opportunities, but I have heard things like Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue injected into a concert on a fantastically-orchestral instrument once—and it about blew me away. I am certainly grateful that there is a renewed interest in placing organs in performing arts venues and symphony halls. That is definitely a step in the right direction (in my opinion).

My point is this: The AGO should not only support but encourage forward-thinking artists and performers and start to showcase the mighty King of Instruments to their fully versatile abilities. Many organ manufacturers such as Schoenstein and even Schantz have designed instruments that are very orchestral in nature and can handle such literature. Perhaps this includes checking in with the certification program to ensure it isn't creating silos and separation between artists, but ensuring that all talent is recognized and appreciated. It is no secret that the AGO and ATOS are becoming grayer and grayer as the years go on. Not only do we have to find young people to take interest in playing, but we must also attract a new audience—one that takes a broader interest than church music or Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor. What a fantastic opportunity we have to emphasize that organs don't just accompany hymn singing and liturgical worship—they can play the theme from "Jaws" or rock out with "Bohemian Rhapsody" or selections from the musical "Chicago." How cool would that be?

I find the AGO to be a very helpful organization. I'm overall quite pleased with my membership. I love the fact that you seem to be considering greater use of web-based delivery of products and services. The only thing that bothers me about AGO is the occasional assumption that all members are active in Christian faith traditions. That's simply not true.

Excellent survey. Thank you. The Guild is a member-driven organization, and as such it needs to welcome all members regardless of their background or whether they choose to affiliate with a chapter. The Guild needs to modernize its seal, its thinking, and its approach to communications if it hopes to attract today's young organists and especially if it hopes to attract tomorrow's young organists.

I appreciate your taking the time to conduct this survey. I think the Guild does a good job, and would hope that we do not try to be all things to all people. I'd like to see do well whatever it is we choose as a national organization. Being a member of AGO has helped me to improve skills in

musicianship, leadership, creativity, business management, social relations and self confidence. This came about by serving on the Board over the years as member at large, registrar, sub-dean, dean, membership chair, study grant chair, and newsletter editor.

I have met very wonderful and creative people in the AGO. The resources are great. Please keep up the good work!

I am very pleased with AGO overall. Everything AGO does is of the highest caliber. AGO offers many resources for its members. I am unable to make use of everything AGO has to offer, but I am grateful for availability of its many resources. I think you should continue in the direction you have been going, always giving an example of something for members to aspire to and work towards. It is important that AGO find a way to young organists through the internet. I just am not sure of the way to do it. I am proud to be a member of AGO!

I am glad there is an AGO, and I am glad to be a member. But I wish the AGO leadership would open their collective eyes and actually the world as it is today. We need sweeping changes. Not minor updates—and certainly don't get rid of the good parts like a printed magazine—but we need a fundamental and comprehensive change in the AGO.

I love AGO and benefit from the magazine, local programs, conventions. Thank you for the survey.

Most (Catholic) churches I have gone to in the past have never heard of AGO and are going through many organist deficits. Even I had never heard of it until just before I went to college.

AGO is very important for the organ profession. I appreciate that the AGO is able to set professional standards for organists. The salary schedule, job descriptions, contracts, and other professional development documents are outstanding, and very useful for working in the church arena. The opportunity to network with other organists and to meet together is invaluable. Chapter meetings are well worthwhile, and conventions are outstanding opportunities for professional development and personal professional inspiration.

In general I feel that the AGO is out of touch with current church musicians and the congregations they serve. There needs to be a radical revamping of the organization with a strong focus on recruiting new organ students and AGO members, engaging youth, and providing educational programs for church musicians. There are many church musicians looking to further their education but unable to do so because of the cost and time restraints. Increased distance learning opportunities would be a great benefit. The AGO should uphold a high standard of Liturgy and Music but stress the importance of keeping it accessible within the average congregation, i.e., quality does not equal stuffy. Local chapters should be held accountable to a vision statement which embodies the main goals of the AGO. Emphasis should be placed on outreach, youth, and continuing education. Many chapters have degraded into a potluck supper club and others have become an elitist society frowned upon by clergy and congregations. It's my hope that the AGO reorganize and become an organization that has a future in the 21st century and beyond.

The AGO is an outstanding organization with many talented, dedicated, hard-working musicians.

While my work schedule prevents me from being regularly active in my AGO chapter, I have great admiration for the organization, its people and purpose. Thank you for everything you do to bless the work of all who are in the "trenches of ministry"—each in our choir lofts, on the organ benches and in the lives of our congregants. My local chapter is 40 miles away.

Way, way, way too much (usually Christian) churchiness in *everything* the AGO does. Please, may we bring things up 1,000 years and acknowledge that not all musicians embrace superstition?

The AGO is an organization of which I am proud to be a member. The quality of TAO is excellent, and all involved should be congratulated. That having been said, I question whether we as in touch with what is happening in church music today as we should be. I'll expand on this in a separate e-mail and send it to you. [Following are his additional comments received by e-mail:] Long-range planning, I am assuming, is directed toward sustaining and growing the interest in and promotion of organ music in all of society as well as in churches and synagogues. I am looking at things from the vantage point of a full-time church musician for 37 years plus part time while in junior high, high school, college and the army—an additional 11 years or a total of 48 years.

The most important ears we need to fill are the young—the very young. We as adults also need to model how we value the organ to the children. What they see us value, truly value, they will value. The same is true of worship. Attendance is not enough. Excitement and enthusiasm for these things has to be taught and modeled to them first by parents when the children are very young. Church musicians need to get to parents and teach them how to model this for their children. Organ concerts and worship services need to take precedence over other things. If a sport demands 5 or 6 days a week, perhaps the parent makes the decision that this is too unbalanced and other things need to be included. Sports only take over because parents allow it. Values can be taught by what we do and what we decide, which is all seen by our children. I think it is interesting that theologian Martin Marty has a family dinner with his wife and children every Saturday night and they all dress for dinner. No one misses. I wonder why? (not really!) The POEs are a good start. There also needs to be an event aimed at the younger people—ages 5-8, for example, to show them the pipes and the console and to hear the organ and to look inside, see the blower, etc. Each can “play” the organ a bit—perhaps a piano piece played on the organ, perhaps ding a few chimes, whatever. Kids love hands-on events, so seeing the organ up close and exploring it is important. Church musicians have the perfect opportunity to put this out there for them. Inviting them to sit near the console while the organ is played.

Another thing I would explore with your group is the direction in which many churches are going using contemporary music. What are the music schools teaching their organ students regarding the realities out there in church music? Are we setting organ students up for a huge shock once they begin job hunting and discover what they are being expected to do? I don't think the churches are even yet aware of the effect this movement is having on the children—the musical heritage they are not only throwing away, but that the children will never come to even know. The theology contained in the traditional hymns we have sung are not being matched by very many of the new worship songs being produced today.

One reason I think people have wandered away from church music is that in many churches it was not well done. Too many times I have heard hymns poorly played and organ voluntaries which were dull and ill-prepared. Why would people want to return to uninspired worship and unenthusiastic congregational singing?

Kids go to a Youth Convention and are caught up in the excitement of a rock concert. It is truly an exciting event for them, and I think if we admit it, it would be for anyone. You get caught up in the spirit of it all. 17,000 young people all cheering and laser lights and hugely amplified rock bands, everyone coming with a huge sense of expectation, that's what they experience—so they assume if we just change the music at our home church to this style, all the rest will come with it. Hmmm! It just doesn't seem to work that way, and yet now that they have discarded the traditional as stodgy and obsolete, they are left with not much at all.

A few years back, church leaders looking to “up” their numbers welcomed rock and R&B music—that would bring in the young people. But it has not. Now having lost their traditional worshipers, they are wondering why the young folks aren't flooding their doors. Perhaps the “new music” wasn't the answer after all. Young people are looking to meet a God that is larger than

themselves, and integrity in their religious experience, a reason to make the effort to come out. They are not looking for entertainment. That they can get much better by turning on a switch in their own room.

The organ is certainly one of those things that give people a sense of something bigger than themselves. Creating a sense of expectation for worship with careful, participatory planning and going back and learning why we value the music we valued before and why we do what we do in worship — all of these things can recover our sense of reverence in something greater than ourselves. Worship leaders need to instruct their congregations by what they say AND DO! If the prelude is part of worship, teach that to the congregation. Why do we sing an Alleluia? They ought to know—it's their worship, for heaven's sake! If the postlude is part of worship, why does everyone walk out? (Actually, some here stay and are glad—that's nice!)

Well, this has gone on long enough. That's just what I think. I love having the resources and the people at my church. I grimace sometimes at the musical choices made by pastors here occasionally, but by and large we are still maintaining a good sense of worship.

I think that individual organists should be able to decide what type of situation they would like to engage in, select the music and materials that they are comfortable working with, decide how much time and preparation they are comfortable committing to. It is helpful to all of us that the present AGO presentations and materials remain available to us via TAO and other programs as we work in our specific commitments to our obligations as church musicians and organ builders. We are aware of our specific job requirements and performance levels, and I feel that we should use the present AGO resources as we feel as individuals for our specific obligations in the obligations that we have accepted. The positions that we are in should be respected by our officers, and we should have the freedom to access those materials and programs that we feel will help us fulfill our performance in our selected positions. My feeling is that this survey is a little heavy-handed.

I am very proud to be an active member of the AGO. I have served in every office and am now the Co-Dean of our local chapter. The local organization has been a great help to me, a piano performance major who took a "church job" and ended up an organist! My husband (also a member) and I enjoy the conventions, which are very helpful and enjoyable.

The needs and wants of the younger members may vary greatly from those of us older folks, but there needs to be a constant standard in the Guild for scholarship, ethical standards, respect for colleagues, quality performance and education at all levels of need. I am amazed at the humility and kindness of some of our most gifted members and leaders. The national office does a great job for the AGO with limited staff and resources. Thank you.

During 2007-08, I attended the excellent 2 year program, "Leadership Program for Musicians" (serving small churches)—a most relevant and useful program. Unfortunately, the AGO local Chapter tends to cater for and attract only the higher stratum of professionally qualified current and retired organists. I regret that, though I have played the organ for the last 50 years, my degrees are in electrical engineering—so I feel somewhat of an outcast within AGO and the NACM.

Good survey, making me think more about AGO purposes and ways to improve as an organization. I have benefited from membership for many years and want to support its continued health and growth. Thank you!

I am basically satisfied with AGO as it is. I am organist and, by default, choir director in a small, very traditional Episcopal church, and am interested in the traditional types of music: no praise choruses, etc. I have thought about certifications and think I could do up to Colleague if it did not include transposing hymns: I read well, and can improvise a bit, but do *not* memorize music at all, and am not likely to at age 70+. My formal degrees are in Mechanical Engineering, and the

piano and organ training has only been through private lessons, many hours of listening to organ recordings through FM radio or LPs in the good old days, and now through the Internet, and through the TAO and conventions.

Good survey. I am not involved in the AGO currently for many reasons. The AGO does not serve my needs as a part-time musician. Of what use is early music programs, seminars and articles in today's musical world. Most of the "academic" composers and styles of music are fine for the academic world, but it intimidates and bores the rest of us that want to play a creative service with hymns, anthems and preludes/postludes. The AGO caters to people with different values than I have. I was once very active in my local AGO both as a committee member and very high donor. However, the committees were taken over by groups of like-minded sexual orientation, and as a married man with children, I was left out and uncomfortable. I do not care if this is politically correct—actually I hope I am not politically correct. Political correctness has ruined our society. We are no longer America founded by Christian principles because of political correctness. You want honesty or more rhetoric. The AGO is also very liberal politically and theologically—not neutral, as one would expect. Conservative Christians still make up most of the churches in America and most of the musicians. The local AGO chapters are run by 'blowhards' that like to promote themselves and their colleagues. Sorry, I am not impressed with the unprofessionalism of the AGO. The only reason I am a member is I do enjoy the TAO, most of the time. Also, I saw an option for the lifetime membership. I was not aware of the option. I have issues tracking down the membership person in the local chapter. She does not have her own email or fax and must use her husband's. It has been a cumbersome event the last 2 years and I have gone past the signup date 2 years in a row losing my TAO for a month or two. The local large metropolitan chapter has no provisions for online membership.

There is concern about declining Guild membership. This is a reflection of a society and economy in decline. If we reverse free trade and political moves impeding our economy, the economy will build back and offer opportunity for society to turn around.

Efforts should be made to engage church musicians in general, so that AGO members don't become marginalized, i.e. strictly a niche in the church music field. Church music has changed enormously in the last generation. If our mission is to uphold the organ in its "traditional and evolving" roles, we need to define what an emerging role for the organ is or can be.

I'm glad the LRPC has produced such a broad and inclusive survey. I hope you will devise a similar survey for non-organists to learn how best to engage them and introduce them to the inspiring sound of organ music.

I am pleased that such a survey is being done. Frankly, the Guild has a diversity of members, and such a survey is an appropriate way to get accurate statistical data. As an educator who knows that much of the professional development of practitioners is born on the backs of volunteers, I truly appreciate the commitment of officers and staff of our Guild.

Do you provide training for the officers and communicators in the various chapters and regions so that there is a clear expectation of roles and responsibilities? My father was a minister, and the most political entity within each church he served was the music program; that observation seems not to have changed a great deal over the years. While the relationship between church and music worship may be the single most important venue within the AGO, it may not be (nor do I think it should be) the AGO's sole mission and responsibility. As a non-member of the AGO, perhaps I should not be commenting, but then you asked, and sometimes it helps to have views from outside the organization.

I currently am pleased with what the AGO is doing, and am not looking for them to initiate a lot of new programs. As in any organization I am sure changes will be made along the way. I am pleased with everything as it is at the moment. To me there is still a lot to take advantage of as it is.

Thanks for all that the headquarters does, I do appreciate it.

I have received much encouragement, guidance and education from local AGO members.

I can't emphasize enough the bias shown in both regional and national performance settings for those few artists with management. It has become repetitive to the point of pointlessness to scan the AGO performance listings. There are scores of gifted organists seeking performance opportunities who are not heard or represented, and this can engender resentment and bitterness, or even merely malaise and withdrawal from the AGO. I also think it's very important *to support* these people who have achieved so very much, and whose artistic gifts are extraordinary. But, please. Let's have some diversity, and more opportunities to build bridges instead of delineate between those few competition winners or recording artists and those who are "in the trenches" more often and bound by liturgical schedules. This country is bristling with gifted organists and organ enthusiasts! The fees for performers are inappropriately high when you consider the quality of some of the performances recently heard at national conventions.

I love the AGO. I only started the organ at age 47 and am now 51. In that time I have become a church organist and choir director, and chapter Dean. I could not have done it without the support of the AGO.

Learning to know and work with local organists has been rewarding. Becoming involved with Regional venues has produced good stretching and motivation.

I belong to the AGO because I think I should be a member of a professional organization in my field, and it is helpful in finding subs. However, I believe that the AGO at both the national and local (Milwaukee Chapter) levels shows little concern about the problems of the typical church organist. Few have majors in organ, or even in music. Many are pianists who never have had instruction in organ registration, hymn playing style, advice on finding playable music, etc., etc. If the AGO really wanted to promote better acceptance of the organ it would address these issues rather than sponsoring recitals where most of the music is beyond the capabilities of the typical church musician. Have you ever wondered why only a tiny fraction of the church organists in this country are members of the AGO? Answering that question might be helpful in building a more relevant AGO. Church organist since the age of 13 (>60 years). Continued work with local college organ faculty. Degrees are in physics (45 year career teaching physics and chemistry).

I've belonged to the AGO in two different regions, and although my circumstances prevent me from attending chapter events now, I stay connected to colleagues and value their expertise. The AGO needs to seriously update its image and "think younger" to survive the next decade. Online is where these younger musicians are, and we need to reach out to them.

I fear I made myself quite clear in some of the answers. I happen to love the Guild, snubs, rudeness or just nasty people or not. In my many years as an officer (at a student chapter and local chapter) I felt NY really didn't get or care about those of us in flyover country. Much like the early fingering debate—sorry, I am in the lineage of Walcha, I will use heels and toes and all 10 fingers. Thus, I am a pariah, and not worthy of support from local chapters and the powers that be. Too bad. I have started concert series at every church I have ever been in and organ concerts were always included. People actually came to mine sometimes. And while not up to Paul Jacobs' ability, or Fred Swann's rep, they were equally as entertaining. Society continues to

toss the baby. Please do not do this any longer in the Guild. Make an effort to remember the old farts.

When I was in the digital industry and then the pipe industry, the Guild wanted our money but rarely did anything to support it. Thanks for the ads, and the expensive booth space with sometimes radical hours (midnight in Seattle when you live on the East Coast is *bruta*), we were just marvelous. The rest of the year and in local meetings, ptui. We Spit On You. We Deliver a Fish to your doorstep. Oh, by the way, we are short at this convention, would you be willing to give a further donation.

Made a remark as well about the hiding of jobs. It would have been gracious to have received a form reply at least. And it would be helpful if you could ask chapters to open the positions to AGO members and not snottily, and I mean *snottily*, keep it closed to only local members. My encounter was the Chicago Chapter. Do they think I am not good enough to want to move there and participate in the community?

Good luck on this. Hope it generates some brilliant new idea that will save the guild and us. We are buggy drivers, playing buggy whips when there are fewer buggies and many more horseless carriages.

The AGO is a wonderful organization and has been a benefit to me over the years, and to the communities in which I have resided. These communities have not been large cities, but the AGO has generally been an active musical and social organization for church organists and choir directors within them. I do wish church choir directors would take a more involved part, and think our name may not be inclusive to encourage that. Perhaps it was/is to those who serve as choirmasters, but the majority of churches have two individuals fulfilling the roles of director and organist and our thrust seems to be mainly reaching the organists.

Less expensive conventions, less costly commissions, more investment in education, promote professional certification at all levels and online resources are ways to work smarter, greener and serve more members.

It is my opinion your dues are much too high for what I know, we the members receive in return. It is difficult to build membership since it has been my experience the "egos" running around the chapter leave a lot to be desired even in just social settings and especially in even somewhat professional setting. There are only 1 or 2 people in my chapter that I feel I can really talk to with regard to musical and or professional issues without it being taken out of context or misunderstood. I don't think the AGO can change those things. I like your list of protocol for visiting organists, but I have received the "abuse" of some of the listings simply because people tend to be jealous and small-minded with regard to certain issues. This is very sad. It is my opinion this hurts the chapters. In order to grow over and above these issues we must have more people begin to study organ. There are just fewer and fewer interested people.

One of the greatest challenges facing the AGO at present is the shortage of quality *positions* for organists. Articles in TAO lament the reduced number of organ students, but the Guild does great disservice to students by getting them "addicted" to fine organ music, and then tossing them on the streets, with no places to play (or even practice). Fine organists may be able to trek through major organ symphonies, the works of Mendelssohn and Bach, with repertoire spanning from earliest music to that newly inked, but there are NOT paying positions for them. These musicians may be able to conduct choirs, and improvise beautifully. They may be able to plan the most complex liturgy, faithful to church canons. Yet because they must pay the rent, they are working full-time outside of music, and cannot find places to play or to practice. Part of the Guild believes the solution is to "dumb down" everything, and only give the general populace "top 40" tunes. But it was trekking through the Duruflé Toccata or the Dupré Passion Symphonie that got the organists excited about the instrument. Where are the opportunities to rehearse and to perform

the great works for the instrument? Or are they only to be limited to those small elite of “represented artists” or “full-time” musicians?

I am proud to be an AGO member. I believe National and local chapters work hard to help improve members. I would like to see more emphasis on certification—requiring certification for membership? A guild is an association of masters and apprentices (and lot of levels in between) all working to improve/advance. The AGO doesn't do enough to foster advancement, I believe. I would like the more skilled organists to mentor others singly or in small groups, perhaps getting a grant from National for their time.

My membership in the AGO and its many resources, conventions, workshops, etc., has been valuable to me in all that I do and have done as a church musician, organ soloist and music teacher. I have often wondered why more organists have not taken advantage of AGO membership.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. It is courageous of the Guild to invite the opinions of its membership. I hope the AGO will begin to tackle the *real* issues of our day: the need for vitality, quality, and excellence in music in our churches, synagogues, and school, and the significant role that these institutions play in influencing our society. This is far more important than competitions and arcane academic debate, and most of us “in the trenches” need to discuss and articulate these serious issues and find ways to implement our understanding in our work. This is certainly why I joined the Guild in the first place.

The AGO has been a significant part of my life. It is dear to my heart. I just wish I could have been a full-time church musician, but outside influences prohibited that.

I feel the AGO is generally living in the past. Our profession is so tightly connected to religion. Religion as we have known it in the past is dying—that's a good and needed thing. We need to face that and imagine a new future.

At the Regional Convention in Las Vegas a couple of years back, I asked our executive director a question after his presentation. He said he really needed to be somewhere, and could I write him at his office? Well, yes, I could do that. I did. The man never even acknowledged my letter. I had concluded by saying that I felt the organization always has been elitist, but has gotten worse in that regard in recent years. He didn't want to hear that. He has never responded or even acknowledged my letter, after having asked me to write to him. Some of the members of leadership are the kindest, most helpful people in the world; others not so.

Many of these questions are irrelevant to me, as I am not a practicing musician, nor have I ever played the organ. I became interested in organ music and musicians because my husband established an organ scholarship in memory of his mother, and I have been continuing to support its activities since his death. I appreciate that most of these issues are important to the majority of AGO members, who are probably practicing musicians; but there are perhaps other non-professional fringe members like me. It seemed worthwhile to fill out the questionnaire, in any case.

Thank you for taking the time to do this. I believe that it is important for the AGO (national and local chapters) to reach out to non-member organists and invite them to take part in the AGO. Among other things this includes being welcoming and accepting of others from different “organ backgrounds” (e.g., those who play electronic instruments) and providing important resources and support (e.g., a variety of good chapter programming, more classes and a greater variety of classes at regional and chapter conventions).

I have found the AGO of great help to me, locally and nationally, since I decided to cease subbing and take real jobs in the church. I have been in my present location for almost 9 years, and the program is thriving, as is the church. I have served on the Boston Board under 6 different Deans, and on several committees, including chairing the Nominating Committee. I always recommend that my piano students try the YOI, attend conventions and meetings as I can. I have always felt it an honor to belong since I have had a life long respect for church musicians and what they do. I have never been interested in recital work, though I support those who present them.

The AGO is a truly valuable organization for more reasons than I can list. I feel that there is no limit to the value of resources—educational and professional, online and in print. I believe that we need to encourage our members to continue to be diligent in promoting the organ and its study through actions such as the Year of the Organ et al, lest we become an endangered species. I think that anything we can do to attract and retain members, while being mindful of our bottom line, is worth a try—I particularly like the idea of online educational resources and discounts on music. These speak to the overworked and underpaid church musician (I'm thinking that's most of us) and to the beginning organist.

My husband isn't driving any more, so I do our family driving and it is mostly local driving. I'm not comfortable driving at night, so that means we don't attend most evening functions as we used to. It's very helpful to have Sunday afternoon concerts. I am the fill-in organist which suits me just fine.

I feel we must continue to foster high level of scholarship and performance but also make programming more accessible and listenable for the public or we may incur the dinosaur syndrome.

Be open to the ferment in contemporary culture, secular and religious. Hold to the virtues of live music, as opposed to the canned stuff. Hold to high standards of practice and performance. Be ready to learn—and, from time to time, to unlearn.

I would like the AGO to support more secular organ music. Our society is becoming more secular and we need to go with that instead of being dragged down by our long association with religion. There can be secular and meditative organ music which is not based on religion. We need to get rid of the religious dogma and let the organ music stand on its own two feet and not be subservient to some religious authority. Music can be very awesome and inspiring without religion. We should not carry on some dogmatic tradition which deserves to die.

Gear the AGO to professional, semi-professional organists. Forget "easy", "simple", etc. Promote substantial artists. Work more at grassroots—many chapters have no clue.

The AGO is an *excellent* professional organization. Quite honestly, it is often my only connection to the much larger world of the organ—and I thank Almighty God for the AGO!

I strongly believe the AGO needs to make the organization more easily accessible and interesting to all church musicians. As previously mentioned the name AGO may need to be changed to reflect this. My general impression of long-time AGO membership is described with the terms "arrogant" and "stodgy" and many of the offerings reflect this outlook. I am "untrained", in the sense that I did not major in music and fell into my current position because of the dearth of organists and my interest in the instrument. I applaud the addition of Barbara Dennerlein to the recent National Convention and efforts to broaden the scope of organ interest. I am also a member of ATOS. Although I would like more online accessibility, many older members don't "do" email, etc. I also applaud efforts to engage children and youth with fun "encounters". Many

of my responses to this survey reflect the fact that my primary employment has never been music; and I have limited time for things other than practice, although I continue to be active in my local chapter. Thanks for asking!

I appreciate the opportunities for professional growth and for social interactions the AGO has provided me.

I love the AGO! It has been an invaluable resource, intellectually and emotionally!

Remember and always show appreciation that we are a highly educated group volunteering our time for the Guild.

If the AGO wants to survive, it needs to junk the "attitude." This attitude also extends to the "pipe versus electronic" debate. Apply that philosophy to the "average" congregation. Music is really, really important and the organ has the voice to enhance the singing and worship of the average congregation. But there are other choices for us "average" folks. Our church has a new Allen Renaissance organ with the six voices. The cost was under \$100,000 and our continued maintenance costs are negligible. The congregation loves the organ and the singing has improved significantly. With this strong new instrument as a foundation, we have instrumental and vocal groups developing.

We are an old church that is growing and blooming as we minister in a poorer neighborhood that we chose to not leave. Our dollars are going far in ministry. When I was studying organ at the university in the 1960s, the AGO was relevant. In our churches and in our organizations, we are either growing or going. If you don't want to "go," then you must change your paradigm. That doesn't mean to throw out the old. But it does mean that we must always be continually searching to do things in ways that make us winsome.

The AGO seem very nice "as it is" at the moment. The organization does a really great job. Especially the National Conventions we attended have been absolutely fantastic. Looking forward for more of this.

The AGO has been and continues to be a very important part of my musical life. The musical associates and friends made in college years and beyond remain in contact through AGO Conventions. The articles in TAO are fine resource material. Recent directions of the Guild (over the past 15 years) have greatly improved it. Thanks for all you've done!

I am very glad to see the National portion of the AGO "thinking" about being forward-looking in terms of the future purpose of this organization. Nothing less than the continued existence of the AGO is at stake!

The AGO has been important in my life and a loved organization since the 1950s. I have served various offices in a chapter including Dean and coordinating the Potomac Organ Institute in the D.C. area. This is a fine and well thought-out survey. My compliments to you!

I appreciate the AGO and everything the organization does to support the instrument we all love. I am pleased to answer questions to this survey, as this means you are looking to a vital future.

This survey, I found, was a way to see how I could help make the AGO a better organization. I think that members have a duty to take this survey because it will ensure the long-term future of the Guild.

The AGO has always been an important part of my life as involvement in church music. I look forward to educational programs, as well as other programs to spur me on to do better. I guess

without this support, I would have quit long ago. Thank you, AGO. I hope this support will never end. All need to have this "shot in the arm"!

Membership Issues and Dues

I am a full-time musician, substitute organist. I am too exhausted from scrambling for work to attend chapter functions, which in the SF Bay Area require lengthy travel times. But I don't object to paying for membership to a valuable organization.

High cost of membership and conventions are the greatest impediments to growth of AGO among part-time musicians, even while more employers are hiring only part-timers. Tangible benefits such as discounts and online opportunities could help attract more of these people, who are arguably in the greatest need of networking opportunities, AGO advocacy and educational support.

Above all, making membership and certification more affordable would be a great benefit to me. After I graduate I don't think I will be able to afford membership.

I am very pleased with AGO as is. I'm a lifetime organ enthusiast, but am too old and disabled to attend conventions but enjoyed the ones I attended and highly recommend them. Suggestion: Contact churches and urge them to pay dues for their organists.

It is time to upgrade the membership process to include online payment of dues and providing space for correcting personal data for each member. As a chapter Registrar, the old method of pasting labels to a Dues Report should be changed ASAP to something done electronically.

When I recently joined, it took over 4 months for my membership to be registered with the National. I still have not received my first copy of the American Organist. There appears to be a great deal of incompetence at all levels of management.

Greatest need is for improved technology, both in collecting dues and in supplying online resources.

Membership fees same for everyone even though compensation varies widely by city and region.

The AGO has been a help to me in my professional life, and I hope it will continue to uphold the high standards it espouses. I wish the national office would reintroduce the Guild Student Groups that were very popular several years ago. Why did the national organization not continue the program? I had begun two student group chapters during my teaching career, and they were very successful.

Too many other area organists I talk with won't join AGO because the dues are way too high and their medium-to-small size church won't pay their dues for them.

AGO national is essentially irrelevant to musicians in outlying areas where there are no full-time organists, and where the cost of membership exceeds one or two weeks of church music income.

Dues are restrictive for students and non-professionals; we need none of the services which I am sure are very important to the professionals and just want camaraderie, casual mentorship, and an interesting magazine or online materials.

You need to find ways to make the national organization cheaper as the dues seem very expensive in comparison with say ACDA. If it means making the magazine smaller or moving out of NYC, that's fine. There is no way for a huge organization to be relevant to all people. Probably

the AGO needs to get used to shrinking in membership rather than growing. Keep the things that are most important.

In general, my perception is that the AGO has developed a reputation of being an organization with expensive fees but with very little output at the local level. The current model may have served a bygone era well, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to justify the membership dues to an organ public that is less and less sophisticated and specialized. In general, people seem to belong to fewer and fewer clubs and organizations these days. The AGO needs to respond to this and update its administrative structure. The AGO should focus less on paying for rent in Manhattan and paying for gala receptions, and spend more of its resources on helping the grassroots chapter level. As I said, it appears that some of these developments are already in the works. Bravo!

Even though I am a member of four AGO chapters, I think that the cost for dues is unbelievably ridiculous. I know many people that do not join because it costs too much. And the other thing is that most AGO people do not reach out to those colleagues that would be members if they thought someone actually cared that they join.

The question about dues collection: I think it would be *great* if that could be done at the national (rather than chapter) level. I say this having served as Treasurer—as well as other positions—in AGO chapters, and I'm guessing anyone who has served in those capacities would agree. Would also be great if that could all be done online.

Membership dues are ridiculously high, which is the reason I have not been a member for many years. To be honest, other than using the substitute list and TAO (which could be a separate subscription), the benefits of AGO membership are limited and not worth the fees, and I am sure many organists, who endure with low income from their religious institutions, concur. If you want to increase membership, cut the dues in half at least (but do not omit TAO subscriptions).

I am concerned about the increasing dues. I know we have lost members because of it.

Make dues paid online with a credit card and not some antiquated way of sending checks to a local person.

Also, I totally understand the need for such membership dues, but I must confess that I know of several for whom the amount is not attainable. Thank you, on the whole, for everything you do and continue to do.

The yearly membership and membership renewal system is antiquated. Please subscribe to a web-based membership system.

I believe that we get many individuals excited about joining our chapter until they come face to face with the cost. Even current members are having trouble with the close to \$100 rate, as their employers are cutting salaries and dropping benefits—like paying for professional membership. I don't know what the answer is, but different membership levels (perhaps by whether or not one has certification) might work. Also, many members are not interested in receiving the TAO. So, perhaps going to a bimonthly or quarterly magazine might be considered. Also, one can really only join the AGO during the summer months. Renewal comes up much too fast if one joins at any other time—making the expense an even greater concern.

The AGO is the most expensive organization that I belong to, and certainly too expensive. I like the magazine best. I enjoy hanging out with my colleagues but am not that interested in recitals and concerts. I am a service player.

While I enjoy TAO, I feel that a more affordable membership without it (or with online access instead) should be offered. I also feel that a more affordable membership level should be offered for those who know that they can't, or most likely won't, take part in many chapter activities, but want to be linked in and have access to position ads.

I was very surprised that new members are not acknowledged and that no information is sent regarding AGO. Usually, upon joining an organization, there is a confirmation letter, or at least a "welcome." I met some AGO folks at a worship conference in Richmond, Va., and an acquaintance told me about the magazine, which appealed to me. I am not really familiar enough to be able to answer these questions.

I am not in favor of moving dues collection away from local chapters. We need to know who has not renewed and keep after them!

I feel the AGO needs to make its membership more rewarding. Big dollars for small benefits is not appealing today, especially for musicians on low salary.

Dues split is upside down. Specifically, Chapter Friend membership split to National removes the incentive for local chapters to enroll this membership type.

I am a member of AGO mainly to stay in touch with substitute organists; however, my membership is in jeopardy because I cannot afford the fee. Since a large portion thereof goes to TAO, I would like to have membership without it. I rarely find anything useful in TAO, and cannot afford the conventions. I cannot afford the lessons to prepare for an AGO certification exam, and having AGO certification would not increase my pay when the church is slashing its budget. My summer Sundays were cut this year, along with 20% of my salary: I'm just praying that next year they don't cut out music completely. Something helpful but not addressed: a chance to buy into insurance, disability or retirement benefits as part of a group; part-timers don't get benefits, and the cost of individual plans is outrageous. Thanks for the opportunity to share my concerns.

Guild Structure

I find the AGO to be an extremely useful organization for someone like myself who will be emerging into the "real world" after college in a few years. I am a sub-dean currently and will be dean next year of my chapter in Bloomington, Ind., and it has been good to get to know AGO initiatives. The only problem I have is the use of acronyms for AGO programs. Things like RCYO, AGO, TAO all make sense, but when I found information about COPEing and AmiGOs, they were a bit of a stretch. I think cheesy acronyms trying to fit the theme of the program only undermine the value of said program. It also makes the AGO seem unprofessional—it is something a middle school principal might do.

Suggest fewer committees and boards, and even those with fewer meetings, to reduce expenses.

It should be a rule that chapter deans cannot be reelected more than for two terms in a row, otherwise it becomes an usurpation of power and a power play position with blossoming favoritism.

National is doing a great job! Local chapters could use more encouragement to add members from part-time churches.

As a cost-cutting measure, permanently combine regions I and II—one set of officers, one regional convention, one region.

Although I am not a fully participating chapter member because of a demanding non-music master's degree, I tried to answer these questions as if I was one.

Overall, I think the AGO needs to move in the direction of more online resources and more local meetings. Thus, I'm in favor of decentralization—more chapter autonomy and more funds staying with local chapters. I think regional conventions are more effective than national conventions in bringing new people to the organ world.

The primary role of the national board, I think is to ensure the following:

1. Keep the regions working toward a common goal and making sure they include all religions.
2. Provide help with advertising, along with regional boards, so that local chapters can concentrate on training and other functions.
3. Manage the benefits programs of the AGO so that the regional and local chapters can function on education, outreach, and other activities.
4. Design online resources to ensure compatibility between regions.

I would like to see more connectionalism between the national office and local chapters.

Headquarters Location

The questions concerning headquarters were important—New York City, for many, is distant in many ways. NYLA (New York Library Association) ceased to have annual meetings there for many of the reasons you listed in your survey (the Association does not have its offices there).

National office should be relocated and expenses drastically cut.

Obviously, this survey is aimed at cost-cutting—moving the headquarters, changing the TAO to e-mail rather than paper. While I've enjoyed attending meetings at the NYC headquarters, it's not essential to me to have the headquarters in NYC.

If the location of headquarters needs to move, it should be located in an area with a large number of members (or a chapter with many members), in a major metropolitan area.

I have advocated for years that the AGO Headquarters should move to mid-America for economic reasons.

To gain control of the budget, it is vital to move the headquarters out of NYC to a more fiscally approachable area, e.g. the Midwest, relatively close to an airport. The hub of an airline would be very wise to choose.

Given the ubiquity of electronic communications, I do not see the need for the headquarters to be in an expensive location.

I had not thought of the possibility of moving the AGO headquarters before taking this survey. However, having recently moved to the East Coast from the Midwest, and after talking with a friend who recently did the same, I believe that it would be a very good idea. I strongly feel that the East Coast (specifically New York) organ culture is behind the times. Just look at the virtual void of good instruments in NYC (an electronic organ in Trinity Wall Street!). Many of the best current builders are on the west coast (Pasi, Fritts), and many of the best new instruments and best schools (Oberlin, Kansas, Notre Dame, Arizona State) are in the middle of the country. I think that moving the AGO headquarters away from the East Coast would be a big step in the right direction for the organization as a whole.

It's good to see the AGO reconsidering its office locations, since there may be cheaper locations.

Not only should an alternate location for the National Headquarters be a consideration in these times, but also, possibly an evaluation of the positions, job descriptions, and personalities of the paid staff. Based on my communications with National Headquarters and experiences, an audit of some staff might in fact improve our organization on other levels.

When considering relocation, please consider wishes of current national staff. Big but important project. Best wishes.

I also assume that by some of the questions, that national is contemplating moving out of NYC. Although the older membership may find this unsettling at first, I think we should look at financial security as a priority.

AGO national office should be relocated to cut down on the high administrative costs. NYC is not the center of church music any more—the NYC organists don't even seem to talk to each other!

National org needs to move and reduce expenses.

I've long thought the national portion of dues was excessive, and let's face it, there's no good reason to have headquarters in NYC. Why not someplace inexpensive? How about Richmond, Cleveland, heck why not North Dakota? As a current (and also past) chapter dean, I understand and appreciate the effort, somehow, to be "all things to all people," and recognize it's never completely possible.

The American Organist

I have enjoyed and learned much from the AGO regional and national conventions, as well as from the TAO articles. I also especially enjoy the articles in the English organ magazines like "You Can Play This" in which actual performance ideas are given for specific pieces. They tend to be very practical and not overly erudite. We need the views of the great teachers and learned research gurgitators, but a more healthy dose of useful practicality would be a useful addition.

We need a respectable publication to represent professional people. Currently, TAO is nothing more than advertising, including many of the articles. It is not an objective publication. I throw it away as soon as it comes without reading it. It is fluff. I prefer the serious tone of The Diapason and Choir and Organ. Until you folks start encouraging organists with dreadful instruments to find those few and lovely stops and use them well, organ playing in this country is doomed.

Would like to see more reviews of organ music and choral music in TAO. Include music for both a smaller situation and large church settings. It seems in many of the musical organizations there are many options for smaller programs, but little help for large church settings.

The American Organist is mostly filled with news in which I have no interest. I subscribe for articles of interest on improving skills, teaching, other educational resources, not chapter news, reviews of books in a foreign language, etc.

TAO is overly formal, stilted, and at times arrogant in tone. It is one of the most humorless publications I've encountered! Lighten up, Mr. Editor!

The AGO has served for many years, especially in the area of new positions for me. I have had several good experiences as a result of the AGO. I do have to wonder, however, at the space taken in TAO with regard to "fingering of Liszt" and other really (in my opinion) needless

information. Some of these articles go on for many pages and I think, by and large, are useless but for a few musicologists who feel we all need to know about these things.

TAO, a decidedly undistinguished advertising venture, should be eliminated.

Although the AGO is a beautiful publication in print, and I would like to keep it—to pass on to others as well—an electronic version would be a good alternative: if done professionally, if members can print articles, if they are available “forever,” if index and search functions are available through all issues.

TAO was once a veritable wealth of information and discussion, some of it provocative (and rightly so). Of late one can read it from cover to cover quickly without learning as much of anything new or having one's thoughts much stimulated or challenged. I understand reaching out to the Easy Service Music group, as well as an editorial policy that tries not to alienate, but serving as a forum for disparate views is one of TAO's historical functions—as well as just plain making more interesting reading! Past articles such as “An Interview with Robert Noehren” and “An Emerging American Organbuilding Movement” (John Hamilton) may not have been ones I agreed with in every respect, but they stimulated dialogue and helped strengthen our profession. Where are such articles today? I'm fully prepared to hear that they may simply not be being submitted, but then why is that?

Overall, I have continually found TAO and the entire AGO unable to be creative and innovative in reaching out to organists and church musicians that need practical, “hands-on,” and useful assistance in their daily creative work. Not everyone has the luxury of performing the most difficult organ and choral repertoire in their church each week. In contrast, pianists and piano teachers have access to many resources that provide creative, innovative, exciting, and sometimes “fun” and useful ways to reach out to young people, new pianists, amateurs, new audiences, etc. One day in TAO, I'd like to read an article about how some organist in a church somewhere revived a dying music program with wonderful organ music, or combined playing and teaching in creative ways, or has found fun ways to reach out to the community. This would be nourishing to me as a professional. Instead, I get dissertations on Messiaen's bird calls and unnecessary announcements about recent appointments.

I look forward to reading TAO each month and have used many of the articles and information to help me with my organ-playing and choral directing.

The magazine is largely uninteresting to me as a non-professional organist.

I've been a member of the Toronto Centre of the RCCO for over 50 years. I think the recent decision made by the powers that be to cut ties with the AGO and not receive the TAO was one of the worst decisions made. We are a small country (population-wise) and cannot publish a magazine that contains the interesting articles that are offered in TAO. That is one of the reasons I decided to take advantage of dual membership. I also enjoy the AGO conventions and attend as often as I can. They are so well organized and offer such a variety of interesting programs. Long may I be able to attend. Long live the AGO!

When the magazine comes, I read it cover to cover. I have been an executive director for another educational association and think that the magazine is excellent! I think there should be more interaction between AGO and the organbuilders in terms of joint meetings. We need more concerts by organists in concert hall settings.

I read (almost) every word of TAO and have really enjoyed the two AGO events that I attended. All the best with the survey and future goals.

I would miss the TAO if I did not have it in my hands every month.

AGO and TAO are very important to me.

As far as the magazine is concerned, nerd that I am, I save many of them! The history contained in those magazines is incredible.

I love the magazine. I feel like it's my touch to academia and would hate to think of it having less scholarly in it—would like even more! I live an hour out of Portland, Ore., so getting to a meeting is very difficult—given I work full-time plus teach plus am a church organist, plus have a husband who would like some of my time—but loves the organ also! I find the idea of an online chapter rather interesting—maybe one worth exploring??

I like having the magazine to use as bedtime reading, it's stimulating and I feel like I'm "keeping up" professionally.

I continue to enjoy TAO, and use it to keep up with organists I've known, both where they are and what they may be doing musically. I am fascinated with features of new and newly rebuilt organs. I've had only limited contact with the AGO organization, and must report that various representatives who purport to contribute to TAO for publication seem to be, at best, preoccupied, and at worst, too egocentric to be effective. TAO has been one of the greatest benefits of my membership. As a part-time musician with minimal formal training, it has provided me an education I could not have found without formal classes. I feel that over a year's time, the articles and features truly address the diversity of interests among members.

Since I have retired from my profession as an organbuilder and church organist, I don't participate in the activities of the Guild, but I am still interested and very much enjoy TAO.

I joined the AGO because I do have much interest in the American organ world which I hope to serve in the future nearby as a director of music. The positions available are very important for me. For now, I've received The American Organist twice, and my opinion is that there is much information in it. So my compliments. [from the Netherlands]

I look forward to each month's AGO and read it cover to cover and then peruse it throughout the month. Now that I have retired and developed neuropathy in my feet, I find pedaling abilities reduced. I wish I could discuss this with others who might have the same problem to find out how they are combating it. Perhaps a short health column could address such issues.

My strongest opinion about the AGO is TAO. I think it has so much in it that is unnecessary. I would like it to be much shorter, maybe not put out as frequent, and more educational. Less chapter news, etc. Most of the time it looks so daunting and not very relevant to my job. Maybe you could use the web page more for job postings, AGO resources, chapter news, etc., without having to have the same listings in the magazine every month. Some reflections from either the chaplain or an organist and some educational piece would be sufficient for me!

I use the TAO as a learning tool, but some of the articles are just too technical.

I enjoy the magazine and it keeps me updated on the innovations in organ music and events. Thank you.

I feel that the TAO has become too much of a "who's doing what" magazine with way too much info on chapters and performers, pictures, etc. I would love to see a more balanced magazine

that will also appeal to the more educated musician that includes more articles on music. I rarely consult TAO when writing articles because it lacks substance.

Do not change the format of TAO!

Although I take the magazine in the U.K., I find it very helpful and readable.

And reduce the amount of boring articles in TAO! The Diapason is interesting. For the most part, TAO is not!

The magazine is stuffy and not very well presented. It seems to be aimed at congratulating its own members who are in important positions and therefore rather grand.

I also enjoy The American Organist, except I think it should have many more articles especially scholarly articles and much, much less advertising. I know advertising pays the bills, but there is way too much in the journal.

It would be great to have commissioned pieces suitable for church organists published in the AGO magazine (Etude type)—a great source in two ways: one in submitting meaningful workable pieces for organists and the other for seeing new concepts—a small prize for accepted pieces. It might increase the “down to earth” approach alongside those great articles. Thank you.

I'm dismayed by The American Organist magazine's gradual change over time: remembering and looking over older issues (10+ years) there were longer articles, including a mixture of scholarly topics relating to organ repertoire, composers, performance issues, etc. Now it seems to be incorporate shorter articles that are less interesting to me (and dare I say non-scholarly?), along with a veritable explosion of advertising. Perhaps there should be a limit to the number of full-page ads? I understand that ad revenue is important, but the downside is that content seems to suffer. I find that I often get more “stimulation” reading Choir & Organ, RCO Newsletters, Organists' Review, and even The Diapason.

The magazine is excellent.

The magazine is fabulous.

TAO is the primary reason for my membership. Its current format is good in that it covers a wide range of interests, has articles of a scholarly nature while also having materials, articles, etc., of a wider interest that may be appealing to scholarly members of AGO, students, and organ enthusiasts and builders. Its eclecticism is good.

I think this survey is a good idea. I hope my comments were helpful. I am an RCCO/AGO joint member, so some of the questions I could not answer because of my proximity from the U.S. I am very much enjoying my membership and have always liked the TAO. However, I find that TAO could have a better balance between scholarly articles and resources for the average church musician. I tend to lean toward the scholarly articles (I also get Organ Canada, The Organist Review, Choir and Organ, Organ, and The Diapason) but I think the TAO and the AGO in general would be more attractive to musicians who are not members and who think that perhaps the AGO is only for qualified and trained church musicians. In Canada we have for some time included a composition in each edition of the magazine. I know that some of the British journals do this as well. I think this might be something for TAO as well. Again it could be focused on practical new repertoire for the average musician. It could also be a choral composition.

While I am overall satisfied with being a member of the AGO, I do feel that sometimes the articles in TAO and the ideals and attitudes of some members are a bit esoteric or lofty. Meaning that they are almost above the average person, or a bit arrogant. In light of this, it is no wonder that organists are few and far between. I also believe that all levels of ability should be equally important and that importance made known.

At the same time I enjoy the big blurbs on new organs, I get tired of having them shoved down my throat. Like how many of us will ever get to play on one in our job? There is an element of one-upmanship that turns me off.

Have a regular column in the magazine from a "regular" church musician with "regular" problems and solutions.

Move to an online version of TAO: too much of member dues due to production costs. Get out of the printed publication business as it's too expensive and there are many online options.

To be honest, I quit reading *The American Organist* a long time ago. It's not relevant to me. I've taken to just turning to the last page, reading that and tossing the magazine in the recycle. If most of your readers are only interested in big pipe organs with fancy cases, then don't change a thing. For me, they're kind of like BMWs—they're expensive, prestigious, interesting, costly to maintain and fun to drive, but I can't afford to buy one, let alone maintain it. My husband subscribes to *Motor Trend*. If every cover had a picture of the biggest most expensive car out there, he'd lose interest and drop the subscription, but as long as he sees cars that he could actually own and use, he'll continue to be a longtime subscriber.

Thanks for all the wonderful articles, especially regarding the technical side of new and rebuilt instruments.

Chapter Issues

I especially think the organ scholarship program is awesome. This is how I learned the organ and how I encourage my piano students to get their introduction. Without the scholarship I probably would never have learned the organ. I have been a full-time church musician now for almost 20 years.

Before moving to Anacortes, Wash., I lived in Orange County, Calif. A lot of my answers would have been different were I still there. I was Dean, head of a POE, etc. I went to conventions and loved my professional interactions. In Anacortes I am basically isolated.

I like especially the concept of an online chapter.

One of the questions was regarding a being a member of a virtual chapter in addition to my local chapter. I don't think there should be two memberships—virtual and local. However, I think the local chapters should have an online presence so that it's possible to see the members of your chapter online as well as in person. Also, I think that an updateable and searchable online directory of members would be *really* good. It could also be a way to renew membership and to change mailing address for TAO.

Encourage local chapter members to welcome visitors and new members. I recently attended a different chapter from the one I belong, and not one person ever spoke to or acknowledged my presence except for the one organist to whom I broke the ice and asked if he was an organist. His reply to me was, yes, where he was organist, how long he had been at that church, and how many and who his teachers had been. He posed not one question about who I was, where I was

from, was I an organist, to what chapter do I belong, etc. He then promptly walked away to speak with his buddies who could have cared less about who I was. Needless to say I will not attend that chapter again in the near future. Thanks you for permitting me to get this recent treatment off my chest. In my opinion, the lack of friendliness is a large reason why others are not attracted to the AGO organization.

I am only able to participate in chapter events sporadically because of time constraints and distance. I would suggest a focus on chapter leaders being more friendly. I have noticed that at chapter events, the leaders typically spend the bulk of their time talking amongst themselves rather than making new or less-active members feel welcome. I have seen this in other organizations as well, which leads me to think it's a training issue.

More chapter activities would be desirable and more variety. Also if chapter membership were less expensive that would also be desirable. In Salt Lake City we have a large number of members, but not a whole lot of activities, and the activities that we do have don't vary much. We always have a Bach Birthday thing in March and Pedals, Pipes and Pizza in February and Super Saturday in January, but even within the Super Saturday activities there isn't a lot of variety from year to year.

The Dayton, Ohio, Chapter recently offered workshops outside an easy commuting distance of downtown. Eight part-time organists who had never attended an organ workshop or meeting attended.

I was a member of the AGO in the Pacific Northwest while I was studying for my BM, and while I wasn't always able to attend meetings, the ones I did attend were much more educational than the ones (or lack of ones) I have experienced in the Salt Lake Chapter. In fact, since I joined this chapter in August I haven't heard anything from anyone associated with the chapter. No information on meetings, nothing. Perhaps closer communication with the AGO HQ would alleviate this issue. I also feel that many of the programs that I have heard about from the past are greatly directed at a specific and dominant religious population of the Salt Lake Chapter. I think this should be kept in mind, especially concerning the survey question addressing relations with religious organizations. If any chapter (or the AGO as a whole) is seen to be favoring a certain religion over another, then certain groups within the membership will feel excluded and discontinue membership. The AGO does many great things, these are just a couple of things that feel should be kept in mind on a local and national level.

My main concern about AGO is a lack of support for small chapters. Ours does a fair amount, but has only managed to make it into the Chapter News one in the last several years in spite of submissions—which chapters like Spartanburg (near where I used to live) have been in on an almost monthly basis.

The local chapter is still a key part of AGO, but I believe must be "reimagined." How do younger organists relate professionally and socially? How do we offer effective programs when schedules are so full—choir rehearsals for various members almost every evening of the week, busy weekends, etc.? Gone are the days when all choir rehearsals were on Thursday nights and everybody was free on Tuesday evening for the AGO meeting. Part-time church musicians are plentiful—how do we attract them, what will they see of value in membership? If they find real value, they might be willing to assist in leadership. How do we attract them? Chapter leadership is a challenge as well, with fewer members willing or able to take on a leadership position. Many members who have had the time and resources in the past were in full-time church jobs—these positions are few and far between in our chapter today. Part-time musicians are busy enough balancing a full time job and their part-time church job. Maybe there is a way that AGO could streamline the leadership requirements. In practice, several official responsibilities are often

carried out by one person. Finding a full slate of officers and executive board, auditors, newsletter editors, education rep, etc., has become increasingly difficult. So how would we envision the chapter of the future? It might be a worthwhile exercise for each chapter and HQ. I certainly appreciate the AGO and all it does. I also appreciate that it is being proactive in planning for the future, hopefully a future of renewed focus and vitality.

Chapters really need to be welcoming of those who don't attend events often (me). Reach out to engage us—we would come more often if we felt welcomed!

Chapter should retain a significantly larger portion of dues. Primary function of National should be to support basic skills education at the chapter level.

A problem not specifically addressed (or if it was I missed it) is the “ingrown-ness” of many of our chapters. I have been a member of three (and dean of two), and they seem to wind up as small groups of friends struggling to make a difference in their communities. National and regional officers are supportive, but it can seem like a struggle.

The AGO could be a tremendous resource. I so desire to participate more strongly, but find that time is limited because I rehearse choral groups every night or am singing. Leadership in my chapter in Dallas has not responded to my offers to help however I can. I am free only in daytime but certainly am willing to send mailings, work at the computer, help create articles, or other tasks.

I appreciate the work of our chapter and the welcome I have felt. The programs have been helpful/enjoyable. Networking (especially to find subs) is also very important to me. Also good to hear what others are doing.

Between my church and community ensemble rehearsals, I cannot attend any evening events. The virtual chapter is a great idea.

I have found my chapter to be somewhat cliquish and somewhat looks down on other musicians with or without certification, degrees, pipe organs, or that don't play/perform as they themselves do—not a very welcoming group.

I am very happy with the services the AGO provides nationally and regionally, though I live in a rural area with few organs and fewer organists. It is difficult to find any church employment over half-time and even more difficult to advocate for pipe organs in small churches with few financial resources. The distance to some chapter events is quite long (a few hours one way, in some cases), and some events tend to be canceled for a variety of reasons (scheduling, lack of interest/response, etc.). I would love to see more recitalists perform in this area, though the lack of decent, recital-worthy instruments presents a problem in this regard.

My local chapter has always had the air of elitism, and I know I don't fit their mold. I'm not good enough. If *that* could be removed, I'd possibly attend more local meetings and might even join that chapter. So far, however, I'm not convinced.

The National organization is excellent. The local chapter is abominable.

I'm in favor of AGO strengthening local chapters. Without that, there will be no AGO.

I rely on my local chapter, which has been irreplaceable in terms of support, education, friendship, and getting a new position (recently).

In spite of an unfriendly experience with another chapter as a student, I did when I moved to this area over 50 years ago organize the chapter of which I am still a member.

I have enjoyed my membership in the Central Arkansas Chapter of the AGO. We have active programming and social activities, also cosponsor programs for worthy projects.

Chapter meetings in Denver, at least, tend to be cliquish and unwelcoming. I rarely attend because I always feel I have to prove myself. Though I have many friends, and have participated in chapter performances and recitals, etc., every time I sit at a meal or performance with the chapter, they are interested only in themselves, and not the community standing outside the door ready to learn more about the organ and enjoy our music-making.

The chapter meetings are infrequent and elaborate; something could be gained by having them more frequently but more casual (I don't know if all chapters operate the same way).

Note that my lack of involvement in chapter activities and AGO conventions has more to do with my work travel schedule than the quality of the programs. I would love to go, but I am often traveling or unable to take that much time off.

Chapters should publicize concerts/recitals more aggressively *and* keep them free!!

AGO can sometimes be dominated by cliques, especially at local chapters. I've gone to meetings and workshops where no one has even spoken to me, probably because I'm not a full-time, "degreed" organist. I play at a 7,000+ member church and have been a church organist since the 8th grade. I truly get the feeling that if one hasn't majored in organ, play all the "big pieces," and been in competitions, you are being cast as a "second-class organist".

As Past Dean, charter and current member of the Northeast Georgia Chapter, I have been wrestling with how to reach out to rural musicians in our area, and to the other musicians in our chapter who are primarily involved with choral activities and are not so well served by what they perceive as the "organ focus" of the organization in general. I really want to see our organization become "relevant" to these musicians and give them a place to come to learn and grow in their callings.

I find that AGO members do not support each other in this chapter by their attendance at programs or by lending their support when a member is having difficulties professionally. (This is not true of your local police and fire professionals.) If they would spend less of their time in gossip and criticism, and more in active support, there would be fewer dropouts from the profession. An article could be titled "How to be discerning musically and, yet, supportive."

Although my chapter is very welcoming and kind, I feel that the overall impression of AGO is snobbish and scornful of someone like me who is a pianist turned organist doing my best with I am sure not enough lessons (i.e. not a "real organist") maybe this is just my own insecurities, but if you get other feedback along these lines, I'd take it seriously as a definite negative in trying to attract additional membership/support.

While I am not homophobic, there are a lot of gay cliques in the AGO; there is a "look down your nose" attitude from the Chicago Chapter toward the Fox Valley Chapter; there tends to be an elitist attitude toward people who play electronic instruments. All these things lead to exclusion. We need to run a campaign on inclusiveness, kindness, and understanding and help people realize that everyone's gift/talent doesn't have to be the same in order to be valuable. Having served as an officer in my chapter and on a convention committee, I have seen these types of

things and feel that it is one of our main weaknesses. When people feel welcome and comfortable, they will participate.

I belong to the Pittsburgh Chapter and we are a vital, thriving chapter. The Guild is a very important part of my life even though I am retired. Thank you for all that you do for our chapters. We in Pittsburgh appreciate your hard work.

AGO seems to be in a period of decline. In my small town I am the only member of a regional chapter whose meetings are sometimes too far away to attend.

I joined AGO after my organist-husband died, since many of my friends were members. In the past, I have directed and accompanied (piano) children's choirs, and have been in handbell choirs for 30-plus years. I now am publicity chair of my chapter and have attended seven National Conventions since 1996 and a Regional one this past year. I have enjoyed meeting and socializing with James Owen, Thomas Troeger, Eileen Guenther, and James Thomashower at our chapter meetings. The fellowship and musical opportunities have been a lifesaver for me.

AGO served me as a young student and I have always believed in "giving back," so I do a lot of work for AGO now in my later years.

AGO membership tools have very little relevance to my position as a Roman Catholic organist/director of music. However, I enjoy the friendships I have with the other chapter members.

More money for the chapters!

I am attending more meetings now because I expect to change and expand my career, and most AGO members are good musicians and intelligent people, and some are well-connected, too.

My local chapter is really good.

I would be content to have only my local chapter involvement in AGO.

Coming from a state with one chapter, I love getting together with fellow organists/musicians, learning new techniques, bringing new ideas back to my congregation/area. Conventions are great for this gathering of music lovers, whether it is the national or the regional convention or related gatherings. When chapter members live a great distance apart there is not as much interest in meeting as a group. E-mailings seem to keep the chapter together.

As the new Dean of the Middlesex Chapter, this survey is particularly timely as we are planning to embark on an aggressive soul-searching "Where does our Chapter want to be two years from now" program in January 2010.

I appreciate the Sacramento Chapter's efforts to provide periodic meetings with nationally recognized organists and choir leaders.

I think our chapter is working hard to find both interesting and useful material for our meetings. But we do need to assure that newer members are included in positions of responsibility.

I have belonged to two AGO Chapters—one in the Midwest and one on the West Coast. The Midwest AGO was a wonderfully cohesive, collegial group that, in my judgement, accepted people at whatever skill level they possessed, yet was supportive and encouraged them to reach for a higher level of musicianship. The West Coast chapter was much more academic in

orientation and not geared to the needs of someone working in a church job, although that has changed somewhat through the years. The second chapter, of which I am still a member (and at age 68, one of the younger ones!) is also comprised of good colleagues and friends, but it is getting harder and harder for 10-11 people to keep a 30-member chapter really active. Frankly, I'm tired of being one of those 10-11. On my least optimistic days I wonder if AGO isn't becoming a relic of the past. However, when I hear young performers I am encouraged for the future of the organization. But it's not going to be your grandmother's AGO. Thus, all the interactive online possibilities are great, I think.

Attendance is not a priority for many members, so chapters and AGO nationally needs to incorporate communication via the Internet.

The Shenandoah Valley is underserved. We had a chapter in Staunton, Va., many years ago and I was sub-dean. Now I have to travel to Charlottesville or Winchester for a chapter. I chose Charlottesville, which is 40 miles one way. Winchester is 90 miles one way. In my county, with a population of 120,000, there are four members of AGO. That is not acceptable. We need a chapter here.

I think the AGO is fantastic and I adore reading TAO magazine, but it's so difficult to get involved in my chapter. I get e-mails about concerts, but I don't know if the chapter has regular meetings, or what they really do. And since I'm relatively new to the area, I don't know anyone here who is a member, so going to the events is very intimidating: at 23 years old, I don't know if I'd be the youngest there by 40 years and have nothing in common with anyone else. Outreach programs for members my age might be helpful—if it was geared toward people in their 20s and 30s I wouldn't feel like I'd be so out-of-place.

My local chapter, though it has some well meaning people, is often gossipy and unkind, particularly to those who play electronics or are part-time.

Our challenge in upstate New York is distance between members—spread from Watertown area to Potsdam—expensive gas, bad weather in long winters, aging and diminishing number of organists, no longer have an organ department. Most members continue membership to get local newsletter and sponsor our local scholarship program; few willing to get to meetings. Cost of dues probably causes more to just get local membership, not interested in voting rights and perhaps late enough in career to not be interested in the magazine. Tiny churches up here in general, salaries to match, conventions and dues are not necessities. No stores carry organ or choral music for hundreds of miles—a real challenge.

I find that chapter programs are most often underprepared and not up to adequate standards of professionalism. I go out of a sense of duty, but often leave disappointed.

I have to travel over an hour to the nearest AGO group. Online additions would greatly enhance my learning and participation when travel is not possible.

I feel chapters need to find more effective ways for members to get to know each other in a structured way and try to break up cliques. Perhaps topical discussions during dinners or in small groups could help people break the ice better. Us introverts would appreciate the structure. I personally do not feel valued by the members of my local chapter to want to go to every meeting. My chapter area is wide and sometimes it is quite a trek to get to a meeting.

I really love the idea of a virtual chapter. I think it could foster communication among people from all over the country. I'm in a very rural area and sometimes feel very isolated from others who share the same interests and passion for the organ as I do. Many organists in our area play

for church as a hobby type of thing, which is fine, but they are not interested in pursuing in-depth study or knowledge.

When I lived in major cities, I always valued the fraternity of fellow organists and regularly attended chapter meetings and educational opportunities. Now I am on an outer island and cannot regularly make meetings in Honolulu, since I have to fly to meetings. I would love to start a chapter here in Hilo, but there are very few organists, and they don't seem to be interested in joining the AGO.

Our chapter slips into periods of time where the "boys" run everything and base their decisions on what's good for them! The rest of us are still here!

I find my local chapter unfriendly. They always use the same people on boards and for workshops. I have been a member for 43 years and have never been asked to play or do a workshop. If it were not for the placements in the newsletter, I would not be a member any more. When I do attend a meeting, hardly anyone even speaks to me. I would think that at least the Dean would be friendly.

Our chapter already has scholarships for beginning organists. For several years, we have given 2-4 scholarships each year.

Before starting and raising a family, I was very active in our Philadelphia Chapter, and served on the board for a term. At this point in my life, I simply cannot commit to that service, but plan to do so once again in the future.

I live in Venice, Fla., which is the southern end of my Sarasota/Manatee region, so all meetings are either Sarasota (15 miles) or Bradenton (30 miles). I was a chapter friend of the Fort Myers/Naples chapter for the past three years and dropped it this year due to cost. But at least I knew what meeting programs they had and did attend two or three in the three years. I am really tired of commuting so don't want to drive to meetings. I previously attended all our Sarasota Manatee meetings for three years and worked on the newsletter, hospitality, etc., so I met most of the chapter members and went to events at many of the churches. Nice to know, but I now only go 1-2 times per year to a really special event.

I really enjoy the chapter meetings with the dinner/program format. Particularly exciting are the inaugural concerts for new organ installations. I am not a musician, but enjoy the AGO and give financial support to my chapter in addition to membership dues.

The Chattanooga Chapter of the AGO has revitalized and become a great resource for networking and learning!

I cannot attend meetings locally because I work on the day/evening of meetings. The few times I have been able to attend, I enjoyed myself. The people are lovely, but the chapter is boring, doing the same types of activities year after year. When I offered my teacher, a Parisian organist (St. Jean Baptiste and St. Sulpice) for a concert and workshop in our town, my chapter opted out with all sorts of reasons why it wouldn't work. So, with one phone call, the Orange County Chapter stepped in and we produced a successful concert and workshop in the middle of July when my own chapter said it couldn't be done. My chapter is very short-sighted and frankly, stuck in a very large rut. No response required. My position is to keep sending in dues, keep my membership, and wait for the day when enough turnover has taken place that my chapter can move forward with some new life. For now, that isn't happening.

I love the Dayton, Ohio, AGO Chapter. It has been wonderful to associate with other organists. I love the organ and want to see it passed to future generations. I have hosted three Pedals, Pipes, and Pizzas. I felt the results were very good with the students (in 2005 = 30 students, 2007 = 57 students, 2009 = 29 students). A number of students hung around after the pizza to keep playing the organ. We have had several who started taking organ lessons due to attending Pedals, Pipes, and Pizza. I have taught about the pipe organ in my public school 7th grade general music classes. Seventh graders appear to genuinely find it an awesome instrument. I think we can improve the younger generation interest in the organ if we can just give them more positive exposure to it.

Because there is not a local AGO chapter (the closest is 45 minutes away, and I have never received any information from the chapters regarding events/programs), I retain my membership in the chapter I was involved with in seminary. It would be nice if the AGO would provide information to local chapters when someone has an address change so they could be contacted by local chapters regarding membership, events, etc.

My local chapter (San Francisco) has been a great help and support to me over the last 13 years as I began studying organ, served as music director in several churches, and now serve as a substitute organist. It is a challenge to develop chapter events that serve everyone: long-time skilled organists, as well as less experienced and just beginning. Programs must be relevant to members' needs to draw people. Social networking is of vital importance, too.

I regret that the distance is too great for me to attend chapter functions. I value my AGO membership greatly.

Since I am getting older, nighttime events have become difficult for me to attend; e.g., the local chapter meetings. I would prefer more Saturday morning meetings.

We do not have a chapter here in Lake Charles, but I have gone to Beaumont, Tex., and Baton Rouge to attend meetings. More online connecting would help this area. Would like to be more involved with the AGO and help it develop in new directions.

I am glad I have reached a stage in life where I have time to be more active in AGO, and am currently Dean of my chapter. I enjoy this tremendously and have met a lot of interesting people, although it takes a lot more time than I anticipated. We have boosted attendance greatly at our events as I have tried to make them more attractive without diluting substance, and have advertised *widely*, including sending everyone we can think of downloadable, printable flyers to post. Also have receptions, nice ones. Also, are connecting with other institutions for joint programs. Organists can be fuddy-duddy, and we have tried to move away from that with good success. Attendance generally has increased 5 to 10 times.

Austin Chapter programming is sorely disappointing. You can suggest a program and even provide the organist to make it happen; but if chapter officers didn't think of it, it ain't a good idea.

I have served as dean of the Kankakee, Ill., Chapter for two years. I found it rewarding. Now I live in Chicago and attend meetings once in a while, but the recitals tend to be on Sunday afternoon, which conflicts with some of my church commitments.

I wish that our chapter would provide more programs for the non-church musician members.

I am currently on the board of a large SE chapter. I find the only issues that receive attention at our meetings are those of programming and operation issues. Nothing is being done actively to

recruit part-time volunteer organists and organ music lovers. The chapter meetings remain stuffy and somewhat cliquish. Though I have tried to initiate some new plans, nothing has yet been instituted.

I especially liked the idea of an online AGO chapter. For someone like me, who is an independent student member, it would be very nice to have an online membership forum to go to for help and support. I am always on the road between school (organ major) and church for rehearsal, so it would be nice not to have to schedule another event during the week to travel to like a meeting.

Because our chapter is located 65 miles away, most things are online. I desperately need help on how to use Finale 2008. No one locally can help.

Online resources of all kinds would be of most benefit to me, as I am in a semi-rural setting 40 miles from my "home" chapter and am seldom able to make physical meetings.

Every AGO chapter should have a website.

My first organ teacher encouraged me to join AGO. I joined as a teen organ student and have been a member since in every place I've lived. AGO is my professional organization and I love it. My AGO colleagues from various chapters are lifelong friends, and my musical/professional life has been greatly enriched by this organization. Thank you.

If I were not retired, I would have expressed a keener interest in some questions, but still enjoy being a member of the Ann Arbor Chapter.

Most of our chapter members do not use e-mail easily—will be left out of your information base!

While it is hard, we need to reach those church musicians who are resistant to the AGO. We have such a person in Lincoln who will not allow any organist to practice at her church and will not allow AGO meetings there, although the pastor is in favor. Obviously she could use some of our services, but *how* do you do that?

Originally I joined for (1) job placement and (2) continuing to learn. (1) is no longer provided by the local chapter, at least for subbing, which is all I have time for.

I feel that my local chapter is quite "uppity," even though I have a degree in music; not many students are welcomed, nor are part-time musicians.

It was wonderful to have the opportunity to play the Conference Center and Tabernacle organs in Salt Lake City. My husband enjoys reading the magazine. I have enjoyed our chapter meetings, Super Saturday presentations, etc.

We have had very poor participation of membership. Some because of time involved, some too busy in general, some because the distance to meetings is too great, wrong day. Long list of excuses, which indicates that our meetings and programs are not sufficiently interesting or important. They do not feel the cost of the dues are justified. We are frustrated.

I live between 2 chapters. The one has a long history of being snooty and for no reason. A certain clique is invited to participate in certain activities. The other chapter is totally different, friendly and not only open to others to participate but it invites even those members who live farthest away to participate and welcomes them on the few occasions when they are able to come from a distance. That chapter is even the home of a well-known artist. Attitude is everything.

Colorado Springs Chapter is really well run and worthwhile.

In my own chapter, I do not feel that the leadership is connected with the general membership in a way that the members feel included or served, essentially. There is always a certain group that makes the plans, attends the events and does the work. In short, there is no real camaraderie among the members, no sense of belonging. I wish it were different.

Thank you for the opportunity to send our thoughts regarding the AGO. One thing I've noticed that could be improved is keeping local chapter websites up to date. Several are months, if not years, out of date. Working towards creating consistency in chapter programming would also help. I've been a member of several chapters over the past 20 years and some have been fabulous while others have had poor (sporadic, boring and/or too much non-organ) programming and poor connection with local organists.

I am pleased with the Canton Chapter of the AGO. I have attended two programs that have been outstanding.

Many authentically brilliant people are AGO members and leaders. I've never had the experience, though, of being a part of a truly *viable* chapter. That's why it took so many years to re-up with the Cincinnati Chapter. I hear, see and read evidence of active, enthusiastic chapter activities and meetings elsewhere. We're not a small chapter. Recently, significant organs have increased in number in our area. Those who eventually become Deans, especially, get involved for a couple of years, and then seem to desert the chapter. I wish there were ways to more genuinely deal with and get organists of various abilities, backgrounds and tastes to more honestly work together.

Very happy to have a chapter in our small community.

All in all a good survey. Since I am totally retired, a lot of the questions didn't apply to me. I love the AGO and think that we need to come up with more incentives to attract organists who would find it enjoyable to belong, but hesitate because they believe that they "aren't good enough, aren't degreed, play a small electronic instrument, don't know anyone who belongs, etc. etc." And I think the answer is that every member of the Guild must personally take on this responsibility by personally calling and inviting a person to attend a meeting, offering to pick up that person, sitting with them at the meeting and introducing them to the other members. This is what happened to me about 15 years ago, and I have never regretted joining, and have always been grateful to the person who invited me to attend. I served on our local chapter Board two different terms.

Thank you for being a voice for organists. Our local chapter is very active, with excellent programs and opportunities for collegiality at different times of the year. I always feel welcome at chapter meetings, although I attend infrequently. My full-time job is just that—full-time, and it is nearly impossible to carve out the time I need to for rehearsals, planning, etc., and, on top of all that, AGO meetings. Just a description of reality here, but I'd like to attend more often.

The virtual chapter concept is a vital one, especially for those of us who live in remote areas. Membership in these areas is in the decline, and distances between members and potential new members are too great to allow monthly meetings. This is going to be critical for our future growth as a viable organization.

In our chapter, the AGO is an elitist group with little or no interaction with the average church. I am part of the elitist group, but I have advocated without any success to include the small church musician. They are the ones that need the most help.

I don't know about the other chapters in the AGO, however, the local chapters of the AGO tend to be exclusive and extremely biased in their musical preferences due to their proximity to BYU. Some of us were not trained and educated locally in organ, so we are not part of the "group." It would be nice to have an online group of AGO members and organists to participate with. People with a less narrow point of view and perspective. Even those of us that are LDS, not all of us are BYU alumni, nor do we want to be. Thank you!

I enjoy AGO. Present job circumstances make it difficult to attend meetings, but the local members have always been very supportive of each other, and of me.

I belong to the Raleigh area AGO, and miss attending local events (meetings, recitals, etc.) often because of last-minute notification. Especially for out-of-town/state events, many working people need more than just a week or so email notification of an event! Sometimes I get the feeling that all the local AGO wants is my dues money to support their private little social club—years back I belonged to the AGO chapter in Asheville, NC—it wasn't like that there, was nice. Oh, and once when the check I sent for dues was "lost" (never has resurfaced), I got a rebuke "...never had that happen before...you must have typed it wrong, etc."

I don't feel that the local chapter is very strong. Need meeting times that are more accessible by all members. More social events.

I am so grateful for my local chapter (Atlanta Chapter) of the AGO, because through them I found my organ teacher. If she retires soon, I do hope I will be able to find another instructor, especially one who will be willing to take on a visually impaired student such as myself. I look forward to continued growth as a musician through my membership in the AGO Atlanta Chapter.

My local chapter is in a large city approximately 35 miles from my home. Chapter events are consequently a significant distance away, and they are often held at times when I cannot participate. Our chapter is blessed with quite a few virtuoso and concert organists, which can be a bit intimidating to those of us with more modest capabilities. And there is the perennial problem of social discomfort for those of us who are straight men who prefer to avoid being propositioned by organists who seem to assume that all of their single male colleagues are necessarily gay. This, for me, is the single greatest disincentive to becoming more involved in chapter activities. I can't handle all of the weirdness. Sorry if this offends you, but it's a fact of life, and it's the truth. I've actually joined the Alliance of Christian Musicians in order to find colleagues with whom I have more in common.

There should be a more uniform method of electing officers in the chapters.

Part-Time Musicians

I took organ lessons during high school. I am currently in my last year of law school. I have no time to practice or take lessons, but I try to attend concerts in my area and read the TAO each month. I used to listen to Pipedreams on public radio, but it does not come on in my area on the normal FM band anymore. I hope to be more involved in the future. I would like to take more lessons and dedicate a few hours of practice time each week once I am working full-time, but I am concerned that I will be too busy as a full-time attorney. I will never be employed as a musician; it is just a relaxing therapy for me.

As a part-time volunteer musician, my priorities are not common. I'm fine with AGO working to also meet the needs of the full-time church musician and would not diminish emphasis on those areas to increase support for the busy part-timer.

I, as a life-long part-time musician, am honored to be a member and AAGO, try to attend all AGO sponsored recitals, meetings etc., help where I can.

In the smaller chapters of which I have been a part, most of the musicians are part-time. The issue is one of skills and how show individuals that their skill level can improve and benefit from the AGO programming at any level. Showing members there is opportunity regardless of skill level to learn at convention would be helpful.

Many organists in churches are only part-time. Some were drafted to play the organ. The AGO needs to realize that the pipe organ is not always affordable to all congregations. There is too much elitism expressed by some members. The part-time organist is not being served, and they are the majority.

Relevance of AGO to part-time and/or retired/sub organists is poor, at best. I retain my membership for the good of the chapter.

Please recognize adults that come to organ studies later in life. There seems to be a decided slant towards those with a bachelor's degree in music and/or conservatory training. Many of us have had to study independently (privately) because we lacked proximity to a music program/school, or other non-musical professional obligations prevented study in a music program. At 48, I feel largely left out. I am neither a highly trained, highly seasoned professional (although I've done this 15 years) or the hot, newly discovered kid prodigy. I'd sure like to see a lot more focus towards those of us that still strive to learn independently and master the art and profession! The American Organist seems to have little for players like me—material is written for either very advanced musicians or, in some cases, those fairly new to the art and profession. It'd be terrific to think those of us with ambition but studying independently could maybe pass certification one day. It seems geared only towards those that have had benefit of university studies in music. Overall, I find the journals and the professionals I have met through the AGO to be top notch, and they do further my ambitions!

My lack of participation in my local chapter is due to the date of the meetings. I am singing in a group that meets at the same time, and I'm not willing to miss rehearsals for that group. I have only been employed part-time and often feel that the AGO national events are so geared for the full-time employed. I really think that somehow the general public needs to know about the AGO and what it means to have a church musician affiliated with that organization. I have a Master's Degree, but no longer wish to do full-blown recitals as I don't have a regular organ to practice on. Would love to see more musicians willing to share their instruments with local members for practice.

I am glad to see that some of your questions relate more to the real world of working church musicians than just the experiences of academic, full-time, and concert musicians.

I don't feel that the AGO adequately represents the interests of part-time musicians. For example, many can't afford the conventions, and it is difficult to get away from the day job when the convention is always scheduled during everyone else's work week.

I see tremendous opportunities for sharing, networking, and professional development for the part-time organist in my area. However, my chapter has never embarked on these paths. Instead, they are more concerned with performances and non-musical meetings. When I have suggested sharing sessions, etc., I have been snubbed. I rarely attend chapter events. I enjoy the magazine and holding membership in a professional organization. At the local level, I haven't felt welcome.

I've found AGO to be helpful, but I've found that it seems to be aimed much more at accomplished musicians than at organists at my level. (I've played organ for six years.) Many church organists are people who play because no one else in their congregation can. They have a variety of skill levels. I think that the AGO should reach out to these people. Many of them have the perception that one has to be a professional, very proficient organist to be a member of the AGO. Even when I tell them they are welcome, they are uncomfortable even thinking of joining the AGO. If we are an organization that promotes and encourages mastery of the organ, we need to reach out to organists of all skill levels.

It is my opinion that AGO is an organization for full-time, large-church organists and offers little or nothing for the organists serving small churches, which is the majority today. Everyone is busy and time spent on activities that are not practical and appropriate for them as well as ways to grow and be inspired will not attract new members or keep the old. We need more organists like Dr. Roberta Bitgood, who was concerned about "growing organists to their greatest potential." She cared about music for small churches.

Need more creativity and intensity of effort to invite organists of local churches to join AGO; specifically non- or under-trained organists (the "drafted piano player"), promising to fine-tune or add to their skills. Most in this category do not feel worthy of the AGO, thinking it's only for experts or "prima donnas."

Part-time church musicians need to be respected more in the profession and be more inclusive. The full-time church musicians are not very tolerant of the part-time musicians, which discourages participation by the part-time musicians.

I think the AGO needs to be less intimidating to those who are only part-time church musicians or those who are not really organists!

Just because someone is part-time, does not mean they are not professional or a poor musician—fulltime organ job ops are decreasing.

Give time to consider the conflict of needs: part-time, less skilled organist needing guidance vs. the highly skilled and yes, sometimes "snobby" organists of bigger stature. Are we an organization that focuses on highly detailed writings in the magazine of different types of trills in Buxtehude compositions or the type that strives to educate many in basics of playing? It's been a huge factor in many of my dealings. Quite frankly, my skill level is high and I do have a master's degree, but the conceit of a few snobs has turned me off.

My membership in the AGO is very important to me. I am a part-time church organist and also teach school. I am not able to attend many chapter events but love attending national and regional conventions. I read the TAO from cover to cover when it arrives. I think the AGO is a great organization and I am proud to belong to it!

It is apparent that plans are already being made for addressing specific needs of part-time church musicians. According to your survey, it would be entirely possible for someone to be categorized as full-time by virtue of working more than 40 hours a week, but this person could have multiple jobs and have the same issues that many part-time musicians would have. It will also be interesting to see how you handle the varying needs of part-timers, some of whom are very well educated professional musicians, and some of whom are really unprepared for what they are doing. Our chapter leadership is currently dominated by the latter, which illustrates the perils of trying to increase membership by targeting a wider circle. It is discouraging and embarrassing that when a top-notch performer comes to town hardly any of our membership are

in attendance, and support for local artists is just as bad. But they'll go to conventions, so go figure.

This survey and AGO national seem clueless that already the vast majority of members and church musicians are part-time. Get real.

Having served in chapter offices, on convention committees, and as a sub-Dean twice, I have come to highly respect the organization. The largest problem, as I see it now, is that many part-time musicians see no benefit in belonging, and no amount of talk—or go with me to a meeting—will change their perception that they are adequate totally on their own. This results in the same errors being repeated in hundreds of parishes by people who are not meeting others in their field and learning. Many people only belong to get TAO. When I was young, it was a matter of everyone saying “you must belong” including clergy, and other musicians. Even though membership in the organization was a requirement for the person who followed me in my full-time parish, the current man has never joined—“I don't need it, I have too much to do in the parish.” Perhaps as we broaden the base of parish music, we should change the name of the society—as organists does not take the huge number of music directors who have no organ training. Also as we are gradually doing, we are getting away from the highly professional organ performer to the parish musician status, which is truly reality. I love going to a convention and hearing great talent but the needs among parish musicians today is to share and learn a huge number of things. Perhaps we should move together with the two choral directors' organizations and enlarge what we do for the parishes.

I have been playing in churches since age 14. I have studied with professional organists for more than 18 of my 66 years. I use TAO to learn about new trends, books, music and recordings and enjoy the service music provided. I also buy things advertised in the magazine. I have served at least 6 churches for more than 8 years each. I have been at my current church since 1991. I enjoy my chapter meetings and my colleagues. I think part-time musicians should take advantage of the opportunities provided by AGO instead of saying that it only caters to full-timers. I have found that if you open the door to the many ideas and resources of the AGO you can grow immensely. Learning is a two way street. Just open the door and take advantage of all the wonderful things offered on the other side.

The AGO has long had a reputation of being elitist organ snobs. Although full-time professional positions are important, they are not the majority of organ positions available. Most part-timers and substitutes have little time to do much traveling to AGO events; events should be spread out evenly within a region rather than located within 10 miles of where the chapter officers live. More chapter programs should be geared toward part-time organists who need more experience with larger instruments (e.g. organ crawls and chapter recitals) and with pipe organ resources as a whole (e.g., organ registration workshops, organ builder presentations or tours).

I am a part-time professional, a senior, and a returning organ student studying with a nationally known organ teacher. I need AGO to provide opportunities for me to perform in public. There are plenty of virtuoso organists for the public to hear. Unless the medium-skilled musician has opportunities to perform in public there is no reason for us to have AGO membership. The churches don't seem to care about AGO membership, even if they have heard of the AGO. But if AGO could encourage performance by the average skilled organist, AGO membership would be valuable for me. So far, AGO for me has been only chapter labor.

The AGO serves a necessary function as a resource for professional organists—it's about all that's out there for serious organists. However, college organ majors are a shrinking population. More and more of them will be serving part-time in churches. In order for the AGO to remain viable, this population must be considered, included and welcomed, and not in a patronizing “you are

second-class" way. This is not to advocate "dumbing down", but acknowledging the realities of our culture—in much the same way major symphony orchestras use pop concerts to subsidize the music of the masters.

I value being an AGO member. And I always at least glance through the TAO. I am a part-time Lutheran (ELCA) organist and I hold a degree in music education. But I started playing organ seriously only about 10 years ago. Sometimes I feel a little disregarded at meetings because I'm not a full-time church musician with a degree in organ. I think opening up the organization and making it more welcoming to members like me would help the organization grow. There many more church musicians like me out there than you think. That is where your potential membership growth is.

Membership in the AGO needs to be made affordable for part-time musicians in rural areas. I believe that the cost of dues is the largest drawback to gaining more members.

I am a member of the AGO simply to recognize my professionalism as a (part time, non-degreed) church musician. I choose not to attend chapter/regional/national functions because of the snobbery and backbiting of more educated organists, and their intolerance toward conservative religious denominations. I am usually not attracted to organ recitals any more because the performers tend to play programs with little or no structure, i.e., disconnected pieces that have little or no relationship to each other. After hearing the same Franck chorales and fantasies and Bach preludes and fugues, it is difficult to distinguish one performance from another. I can accept the fact that the AGO is an elitist organization; but after serving on the chapter executive board for a few years, I choose not to socialize with the "elites."

I am not a musician by training, I am the local church organist because there is no one else, and have been for over 50 years. I can't think that I am the only one out there, but seem to be at the conventions, as everyone else I speak to are well music-educated. So I think you could attempt to encourage some of those country church organists who do play the organ because there is no one else. Every time I approach one of the organists in my same level, I am told, I am not good enough to join, I'm too busy, and it's too expensive. I do try, but so far have been relatively unsuccessful. I have talked a few into joining, but not enough. Wish I could give you suggestions on how to make it more approachable, but so far have not been able to come up with my own ideas. Best wishes to you.

The Guild will grow only if "organist" continues to be a relevant profession, and to that end we each need to remain "relevant" to our largest source of employment, which is churches and synagogues. This relevance can be maintained only if we are each willing and able to stand as musical authorities, and to offer effective professional guidance to the musical life of the congregations we serve. Most of us will never make our living as concert and recording artists. Some of us will work in university music departments, or find a full-time church position, but the huge majority of us will have part-time church positions and a full-time career in another field. The Guild seems to imply constantly that a concert career, or a full-time church position, are somehow better than what most of us will achieve, and that to *not* hold such a position is somehow a reflection on one's skills and abilities. The full-time church organist may have been common when the Guild was founded, but it is thus no longer. Even most tenured university organ professors carry a part-time church career on the side. I hold two conservatory degrees and have been a church organist since age 14, but my full-time career is in architecture. I have neither the desire nor the temperament for a concert career, and I enjoy being an organist by avocation rather than as my primary career path.

More help and encouragement for organists at churches with less than 75 attendance and very small volunteer choirs.

I've found the AGO to be largely out of touch with part-time or volunteer organists. Whether this is deliberate or just coincidence I'm not sure, but in any case it's very apparent to the most casual reader that the "non-professional" organists are looked on as somewhat subhuman and not worth any effort to help them. This especially applies to my local chapter, where I rarely attend (a) because of my "day job" and (b) a distinct atmosphere of scorn is just barely below the surface.

The AGO has been a valuable resource during my career as a church musician. As a full-time employee for many years, the Guild's programs spoke directly to my work and needs. However, now as a part-time organist, I recognize the challenge that the Guild faces in reaching a diminishing number of full-time organists. It is obvious to me that the organization needs to find new directions and means of communication and support.

The part-time musician *must* be considered in a *large* way and given more consideration, along with the full-time musician. But the part-time musician seems to fall between the cracks of so many areas and we too are a vital part of this big picture. If you think about it, any church musician sacrifices every single weekend and major Holy Holiday of their life in their service to their religious organizations. In a time where dedication and consistency of giving of one's time is becoming more and more depleted, something *must* be done to help educate our religious organizations and national, regional and local chapters in becoming an enforcing factor to help with this process. It is vital to the future of the American Guild of Organists that we perform these items and help educate, lift up our part-time musicians, and revamp the qualifications for certification and help network and bring us all together in new and creative ways to help strengthen the future of our professions and guilds. Thank you for creating this survey and allowing me to speak opening and honestly with my heart.

I joined AGO to hopefully participate in chapter events and to find the local organ concerts/recitals. I would like to attend a few master classes for a new organist who will never become a full-time church musician. I enjoy the music, the playing, and the challenge to improve music playing ability.

Because of the high dues, I am not receiving TAO and can read it in the university library only occasionally. But its focus seems to me to be directed entirely to full-time, big-city church musicians with a competitive tone to that "insider" group. Perhaps full-time church musicians are more performance-oriented, while those of us who are part-time must focus on service music and let our other repertoire go because of other part-time employment. The Montreat Conferences on Worship and Music offer a full year's inspiration, information, improved skills from world-class musicians in one week, far more than TAO or AGO ever have for me. I realize there has been a policy in recent years rather divorcing AGO from sacred music in general. My Montreat colleagues, though fine musicians, seem not much involved with AGO. Maybe some consideration of pipe organ playing: what percentage of organists are playing service music vs. performance/recital music and what percentage are doing both? Who are you actually serving as AGO? Perhaps my choice to be a service organist puts me in the Montreat camp rather than AGO, and that's OK.

Because I, along with many members, came to be active via non-traditional ways (i.e., we did not enter the field as our primary profession with academic degrees and training), some of us have felt less accepted or welcomed in the organization. In these days where there are fewer positions in full-time church or synagogue service, I think it is important for the organization to reach out to a more diverse (in terms of training, professional expertise, professional employment) membership.

I appreciate the articles on organ technique and specific ideas for playing different kinds of organ music. I would like to see some less logistically complicated options for earning some sort of recognition from the AGO (if that would be feasible) as my skills as an organist and pianist are above average, but it would be difficult with limited time, money, and support resources to meet the requirements of any current certifications. Please know this is *not* a suggestion that the standards of the AGO be lowered in any way. Thank you for the valuable support and services you offer to musicians and to those of us who are part-time church musicians.

I have had a hard time getting to meetings for years due to my work schedule, which has conflicted with everything, having three or four part-time jobs in music going simultaneously. I think part of the problem is trying to make a living in the music field if you are not in a full-time church position—and you have to admit that most of us fall into that category. There are more musicians around than there are full-time church positions. The Guild should not forget that majority of musicians who need all the support they can get.

I think the AGO needs to focus more on we part-time musicians and offer more programs for us. I have never been nor do I ever anticipate being a full-time organist. My local chapter did not offer anything of interest to me therefore I now only subscribe to the TAO which I have enjoyed for over 40 years.

In order to improve church music today, I think AGO should examine two directions. First, more opportunity should be given for musical growth of non-professional organists. Perhaps the Guild should look into a simple type of "Associate degree" in organ or sacred music (check out the German system of four levels). Second, conditions for qualified part-time musicians must be improved! The churches should be pressured to accept our salary scale and offer health insurance and retirement just as they do to any ordained clergyperson working in a lay capacity in the church. If you don't offer decent work conditions, no one will want to improve and traditional sacred music may die out from poor performance.

The main thrust of this survey exhibits the unrecognized bias towards N.Y., the East Coast, full-time organists, and those who are what I call "concertizers" or recording stars. Glad to see the questions about part-timers; you need to also acknowledge that *most* working church organists are part-timers, in small churches, to whom most of the things you consider important are irrelevant.

Pipe vs. Digital Organ

Greater support is needed for people who play digital instruments.

I would like to see the AGO take a more active role in promoting the *pipe* organ. Electronic organ substitutes are no more on a par with pipe organs than electronic keyboards are on a par with fine pianos. For us to pretend that they are is a farce. I realize that the AGO receives a lot of money from advertising and grants from the manufactures of the electronic instruments. I know that the AGO needs this money. Unfortunately, it gives the appearance that the AGO feels that these instruments are on a par with pipe organs. The proliferation of electronic organs to the detriment of pipe organs poses a problem as we try promote the organ and recruit new organists. I have yet to meet a young person who is excited about an electronic instrument. I meet young people all the time who are in awe of pipe organs. I rarely meet an organist who finds playing an electronic to be satisfying. Most of us want to play pipe organs. As professional development chair for our chapter, I have seen that churches with pipe organs rarely have difficulty finding a new organist when a vacancy occurs. Churches with electronic organs often end up changing music formats entirely because they cannot find an organist to play their instrument. Most pipe organbuilders do not have large advertising budgets and experienced sales

staff. For this reason, it is much more difficult for them to sway a church committee, especially since the initial monetary outlay for a pipe organ is greater. So, I would like to see the AGO to continue to support the organist, no matter what kind of instrument the organist must play, but do everything possible to promote the *pipe* organ.

AGO should take initiative, although controversial, to provide the views of various organists, without AGO endorsement, on the technical and aesthetic virtues and deficiencies of the many competing electronic organs. It is very difficult for musicians, much less church committees, to evaluate the many competing claims made by salesmen without some sample of independent views being available. The AGO should offer, in its publications, etc., much more recognition of the existence and progress made recently in electronic organ technology and musicality. The AGO, and many organists active in it, seem to be trying to ignore the 800-pound gorilla in the room. (P.S. My home organ is a large pipe organ, although I have found many modern electronics to be excellent and do not look down upon them.)

Although digital instruments are supposed to be used in AGO events, their actual usage seems to be limited to minor roles.

The AGO needs to become less pedagogical and more in touch with those who toil each week trying to provide the best programs for their respective church/parish situations. Promotion of the real instrument, the pipe organ.

The majority of churches are small to medium in size and most employ (with or without pay) part-time organists who play electronic organs. To attract these people to the AGO, you must embrace them and their instruments. Do this by frequently writing about such situations and make the digital equal in status to the pipe. Doing so will make these people more welcome when emphasis is also less on the academic, skilled performances expected from church organists. In my honest opinion, the AGO is more centered on the academic/professional level than the average organist playing for worship services.

Having tea and cookies and checking out the latest Allen organ is deplorable for programming. If the AGO wants to survive, it must support pipe organs, not digital substitutions for organs, and it must reach out to the young by programming fresh and hip approaches to our instrument which has such a vibrant history.

The feeling I get from AGO and TAO is that all members are employed (i.e. paid) professionally as organists by Protestant denominations in churches with a pipe organ and hold advanced educational degrees in music and/or organ studies of some sort. I see very little focus on who I believe the majority of church organists are, unpaid volunteers, without advanced music degrees, in churches with electronic organs. I have played for approximately 35 years on church organs ranging from an electric Wurlitzer to a Hammond B2 to a 40-rank, 3-manual pipe organ. I love the pipe organ, I prefer the pipe organ, but let's face the real world, pipe organs, while the king of instruments, are in the minority number-wise in churches and as a home instrument. I believe additional effort needs to be put forth by AGO and TAO to reach out to and embrace these people. I think additional emphasis needs to be put on the electronic world we live in, be it the new wave of electric organs, the old faithfuls that people still play and enjoy, or the hybrid pipe/electric combinations. Placing additional and great emphasis in these areas is necessary for the survival of the AGO and TAO, as it opens up a whole new world of mostly untapped membership.

Thanks for your diligent work on this. You did not give an opportunity to comment strongly on the AGO's position on organ construction. I feel that, while supporting the work of all organists no matter the maker of their instruments, the AGO should take a firm and unequivocal stand for

the pipe organ as the definitive instrument for our profession. Supporting electronic organ builders and hybrids is not appropriate for the AGO, through advertisements or tacit implications that electronic organs are "good enough." If the AGO does not stand up for the time-tested tradition and value of pipe organs, who will? Give up the advertising revenue and the pressure from electronic salespeople who are not selling fine art and craft. This should be one of the primary mandates of the AGO: in an affirming and respectful manner, to educate the public about the unmatched beauty and value of *pipe* organs.

Despite all efforts, the AGO remains very centered on pipe organs only. It has failed at trying to be inclusive. Those of us who love making music on fine instruments, be they pipe or electronic, often suffer the wrath of self-proclaimed purists, who have such a strong voice in the AGO. Until the AGO begins to embrace all organists, it will remain small, serving only a few. There is a whole world out there waiting for some body to speak to the masses. The AGO doesn't.

We need to accept electronic organs. Some are very nice and it is a way to install organs without breaking the budget of an old or new church. We need to stop being snobs, *but* we still must maintain and teach respect for good music and good musicians in the church. I am not ready to equate a guitar player who learned in the garage with an organist who has studied piano and the organ.

I feel strongly that we should not differentiate between pipe and digital instruments to the point that digital organs venues are excluded from chapter programming. There have been amazing advances in digital technology and we should take advantage of it as other fields have done.

Although I think pipe organs are the best in music experience, why do pipe organists think they are "better than" us who play the electric organ? We don't have a choice when we accept an organist position at a church. Often I hear a reply: "I don't play anything that is not a pipe organ." Excuse me. Often articles are played down about the electric organ. Makes us feel second-class if we are not on a pipe organ. I do not agree with that type of thinking.

The AGO in general is not a successful organization because it doesn't stand for anything. Its positions on electronic organs and contemporary praise music don't advocate for one side or the other in order to create a "big tent" philosophy. As the 2008 U.S. presidential election showed, moderation doesn't succeed because it doesn't stand for anything. Likewise, the AGO needs to build its foundation in traditional pipe organs and their builders and fine high-quality liturgical music. While welcoming as members organists who in their current circumstances must play electronic "instruments," the AGO needs to take a firm stance that "organs" that produce sound via non-acoustic means are NOT preferred; hence, it should remove all advertising of Copeman-Hart, Allen, Johannus, Marshall & Ogletree, etc. from TAO. Likewise, the AGO should do everything it can to support traditional liturgical music at the expense of contemporary praise music, as the latter is unfitting of the dignity of the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Membership and revenue may decline in the short term, but the benefit of an organization that actually believes something and can support it wholeheartedly will outweigh these costs.

AGO needs more recognition of the incredible resources (MIDI) of electronic instruments.

I think we need to do more recognition of electronic and virtual pipe organs, and the people who play them.

The AGO, like the OHS, tends to make fun of electronic/digital organs. Yes, pipes are nice, but the general tenor of thought and discussion is that most members look down strongly on these "electric toasters." As the electronic/digital instruments are getting better, it behooves us to support them. At least the big companies buy nice ads in TAO. I dare say that an electronic

organ has rarely (never?) been used in a major recital at a regional or national meeting. To me the AGO is just too uppity and snooty to realize that times are changing.

There should be no ambiguity in the AGO that our instrument is the pipe organ, and that electronic/digital/virtual organs are what they are: electronic/digital imitations of the real thing. There are electronic/digital pianos and electronic/digital versions of many other instruments, and no one pretends that they are in any way equivalent to the real thing. The organ, our instrument, should be no different. It makes no difference that our instrument is very costly; a consequence of the cost is that electronic/digital organs are plentiful and many of our members play them, but their frequent use does not change what they are. While organists who play electronic instruments should not be dismissed or scorned, there must be no attempt by the Guild to elevate the prestige or legitimacy of electronic organs for these members' sake. The quality of organists is distinct from the quality of instruments they play; some excellent organists play poor instruments (pipe organs and electronic) and some unskilled organists play fine instruments. The Guild should promote quality in organists and quality in organbuilding so we have more fine instruments available. It should not sacrifice its ideals to prop up the self-esteem of organists who play electronic instruments. The rampant electronic organ advertising in TAO is bad enough. The AGO needs to stand up for our instrument! Electronic organs should not be featured in conventions and should not be listed or featured among new organs in TAO. (By the way, I write this as someone who has held positions playing electronic organs and who has no connection to any organbuilder.)

I would like to see AGO better recognize and serve the needs of organists who play digital electronic instruments ("virtual" pipe organs) and provide regular articles and information on digital organ installations.

I really enjoy TAO, but would like more articles about new and old organs, although I appreciate the articles that are now presented. You should also feature some digital organs. I was discouraged, at times, about the disdain many organists showed toward electronic and digital organs.

Styles of Music

As church music in the modern/post-Oxford Movement continues to evolve, I personally would welcome workshops/seminars providing quality materials for contemporary and multicultural worship settings as well as offering seminars on Gospel music. I serve an inner-city multicultural church and am always looking for new compositions that speak to the wider community that I serve.

Although a clergyman, I love the AGO. We're building a 3-manual pipe organ for our new 55-seat Chapel-On-The-Lagoon in San Diego, even though we'll use mainly jazz and gospel (non-pipe organ) resources during worship. Pipe organ music is an acquired taste, and if done with a spoonful of sugar (jazz, gospel instruments), it can catch on with the public. The AGO better go *blended* for its own success!

AGO must address the changing culture in worship music. How can we make the organ relevant in our ever-changing culture?

Bach and other masters are fine—for those that want to play that kind of music. I believe that we need to understand that younger people are more into *digital* music. We need to provide information on using a MIDI. Not everyone is interested in playing music written by *old, white, dead Europeans*. If the AGO continues to be an organization for the organists who think anything other than the Masters is beneath them or unacceptable service music, the AGO will go the way if

the *old, white, dead Europeans*—emphasis on *dead!* Too many churches no longer use organs because they think they are irrelevant, incapable of producing the sounds that people are seeking in “contemporary” worship. I prefer organ, but I am in a diminishing group.

The AGO cannot be in the business of saying what instruments are appropriate for worship, or what styles of music are appropriate. That will marginalize the AGO even more. Let’s just present whatever we can in the most positive light, and project a positive and proactive image.

Organ music is being challenged by praise music. Rather than react, why not adapt? Many popular tunes could be worked into organ worship music. Choirs with organists form an important social network in a church that might also have a praise band.

Since I work in both traditional and praise services, I see people who are so limited in their music that they won’t open a hymn book, listen to handbells, or for that matter attend a service with a band. It is impossible to accommodate the sliding preferences of today’s dial-a-church mentality. The only thing I can do is to provide the best worship music no matter the genre.

I don’t know how you can legislate “appropriate” music or instruments for worship given the slide into the abyss of contemptible—er, contemporary—music.

AGO should be less involved in religious and worship topics and more in the secular/popular focus that the organ needs in 2009. Bring the organ back into the musical mainstream.

Something not mentioned is a seal of approval from the AGO for TV and movies using good music in their programs, especially weddings and funerals. How much time is wasted convincing brides and families that they should not use the media for their selection of music in these events!

A number of trends have contributed to a de-professionalization of the church organist’s role. They include the rise of Contemporary Christian Music, the dominance of the pop culture in general, and the loss of the centrality once held by the Sunday morning worship service—there’s a considerably lessened emphasis on this even on the part of committed Christians.

AGO is a good organization. We could benefit by thinking “postmodern” and “mass appeal”—we have a reputation of being musical snobs. Our region hosted a convention that included a theater organ piece and one night at the local Shakespeare festival—it was a great success. One can find balance between classical, formal, serious, and popular, informal, sheer delight.

I am building bridges between my church band members and the organ, but I am not sure my colleagues in more “prestigious” positions respect this. Can the organ really survive in its “historic” form?

We need to interface with the “praise” music growing in churches. We need to play along and make a contribution. We cannot be purists. We might find some of the music interesting (yes, some of it is junk).

I think the declining membership in the AGO is just a shift in worship priorities/style of worship—not the fault of how things are being run or not run at headquarters. Every dog has its day.

If we can provide top quality resources for people who do many styles of music, we can fill a void and replace commercialism with high-quality, intelligent material in a broader range of musical styles. In turn, it would be my hope that we could expand our membership. In many, many churches there are two or three different types of services. We are not adequately providing

good resources for a wide enough variety. Instead of ignoring various trends (including contemporary, emerging, ancient-future, blended, and "alternative" worship), the AGO should address the issues and help our membership to provide visionary leadership when these issues arise and new types of worship services are established in their churches.

I joined AGO because I love organs of any type and play for church services, concerts, and other special events. I have always felt that the AGO was biased toward Catholic/liturgical worship and all-pipe organs (esp. trackers) and that Baptist organists and digital organs just "weren't acceptable." ATOS is too "theater organ for me," and I see no other organ group to join. I find individual members to generally be cordial, but as a group, the collective "snobbery" sometimes gets overwhelming. I would like to see a greater focus on the AGO helping organists who play any musical style in the name of Godpraising to do their best in the setting in which they find themselves. The general public has a hard enough time with relating to organs (they don't know what diapasons and bombardes are) without the AGO mindset telling them that their programs are really only for "insiders." That's why I play concerts of more familiar but worshipful music, not the "approved literature."

Please don't make a statement about styles of worship. Lots of us can do both styles, and it would be very harmful to our positions if the Guild made a policy. Each congregation is a little universe, and we dance a very delicate dance within each of them. I am part-time in three churches weekly, do High Holy Days at the synagogue and do Evensongs at an Episcopal church. I know whereof I speak.

We older organists need more help in learning about some of the new music that we don't necessarily like (CCM), but need to adjust to as it seems to be taking over more and more churches. I don't like that stuff, but do need to know more about it.

AGO should stay out of the discussion of musical styles in church. The only thing I can see resulting from this meddling would be to convince clergy who already think organists are snobs that they were right all along. The only thing that will result in a better educated listening audience and more supportive congregations is education. AGO, along with every other music organization that wants to survive, must whole-heartedly get behind pushing music in public schools. The reason we're in such trouble these days is that the general public is ignorant about music. Even when music is technically present in the schools, there is often not much actual musical education going on. Music theater productions in a school do not necessarily signify that the school is teaching music. I'm surprised this was not a part of the survey.

I think that the AGO needs to focus on raising the level of church music performance in all musical styles to include traditional and contemporary organ, keyboard, and vocal music. Digital instruments need to be placed on an equal footing with the pipe organ because the majority of churches seem to be using them. More needs to be done with workshops for the run of the mill, part-time, non-music degree musician because they make up the majority of church musicians. The high level of musicianship needed to play Bach, Widor, etc. is something that many church musicians will never achieve. We need to address the needs of a broader base of musician if we are to continue to be viable in today's church music field.

Organ music is being challenged by praise music. Rather than react, why not adapt? Many popular tunes could be worked into organ worship music. Choirs with organists form an important social network in a church that might also have a praise band. Also I sometimes see elitism as a danger to the field. I wish too the Guild raised more money for definite programs rather than just having a big staff in NYC. For example, music scholarships and prizes (more money means more prestige), an endowment to commission paid articles in TAO that will boost membership and the craft of organ playing and bring more readers before advertisers. The

website could also have a sort of World Book Encyclopedia of organ articles for the younger set with pictures of exciting organs in various places, sound samples, mechanics, etc. A reverence for religion is also important and the AGO needs to respect all denominations and recognize the ministries taking place among its membership.

I recently attended my first regional convention. Although I found the recitals absolutely fantastic, I heard only one or two pieces the whole week that I could use in a worship service. I have been a member of the AGO for many years, but I have to say, very little of the repertoire that I have heard at chapter meetings is usable in week to week worship services. I think the AGO needs to come down to where congregations live with their musical programming. I have not taken a certification examination for the same reason. The repertoire I would have to spend valuable time learning would not be appropriate in my church, so why should I bother?

Headquarters has always been polite, and responsive to calls and requests. I am not formally trained in organ playing—piano training was thorough for twelve years. Performance accuracy is important in a recital, but precision in accompanying the congregation is paramount—many attendees don't respond to lavish improvisations—they may have a "pedestrian" mentality. Forget the entertainment. "Last stanza" stormy performances are sometimes disasters because even some professionals don't know how to improvise (or produce a satisfactory key change). Organ accompaniment frequently drowns out the choir. Response from directors: "What!" "Sit further back," etc. Be professional—be "humble". If I can't play it right, I won't play it. Forthright playing makes for forthright singing. And I do not spell "traditional" as "Maranatha" and other junk music. A very professional survey.

We need a public presence. CAGO and MusB do not relate to my church situation. Anthems are more like rock music. I have the need to mentally clean out after the rehearsal, such as playing from The Messiah at home. Finding music relevant to an inner-city congregation.

I like what you are doing at the AGO Headquarters. The organ profession has taken a big hit because our whole society is in a downward cultural and organized religious spiral. In my mind the organ is part of, and derived from, traditional Christian denominations. And we are all aware of what has happened to those memberships during the past decades. Since I work in both traditional and praise services I see people who are so limited in their music that they won't open a hymn book, listen to handbells, or for that matter attend a service with a band. It is impossible to accommodate the sliding preferences of today's dial-a-church mentality. The only thing I can do is provide the best worship music, no matter the genre.

Although there is still a need for organ music in worship, it is rapidly being pushed aside by the needs for contemporary programming that is not appropriate for organ. The Guild may have to come to grips with this situation, because I do not think it is going away any time soon.

I am a volunteer church musician, with full time "non music employment". My real music is jazz—that's where I am paid to play. As I get older I see the beauty in the classical church music and am trying to learn the history and performance skills needed to cross over into performing pipe organ. I took the training I had in music recording acoustics and digital keyboard and midi and am working backwards to see the physics and voicings for organ performance. Everything I can remember from my college days piano lessons is being called into use again. The organists in my guild chapter who are my age are very good performers and I am like the student. I have the study notes for the service playing certification exam and hope to take it someday. Private lessons from a pro are really expensive, and the one I want to study with can't give me a set date and time for a course of lessons. She keeps having to reschedule me in between her performances and travel. I wish I could have some home-school course that she could check me on so I know I am getting a curriculum and not just a QA session. It would be great to have a

summer course to attend and then some online homework, and have my private teacher serve as a sponsor/mentor/ and private teacher so I could learn faster. I have read the Gleason method book cover to cover and am trying to master the drills. She thinks the book is too boring to use in lessons, but if I can't get the coordination, I can't play a thing. I think a lot of growth could happen in AGO if they make a path for the musicians who crossover from other instruments to develop proficiency and be a part of the "labor force". I think younger people like organ music sounds, as they incorporate them in arena rock, film scores, etc. Have you heard the film score to Harry Potter and Pirates of the Caribbean? Church music will evolve to "anything you can imagine" in the future, and they are limited by the skill of future musicians in what can be played in church. I think there will be a great decrease in musicianship among church leaders in the future. AGO should be a resource for the churches of all brands. I am having a problem with church leaders who don't understand music now. One church I play for has musician leadership team that cannot read music in notes at all. They only read chord changes and pass out MP3 files to the praise team members. Because of my jazz background I can play with them, and they only use a few chords and they stay in the "guitar player keys". There is a pipe organ in their worship meeting room, but nobody can play it. They want me to play it for them, but they can't name a song that they want to hear or decide how to fit it into the programming! Recently they wanted "something ambient" for meditation music. I went to my XM Radio selection for "ambient" to get the sound they were looking for, then I built a piano solo based on a gospel hymn melody. They couldn't tell me how many minutes to prepare—just watch the soundboard guy for the signal. Once they turned down the house lights so low and put a spotlight on another part of the stage, I played the whole meditation piece in the dark! They don't think of a light on a music stand, because they don't read music. By being a resource for musicians who want to learn about classical concert and church music and improve the level of performance in American church music, AGO will do a lot of good.

I am especially interested in the AGO gaining a clearer understanding of the requirements by the different denominations and a greater acceptance of the different styles of music that are used in the churches. Too many organists limit themselves to just the classical styles and will not work with the different church groups to make the organ a valuable part of the new worship experience. Thanks for the survey. We need to be planning ahead for the next 50 years and adapt to the broader range of styles that are now required.

On the questions regarding AGO's policy statement on types of instruments and/or music for worship, I checked "no" for both. I don't see how the AGO can "dictate" to any one or any denomination as styles of instruments and worship vary so widely in our current culture.

I do not want to see the AGO becoming overly inclusive. I fear that we may be starting to stray from our initial purpose of being primarily church musicians and classical concert organists. The ATOS should remain a separate organization for entertainment. Also, instruments used in "praise-style" worship services should not be encouraged. The organ should remain the primary instrument for services of worship. An exception is the piano, played in a classic traditional style. We should keep the high standards that our organization was founded on. We are in danger of becoming "watered down" in order to become all-inclusive. Please, let us not do that.

I hope AGO doesn't get in the business of announcing what they feel is appropriate in worship. Thanks!

Clergy Relations

With every change of clergy in all my years of church work, I have had to describe the AGO, what it stands for and why I belong. So many clergy/churches, if they have heard of it at all, think it is a "union." I have done what I can to educate the masses, but am not always

successful. We need to be more visible to local churches and clergy. My need for a contract is not thought important, and I am weary of fighting the battle. I need the AGO to help.

The AGO needs to do *much* more to keep its musicians from being jerked around by the clergy.

I would like to see more on organist/clergy relations. I'm tired of fighting copyright issues, having clergy throw theologically unsound demands at us (like playing "Hail Mary" during a Protestant Eucharist), and being given ridiculously small budgets—e.g. \$250 a year for in my case for all conventions, seminars, etc., which doesn't come close to actual costs. Recognizing the true impact of inflation, I'm "poorer" in buying power now than at any time since the mid-1980s. Clergy often make four to ten times as much as organists; do they work that much harder or longer?

I am proud to be a member of the AGO, but was totally scorned and ridiculed by the last rector of the Episcopal Church where I was the organist for 43 years for believing the AGO was important. He is not the only one that does not value trained and dedicated church organists. It is a sad commentary on the importance of organists in worship here in the U.S. Clergy need to get off their ego trip and recognize that church musicians are equally important to the worship needs of the respective congregations. I gave 60 years to my other church, where sometimes there were pastors who appreciated the musicians, but for the most part, it was a necessary nuisance. American church music needs to clean up their act and then proudly present it. We have a mission that needs more people to see what it is all about. The AGO can and should be promoting this loud and clear. We only need it to get beyond the small group of musicians that now comprise the AGO.

The future of the church/synagogue musician depends upon the extent to which the clergy and church leadership understand, appreciate and support the importance of good quality sacred music. Anything the AGO can do to foster that goal should take priority at the national level.

As a retired Catholic clergyman, I believe that the AGO could be more influential in encouraging all denominations to give genuine importance to the quality of liturgical music they provide their membership. On paper, the Catholic Church calls for top quality music in its worship and gives a primacy of value to the pipe organ. In practice, it is not always the case. The AGO can advocate for very good music and make clear the benefits to the churches of holding to high standards.

I see the Guild's biggest forthcoming challenge as stemming from one of its greatest successes. The POE program has been a tremendous success. More young people than ever are playing the organ, and the standard of playing continues to rise. With the onset of social networking sites, students who meet at POEs and other organ programs can connect, network, encourage, and challenge each other. The days of being the only person you know who is studying the organ in high school is over, and for all these reasons, the number of young people studying the organ and aspiring to careers in the church has been rising.

That being said, with mainline denominations shrinking, and so many churches resorting to "entertainment" style worship, moving away from organ-led worship services, there are fewer and fewer jobs for the people who aspire to fill them. Some of the nation's most prominent full-time positions have been cut in half or eliminated (same, we know, for university organ programs). Therefore, I see one of the Guild's primary challenges in the next decade to develop some kind of program or outreach that parallels the scale of the POE program that focuses on reaching out to seminaries, churches, clergy, and denominations—promoting the organ, choral music, and traditional worship in general. While I like to think that there will always be good jobs for talented and hard-working musicians, I worry about the future given what is happening in the Church.

I think one of the best things we can do nationally is to foster a feeling of acceptance of *all* who attempt to be church musicians in a country where the everyday sounds of guitar and percussion and hand-held microphone singers has too long been encroaching in an area where too many congregations do not see the need that their worship be set apart from the everyday. I have heard pastors say that they now come out of seminary very, very ill-equipped and educated about real church music that doesn't sound like it is produced in a sound studio. They admit this, but prefer to call upon the likes of Ray Boltz, video clips and turning the narthex into a coffee house (they do have good food!). But until seminaries are willing to give future pastors some solid food, we are sunk. AGO needs to be working with the seminaries.

Educational programs directed to clergy and worship leaders.

It should also work on fostering the importance of clergy/musician relationships.

As I said in the survey, I think a huge problem is relations with clergy. Too often I've heard the story, in different denominations, how some congregation member can't stand the organist (there's always one). The clergy then is put in the situation of supporting the organist or supporting the congregation member who pays the clergy salary. Most of the time the clergy will side with the congregation member. Congregations and clergy "get" what secretaries and sextons do, but they don't often "get" what organists have to do. More education/involvement with clergy and denominations is a big hole that needs to be filled.

Repeatedly I have indicated the need for more clergy involvement. Without clergy support, the organ could become a dinosaur. I sincerely hope this message is heard.

The AGO needs to be the greatest advocate of the church music director and/or organist, particularly in these times when many churches are changing their worship styles. Quality always lasts, and it is up to all of us to maintain that quality and to defend it in the face of adversity. Particularly important is the need for stronger relationships with seminaries and degree-granting religious institutions. We cannot expect clergy to make informed choices about worship music styles if their training did not provide them with those tools.

I feel the AGO is doing a good job and serving an important purpose in my life. I only wish it held a more prominent place in the minds of pastors, and also in guiding them in the choice of more worthwhile music for worship. I deplore the "dumbing down" that is happening in my particular denomination solely in the belief that it will attract new members who are musically illiterate and might not appreciate good music.

You talk about seminary involvement but in my time as chapter dean I have seen the number of organist-clergy disputes triple. In one instance the organist was told if she pursued ago intervention due to being dismissed with no notice she would be "blackballed" by the denomination and never play in one of their churches. You are obviously seen as a paper tiger, and thus you are of no assistance to your members. Until seminaries impress on their students the importance of working with their musician rather than managing their musician you are worthless to the musician.

You need to interact more with Seminaries and Church leaders (like the USCCB). Most Priests and Ministers are abysmally ignorant of church music, the logistics of planning and scheduling. Provide courses in hymnology, design of worship services, logistics needed for choirs and organists, etc. How about providing detailed sample worship services, types of music/hymns useful, with timelines of preparation time for the organist, soloist and/or choir? The Minister I currently sub with just fired the previous Director of Music without taking into consideration what would be needed to replace him (hence I'm subbing). I myself was informed on Thursday noon

Nov. 12 that I would be in charge of a Xmas Eve Carol Service. (Rehearsal was that Thursday p.m., one of only 4 rehearsals before Xmas). Since I have 50 years of experience, I may be able to do so, but no Minister with such little knowledge of music should be picking hymns and designing worship services. This is the reality that most church organists work with.

Public Relations

AGO should become more aware of electronic communications, including the value of publicity for all AGO-related events. TAO is a fancy, costly, old-fashioned method of communication. Fewer issues (6/year) and electronic newsletters much better. Chapters need help publicizing events and educating local public audiences. All organists, no matter what level, need encouragement to improve performance and promote organ music.

In American culture today, organ music has a very small place; and a majority of people have a very limited or even no idea of what you're talking about if you mention organ music. I think the most important thing that the AGO could do for us all in the field is to help the general public's awareness and appreciation of organ music.

The AGO as a whole needs to be more savvy in getting the word out about classically trained pipe organists; for example, by getting into movies and TV! This might make people realize what organists really do and how they play with both feet and hands. (Of course, let's also try to stop allowing the organ to be stereotyped as "spooky," only for Halloween or Phantom of the Opera!) I think this flies over most people's heads. Most people do not know what organists "do," and think that organists are just volunteers who sit down and play in church once a week. They have no idea how much training is required. This is coming from a musician in a small parish—not in a big downtown church or cathedral. People need to be educated, and it could happen from a more national level. Locally it's tough because the local chapter does not have the money to advertise. I often marvel at how Hollywood always includes classical musicians such as violinists, cellists, pianists, etc., but never organists. Just a little pet peeve of mine, thanks for listening!

I think the AGO should concentrate on effort to bring the organ to the general public. I'd like to see the organ survive into the next century. It does not look too good at the moment.

At the local chapter level (especially my local chapter), more attention needs to be placed on providing programs of the highest *quality* when presenting the organ to the general public. More emphasis needs to be placed on keeping the organ in the public eye in a positive way and at the highest musical standard. Otherwise, the instrument will continue to be considered irrelevant.

I think the most important thing the AGO can do is begin to involve with the general public and show them that organ performance is not a lost art or an obsolete, boring experience. We need more artists who can set audiences on fire, such as Nathan Laube or Olivier Latry.

Hollywood has dictated the direction of our culture by providing excitement and entertainment.

While the AGO is not large enough to have the ubiquitous presence of television and the movies, there is opportunity to leave a mark. Examples: Hallmark Co. Hallmark Theater and Hallmark Hall of Fame; Diane Bish's "Joy of Music" TV series; Crystal Cathedral church services with choir and organ broadcast on TV.

Well thought-out questions. My biggest concern is that the AGO needs to publicize and promote itself, and its programs, more effectively to the general "unchurched" public as well as the church-and-organ-music-oriented public, and that's a tall order! Anything the AGO can do to promote and uphold the traditional roles of the professional (and serious amateur) organist and

organ student in the life of the church, the academic and the concert world, is a good thing! In other words, keep up the good work, only make it more apparent to everybody "out there" beyond the realm of church and academia! One example of AGO at its best was the International Year of the Organ—commissioned works, publicity support, etc.

I believe that we must be careful to retain our organization as one foremost for performing organists and organ students. Keeping the public aware of our importance as a legitimate cog in the music world and as a supporter of genuine pipe organs should be underscored. Yes, we do play the less expensive electronic instruments and do our best to make them sound musical, but we should not toss in the towel and cease to defend the real thing!

The AGO needs to engage in a serious effort to engage the general public in understanding of an appreciation of pipe organs and pipe organ music. This is, in my opinion, far more important than serving as a professional organization. Without the public, there will be no organs and no organ music and the organization will fade into irrelevance.

I know this is a chronic problem, but getting the name of the AGO out there to the uninformed public. People always ask me, "What does AGO mean?"

I encourage the AGO to promote "high level" organ repertoire and pipe organs to the general public through packaged TV and radio programs. Is there a way to counteract PBS's conclusion that organ music is of little interest to their audiences?

I wish there could be greater national awareness of the AGO.

It is a difficult job to address issues for so many organists (and we *are* an opinionated bunch) working in increasingly complex worship-related situations where the organ is no longer as "welcomed" as it once was. I believe the most important thing the Guild can do is to promote the organ so that more people—not just organists—want to hear these instruments and the literature written for them. I know—no small task! Thank you for doing all that you do.

We still need to inform potential new members that it is not necessary to be a full-time musician, concert organist or even be able to play an instrument to be a member of the AGO. There are still many people who enjoy and support organ and classical music. I think the AGO needs to publicize itself more nationally, not just on NPR, college stations or classical stations. Also we need to figure out how to get organ music not only associated with church in the minds of many. Better local publicity of well-known artists and concerts is necessary. We also need more collaboration with other musical organizations and performing organizations, like symphonies, bands, and concert series not associated with a church. We need to encourage education and dialogue for clergy and folks who are pushing non-traditional music in churches and who are for abandoning the organ. That also calls for just compensation for part-time people so they can improve their skills as musicians to better serve their worship communities.

Comments of Lapsed Members

Our chapter is very "cliquey." If I were to take an AGO exam, I don't care for the people that would judge me. I would like to take an exam, and even have some materials, but the judges are tight-knit and a little eccentric. AGO needs to expand its name. Sponsor programs on public radio. Our local public radio station reads the name of the donor of CDs—donate organ CDs! Lots of organists don't even know about the AGO.

A number of years ago I decided to join the AGO. I hadn't been a member since my college days. I called the national office and was sent an application form, which I returned with my dues. A

few weeks later I received an e-mail informing me that the dues were \$10.00 more than I had sent, even though I had sent in the amount on the application form. This wasn't a problem for me. I sent in the \$10.00. I received TAO for slightly over a year. However, the only time I heard from the AGO during that year was a letter informing me of a regional meeting in Albany. I assume that the NYC Chapter has many activities during the course of a year. However, I didn't even get information about renewing my membership. Approximately two or three years later I received a letter asking me to rejoin. I saw no reason to do so, since at the time I could buy TAO at Patelson's Music House in NYC. Over the years I have often thought of letting you know this. I certainly don't want to sound angry as I'm sure this was nothing personal. I somehow slipped through the cracks. It is important for any organization to be aware that such things can easily happen. When I received this e-mail I thought this would be a perfect time to share this with you. I am considering rejoining. I only wish the very best for the AGO.

I didn't join AGO this year because after 25 years the TAO magazines are beautiful, but they pile up. I wanted to save money this year. I substitute in only one church and I don't want to go elsewhere. Here in northern Vermont chapter activities are almost always very far away.

I like the AGO for sharing with some of my fellow musicians in the area, but working full-time in addition to the church duties keeps me very busy, and I live an hour away from church and work.

If a person sends mail to the AGO national headquarters, it should be edited if necessary and *always* published. My mail has *never* been published. At the local level, some of us with great talent and background as organists are shunned for non-musical reasons, such as certain personality traits and non-traditional demeanor and appearance. This should *never* happen, but it *does* happen quite often.

Promotion of organ study/teaching, recitals, organs to educate the public to the beauty and importance of the organ and its study is important.

Most of the organists in LDS congregations are untrained organists who accept a call to serve as organist of their local congregation. They do this without pay and for the love of service to their congregation. Many struggle to find some form of help in becoming more competent as organist. I feel that the Guild would benefit from reaching out to these dedicated folks in their programs. There could be mutual benefit to the organ world and these amateur musicians. I enjoyed the membership in our local chapter, but I'm afraid they could be a little intimidating to some people.

I enjoyed my membership in the AGO and the camaraderie I experienced with my fellow members. At this time, I am employed at a church where the use of contemporary worship music is higher, and the relevance of the AGO to my current position seems negligible. While I miss certain aspects of my membership, my current employment position just does not seem to align with the AGO's mission and values.

Sadly, my needs as a full-time church musician are better met by denominational professional organizations than the AGO, national or local chapter (R.I.).

In my experience, the AGO has been used, especially in this region, to feed the egos of a few who consider themselves stars and supply them with sycophants. Collegiality has been absent, as has a cordial sense of openness to newcomers who are not nationally or internationally known. The failure of the Guild to make a meaningful protest to the treatment of Gerre Hancock at St. Thomas and the wide disparity between reality and AGO salary guidelines and professional code of ethics has pretty much soured me on the credibility of the Guild.

I was a church music director, but not an organist, so primarily used AGO for contacts, resource information and substitute list. //I was an organist, I would definitely be a more active member of AGO.

My primary reason for leaving was the cost of membership. I'm not an organist. I'm a lover of pipe organ music. I would like to receive TAO and chapter news at a much reduced cost and not be a voting member.

AGO has a golden opportunity to further the cause of music in general and organs in particular. No other group in the world is so well placed. Why don't you get your members to seek out organists in their towns/villages in order to nurture the study and celebration of organ music? I'm astonished by some of the kind of questions you are asking and by some you are not. Be relevant—music is a without-borders phenomenon—so should you be.

I just recently graduated from college and am now living in a place where there is no nearby chapter of the Guild, and few, if any opportunities to hear or play the organ. Even though I was not an organ or other music major, I still enjoyed participating in local chapter events and associating with other organists. I miss having a nearby chapter of the Guild and would join if there was one closer (and I wasn't broke because I just graduated).

I was a regular chapter member, but fell away because of a pervasive attitude against those of us who were serious musicians, but not full-time. The AGO needs to get serious about transforming its membership's approach to the organization. I gained many resources from the organization, so I'm not negative. I think it needs a friendlier face.

I have found the AGO members to look down their noses at certain denominations, churches that use other styles of music other than traditional and/or classical in nature and those of Pentecostal nature. I used to attend every meeting or our local chapter until that started happening and open homosexuality started permeating the organization.

I'm more interested in the Royal School of Church Music and the Association of Anglican Musicians than in the AGO. In short, I don't much like the AGO, but I'd hate to see it go out of business, all the same.

As I neared retirement age and planned relocation to a small community, membership became less important. The congregation had paid my membership the last few years of employment, and I felt not renewing would save them the cost.

My chapter is 45 minutes away, and I simply do not have time to attend meetings while in nursing school. I will likely rejoin in 2011 after I have graduated. It would be nice to have a less expensive regular membership option for those who do not wish to receive the TAO. I have no use for that magazine, and hate for the paper to be wasted on me every month.

I don't have a generalized "hassle" with the AGO, but my current chapter became less relevant to me because of my own financial stress, geographic distance (long drive), over-clogged calendar (still children at home, etc.). I realize it was a mistake to neglect these relationships—but there was no possibility to make them real. I still feel that I owe a debt to the people at earlier chapters in Indiana and New York who assisted me in preparing for my exam. I would be pleased to help others as they helped me, but there are no likely candidates in my current "world." Overall, I am very confused about the priority of organ in my world. I am prone to use other instruments, voices, more flexibility/creativity. The actual instruments where I now live are frankly not very inspiring, and it feels snobby to say so. But the finances required to remedy the situation are just crazy. And our original objective is worship—not organs. I am always a zealot

for quality music, quality texts—traditional worship. But I do not feel very able to convey my convictions about this to others. They are less literate (musically and generally), less historically oriented—just very different from me. These issues are an ongoing “quest” for me. And are not settled.

I personally would have liked to been more aware of the benefits beforehand of joining the AGO. The only reason beforehand why I was in it was due to a POE which I participated in, and I was unaware of little more than the free membership. I am afraid to say that I learned more about AGO from this survey than from what I was told by the POE staff in the first place. Had I known everything available to me from my status as a member, I would have been much more active in the AGO.

I think the AGO is a very important organization. I really have only let my membership lapse because I keep forgetting to renew, although I have been reminded many times by chapter members. If I had had a way I would have renewed online probably many months ago. I personally believe that the AGO needs to “update” itself without losing itself, if that makes any sense. At times I believe that the organization has a reputation of being a bit snobby (as do some organists, just goes along with the territory) and should be more “user friendly.” Most people I know, myself included, are part-time musicians. The local chapter is an hour away, as are most recitals, and I/we often don’t have the time to drive to meetings or recitals. We have been revitalizing out chapter (Roanoke, Va., Chapter) with much success, but I haven’t been as available as I have had to take on more work to support myself. This may be a problem with other members with the economy as it is.

Organ students and part-time church musicians under the age of 30 should be encouraged to get together at regional and national conventions. There seems to be a great disconnect between Generation X and the Millennials. Even those that graduated from high school in the 1990s are having a tough time with the “TwitterKids,” and organists are no exception. How will the organ participate in 21st-century America with a reputation for being stuck in 19th-century Europe?

Thank you for including me in your survey. While I am a great friend of the AGO, it has been difficult for me to afford the membership. Because of my particular religious convictions as a vocational church musician and Anglo-Catholic committed to social justice, I have taken a voluntary vow of poverty, but will be renewing my membership shortly. I would very much like to see the AGO become more visible, and especially in relationship to the clergy. Also, more educational programs would be useful.

There seems to be disdain for amateurs, non-organists, and digital instruments.

Like so many others, I was a part-time church organist, with my “day job” providing my real income. I came to the organ late in life, impressed into service by a desperate parish. It would have been great to have some moral support as I learned my church music craft, but AGO sure didn’t supply any. It was difficult to attend AGO meetings, and they were so unrewarding I eventually gave up altogether. No one was interested in why I left; I doubt they noticed. These days I’m retired, supplying from time to time for friends. AGO is more irrelevant than ever.

Very interesting survey. I joined a local chapter, but found it primarily a “closed group” uninterested in new ideas (but sure wanted the dues!). No interest or aid for part-timers. Liked the magazine.

I was a full-time organist in church and entertainment and also worked in computers. My work collapsed—I am down to 4 hours a week in a Catholic Church and 1 hour in a Spiritualist Church and 3 students, with no computer work. My finances have not allowed me to maintain

membership, which I miss sorely. I also enjoyed TAO. I would love to get back in but can't. Also, as I stated previously, some of the Deans are not cooperative when it comes to soliciting new members and can be offensive. I would very much like to stay in touch with you.

A thoughtful survey. If AGO wants to survive, it must become more flexible for drawing in younger musicians. Much of AGO in this region seems to revolve around well established or retiring members with little draw to the student or newly employed young musician.

Probably the biggest reason I've stopped being part of the AGO is that it no longer seems relevant to me. In my church, I still play the organ for a small portion of our services, but the momentum is all in modern worship music. In a nutshell, playing the organ is really only a small part of my job, but when I was around AGO members, all I ever heard was complaining about this new music. Also, I always found myself disappointed with all the politics inside the AGO and the gossip amongst members. To be completely honest, my other frustration was that it felt that the AGO was pushing a liberal pro-homosexuality agenda, and I never understood how that related to playing the organ.

I was widowed last year and still have a young child at home. I have been extremely busy settling the estate and working. Because of this, I haven't been active in the chapter; however, no one has contacted me from the chapter.

I am a self-taught organist, having begun at the age of 60 with only modest talents as a pianist. I bought and restored a Klueker pipe organ (1965) for my residence. I practice every day, and I can play pieces of moderate difficulty. We live near Yosemite National Park, and there is no chapter closer than 80 miles. I realize that my kind of person is not and should not be considered an ideal AGO member, and I don't expect the AGO to cater to people like me—it is a support organization for professionals. Yet, I feel that organ playing and organbuilding are sliding downhill in terms of social importance in the U.S., and an AGO program or two that would lure people into the center from the outside might help reverse this trend. Thanks.

The AGO was extremely helpful to my career. I held many chapter offices and also was Illinois State Chair. One of the most important functions of the AGO is to provide networking with other church musicians. The AGO would profit by working on the AGO image—which has always been and still is "exclusive." Too much emphasis is put on who has what degree, who holds a full-time position, etc. In the U.S. most church musicians are part-time. The AGO primarily addresses the minority instead of the majority, however through the years an effort has been made to reach the part-time group. The AGO needs to decide if its image is academic for professionals *or* grassroots for the ordinary musicians who serve the church. You can't be both.

I would rejoin if two policies were changed: 1) removal of the policy that members can discipline a church and membership by individually singling out a church for *any* reason, 2) removal of the sexual orientation clause from the non-discrimination policies. These two clauses render the AGO completely irrelevant to thousands of Christian churches.

I wish to emphasize that my lack of involvement in AGO and my lapsed membership are simply results of working two jobs—my full-time non-music job and my part-time church position. I don't have time or energy left to participate, and therefore find it difficult to justify spending the \$\$ on membership.

The AGO is a *very* important organization. For me, however, it is too expensive—including conventions.

I think the AGO is a great organization and will renew my membership as soon as possible. Right now things are a bit tough for me financially, but once I get back on my feet a bit, I will definitely renew. I plan to take the Colleague exam one day.

The AGO has become "stuffy," "outdated," "impractical," and *too expensive!* I received more valid and applicable information from denominational conventions than anything ever received within the AGO over the last 20 years. I found the AGO meetings, etc., to be for the "elite" and full of people that strutted around as if their "you know what didn't stink." The field of church music and organ as a worship-leading tool must not ever be about this; it is all to be done in the form of personal worship and praise to the one who created all of us.

I'm currently a college student, and I'm familiar with AGO because I attended three POEs during high school (Worcester, Denver, and San Diego, all wonderful!). They were great experiences which encouraged me to switch from piano to organ during 10th grade and to continue studying organ as an extracurricular in college. I think AGO is a wonderful group, and I hope you are able to continue and grow!

The responses I've submitted are perfectly candid. Do know that I've had a huge number of wonderful experiences through the Guild, but having been in since the '50s I've experienced a lot, to say the least. I noticed you didn't ask, or I didn't see it, whether I've held office in the local chapter. Personal concerns for the Guild center around the "ingrown" nature of local leadership in many of the chapter's I've held membership in. There seems to be a "handing over of the mantle" to those who agree with whatever the past leadership has done or are in line with them socially, position-wise, etc., more than not. A healthy Guild needs constant turnover of ideas and pursuits in our current society and excitement about the instruments of our interest: organ *and* choir. After all, the organ does not speak the message and the choir's voice has to be heard, too, and most of us affect whether or not the choir is heard. I will not drop out of the Guild, but do want the Guild to be continually growing in vision and goals that reach out to musicians in the boondocks. More degrees won't make this happen! More high criticism from the academia community won't improve the Guild either. Mentoring/fellowship *about* "being musical when you play," job management, healthy relationships to the clergy, and development of people skills with our congregations will make an immediate difference. We so need less stoic academia control—less arguing over tuning/atonal music/tracker organs vs. whatever/and trying to produce *pure* worship, based on the Graduale and other stuff, so that the nation as a whole will begin to see us as happy, well adjusted, thoughtful musicians dying to share the incredible gifts we have to undergird the ministries of the organizations to whom we are beholden to have the opportunity to place the magnificent (hopefully) instruments that we enjoy. Thanks for the opportunity to speak!

I am pleased to see the range of selections represented in the survey. For years, I have been very frustrated with the AGO on certain levels. I have been a member of the AGO since my years as a student at Westminster College, New Wilmington, Pa., with Raymond Ocock as my teacher. I further studied with William Whitehead privately until I settled on going to graduate school at Westminster Choir College, Princeton N.J., where I studied with Eugene Roan, John Kemp, Erik Routley, and Joseph Flummerfelt. As you can see, I am a very adequately prepared part-time musician. Although I have served as Dean of two AGO Chapters (Williamsport, Pa., in the '70s and Waterloo, Iowa, in the '80s, Kalamazoo in the late '80s), I became increasingly aware of a "snootiness" from members of the chapter where I was in Minnesota near Rochester. I enjoyed many programs which the chapter presented, but felt put off because I always had to travel to get to the programs instead of giving our town a chance to present programs. I did get one chance to organize such a program, and it was greatly received by an attendance of about 80 townspeople and a few AGO members. I let my membership go in 2001 when my husband lost his six-figure job income due to 9/11 and layoffs worldwide. We were reduced to my piecemeal

work as a "part-time" director of music and high school choral accompanist at the local high school (a la Nancianne Parella). Fifteen thousand dollars a year with two children in high school and headed for college doesn't quite cut the AGO memberships or PAM, etc. We finally made it and moved to Wisconsin in December 2006, where my husband found work and I found my current employment at the First Presbyterian Church. I am appreciated, but not remunerated adequately. There is no AGO within a meaningful drive without going to Green Bay or to Milwaukee. So I have not affiliated.

If AGO had the funding, it would be great if you were somehow able to subsidize students' lessons at the college level. Since I'm not majoring in music at my university, it costs me about \$600 per semester to take lessons, not including the price of music and so on. That's quite a lot when you consider that as a full-time student I could take any other 3 units in English or Chemistry or whatnot without having to pay a cent extra past tuition. Thus, I'm actually not going to take organ in the spring semester because it just costs so much. \$600 is groceries for the semester. I bet there are a lot of college students who would like to study organ as an elective, but find the cost daunting. In any case, it's just a thought, and I'm sure AGO has its own financial troubles to think about in this economy.

I am the only AGO member in a 100-mile radius, so any online networking or educational opportunities would be very useful.

As this survey mentioned, perhaps it would be better to switch altogether to a Facebook-type mode of notification and communication. Right or wrong, Facebook is how I know what's going on in the world, and it would be really amazing if AGO chapter meetings or concerts were posted as events there. My organ teacher once invited me to an AGO meeting and concert, and it was quite nice to do something other than study for college exams, so I'd definitely be interested in those sorts of events if I knew about them. Besides, there are already several organ groups on Facebook, my favorite one being named, "Organists are Great! and Swell! and Positif!" There's the sense of humor.

I'll try to get the check in! Best question: How should we collect dues? Nationally would be way better, in my opinion: streamlined, consistent, free of local quirkiness.

More affordable dues, rates, and fees for those just establishing themselves professionally would be encouraging.

Many rural churches do not have the funds to hire organists or choir directors and consequently use volunteers. It would be nice if the AGO had a membership category with reduced dues for these people.

I haven't renewed since I misplaced the notice and haven't gotten another one.

We have such sporadic communication in our area that I didn't even realize I'm a "lapsed member." Given some contact in the area, I would probably continue to be a member.

I wasn't aware that my membership was about to lapse. How was I supposed to have been notified? Perhaps I just missed the reminder.

An important aspect of keeping the HQ in NYC is the professional and interdenominational *image* it gives to the AGO. Relocation to another part of the country will, over time, give it a regional denominational bias, if only in appearances. Say, Wisconsin = Lutheran, Georgia = Baptist, California = New Age. I think it best by far to stay put in NYC.

You do need to find a place for your headquarters that supports this notion [*that the Guild is made up of part-time organists*] and lowers the overhead of the organization. A central U.S.-located headquarters makes sense for members who have to travel from across the country to access the headquarters office facilities. A location in the Midwest would help the national organization build an image of credibility with the majority of organists who are not “professionals.”

My main reason for joining the AGO was to receive “The American Organist.” I feel the publication has gone way down hill, however. I wish it could return to something more like its 1970s and ‘80s style. I wish there were more scholarly articles, and I think having a print magazine is very important. Also I love the publications that the Guild makes available.

Also articles in TAO seemed more erudite and not pertinent to my work situation.

I think that the organization in general needs a bit more professionalism. When I read articles in the TAO, I don't feel like I am learning anything. I feel like it is someone's biased opinion on a particular matter. For example, in the most recent TAO, there was an article addressing why the organ isn't more popular as an instrument. Rather than being scholarly in any way, it was the author's opinion about trivial things to do not to make the organ aversive. For such a great topic, the article was not good. There needs to be more scholarship and for lack of a better word, intellectualism, though I don't like the feeling that that word elicits, among us. We need to be a professional institution and hold to higher ideals, not cater to the lowest level. It is possible to be more scholarly and educational and still appeal to those who may not be able to play as well. I think generally the AGO lacks the drive to better the art as observed through the TAO. I attended the second American Classic Organ Symposium in Salt Lake City, Utah in 2007 and was very edified by the high degree of professionalism and content of the talks and workshops. I think that that can be transferred to the TAO. If funds would allow, it would be nice to attend conventions and gather in those, but I can't afford that at this point in time. In conclusion, I think the best vehicle to improve the AGO is the TAO and I think that the magazine leaves a lot to be desired at this point in time. I would love to read well written and well researched articles rather than articles pushing an opinion or dealing with issues outside the scope of the art of the organ.

I enjoy the magazine, but sometimes it should be called the American Organ and not the American Organist!

Concerning TAO, I would love to see it as an e-zine; saves money, we can print what we want, and store it without taking up shelf space (a big plus). I think that a reorganizing of some departments in the TAO, or even simply renaming or redefining that department may make it easier—especially for new readers—to connect with what are their first interests. I regret very much not receiving TAO any more.

The American Organist magazine is very good.

If that magazine is too costly, go online. It is deadly. Time to come into the media age.

Perhaps you could change up the American Organist magazine a little more because it always seemed to me to be rather repetitive. Granted, I never really read it very much, so take this with a grain of salt, but it seemed like the same people with the same pictures were always getting advertised in the magazine. When I had a subscription as a result of being in POE, I usually looked at the pretty organ picture on the front, flipped through the magazine to see whether any of the people advertising themselves had updated their pictures, and was done with it. Terrible to admit, I know, but the magazine was just so boring compared to the POE experience. Perhaps if I were to read the magazine now, since I am a sage and wise old college senior, I would find it

more interesting; but at least as a high school student I wanted a fun magazine. During POE and afterward via the Internet, the friends I'd made and I had so much fun communicating together and sharing on topics such as: Most Embarrassing Church Job Mistakes, Coolest Organs I've Visited, Why My Teacher Is Better than Yours, etc. I really enjoyed the personal stories of the organ world, and I think the adult TAO magazine could expand in the direction personal nonfiction. It would be so cool if you guys told stories about trips you've taken to Europe to study or give concerts, or reminisced on your organ professor from the olden days who was blind but never missed a note, or what your first organ job was like—whatever, just as long as it's interesting.

I live in North Dakota and, really, we are pretty insular. The Missouri Valley Chapter, to which I belonged, stopped collecting dues and has not met for about five years. I have changed my membership to the Red River Valley Chapter, but have not attended any meetings because it is a 600-mile round trip drive to meet for lunch.

The only reason I am not a member of AGO now is that there is not an active local chapter in my area. The chapters in Wichita Falls, Tex. (my last membership before I moved to another city), and other areas were dynamic, with programs for part and full time organists, choral directors and other church musicians. Since I have lived away from AGO for 10 years, I still visit the website often and look at a friend's American Organist magazine, and I attended part of a convention that was in Dallas a few years ago. But since there is a void with no local chapter, I have filled my time with other disciplines. The thought of an online chapter is intriguing. I don't know if I would do it, but who knows? Nothing could compare to the fellowship of being with other musicians and planning joint worship and conference experiences, so I don't know about the online experience.

My experience as an officer of one local chapter is that local personalities make or break the local chapter. Where oddballs, egotists, and self-important members and officers dominate, the local chapter will not be very inviting or vibrant.

I joined the AGO Cleveland Chapter in 2004. Not sure why, since my intro to the group was less than effective. When I attended the first meeting, I told the person at the "welcome" desk that I was thinking of joining. He said nothing in response to that. No "glad to have you" or "good, we need more members," etc. He also did not bother to introduce me to any of the other members standing around in their own little groups talking. He barely even looked at me. He just filled out my name tag and handed it to me without ever looking up. As I wandered around from one event to the other throughout the morning, *nobody* ever spoke to me!

I'm admittedly not adept at making new friends, but my experience with both Chicago and St. Louis area chapters is that members are elitist and not open to anyone they feel is not up to snuff. I know we are all busy, but it took the St. Louis Chapter a long time to respond to my inquiry when I relocated here. Each chapter should have something like an assimilation committee to personally invite and encourage new/prospective members to attend chapter functions, and make sure they are made to feel welcome if and when they do attend.

The quality of local chapters is highly variable. AGO could work to raise the consistency of chapter activities, to raise the profile of organists as a profession in their communities.

Cincinnati Chapter had many problems this year. I notified the then dean in the spring that I had retired from church work, and would like to be put on the sub list so I could help out, especially in the summer. Even though the dean left me a message at home that she would take care of that, it never happened. I attended several chapter events over the years, but I felt that since I am a professional in another non-music field and not a full-time musician (or not a part-time in

church work, but full-time musician elsewhere), that I was not in the cliques that folks seemed to gravitate to, and no one made much of an effort to greet me.

Europe Chapter was dead, so became the secretary and started it up again. Judy Lindel took over again and does a fantastic job. But I notice from the chapter letter that I see sometimes that mostly professionals are proud to submit articles and concert schedules, and maybe it's just me, but I feel like a musical outsider and don't fit in. The "professionals" don't bridge the gap down to us less qualified musicians as well as they could. If they were friendlier, they would be great mentors and could show us the way to improvement.

I was informed by a former dean of the chapter, when I asked about different programming other than what has been programmed for many years, that "this is what we do and how we do it, and we're not going to be changing." I'm too old to fuss with such folk anymore. This kind of control, which I'm sure is not just in this local chapter, will eventually be the end of chapter, region, and national.

I was a member of AGO for at least 28 years, and participated in almost *all* of the meetings, activities, etc. I was on the Board for many years. Then, after a difficulty with one of the members (a *very* aggressive board member), I was basically eliminated from any activity in a leadership role. I did hope to continue participation in the Chapter, however, I was excluded. When I did not renew my membership, it did not seem to matter to them, so it lapsed, and I continued to participate as much as possible with a chapter (Evansville, Ind.) 300 miles away from my home, in which I had maintained a "joint chapter membership." I have continued to keep in touch with that chapter, and have supported them as much as possible by attendance at meetings, recitals, etc., and financially. I planned to join that chapter as my primary membership, but it has slipped my mind to do so officially. I will join that chapter now! Thank you for caring about my continued membership and my opinions!

I have been an active chapter member (off and on), serving on various committees within the chapter, for many years. Occasionally I drop out because of one main frustration with the local chapter: the continual practice of programming primarily for other organists and then wondering why the general public is not interested. I think the AGO is a wonderful organization in the way it assists organists on many levels. For my situation, those things are largely irrelevant because I have been lucky enough (for 30+ years) to work for a congregation with excellent instruments, an excellent staff of clergy and musicians, and an appreciative congregation interested more than most in the organ and in what I do. I am grateful for this, yet I realize that I'm in a very, very small minority. So I appreciate the fact that the Guild is there for those who have not been as fortunate as I in their employment. So basically the Guild and what it does is irrelevant to me, and that's not to be critical of the Guild in any way, just that over the years my membership in the organization as a whole has not made much difference to me in my professional life. I enjoy the conventions for the chance to see old colleague and to attend workshops and recitals. I tried being a member at large, but other than to get the magazine (which I see every month anyway), there seemed little benefit. My biggest problem over the years has been with the local chapter. They are an active chapter and have wonderful programming for their members, and (probably more than anything) it serves as a social outlet for many of them. My biggest gripe over the years has been their insistence (at least that's the way it is perceived by me) on programming pretty much exclusively for their membership and not for the general public. I think one of the big opportunities for the AGO on the local level is to build interest in the instrument and its literature in the community. I live in a community with tremendous resources for this, and yet it seems to me that the chapter as a whole is more interested in serving themselves than others. For instance: I go to one of their chapter-sponsored recitals and I see the same people year after year. The audience doesn't grow, and there are very few people from the community present. Something is wrong with this picture, I think. I continually wonder why the chapter is not doing

more to broaden its base and appeal amongst the general public, whether they be musically "inclined" or not. For years I sat on various committees of the chapter and tried, in vain, to get this message across, never with any success. They seem stuck in the same mode of doing the same thing, yet expecting a different outcome. I finally gave up. To be honest, I haven't been a chapter member for some time, and there has been a new generation of leadership that might be more receptive to some more innovative thought. Yet at this point in my life I'm too busy to be involved and, frankly, too disinterested to really care any more.

I am delighted to see the excellent work you have done on this survey; lots of good planning. I let my membership lapse because our local chapter (St. Lawrence) is spread out. Four months of real winter preclude any meetings or events during that time. Many events are merely a rehash of previous years, and I apologize for complaining instead of lighting a candle. Thank you very much for this survey, and the opportunity to explain a little my reason for being lapsed.

Consider having an online chapter only for organists under age 30. This could be a regional or national chapter that would cater to the needs of young organists and pull all young organists together. As the only undergraduate organ student at my university, isolation of young organists from other young organists is a problem that needs to be resolved.

It seems as if most programs are geared to full-time organists. The national conventions are expensive. I only make a little over \$8,000 year and can't afford to do any extra nor pay my dues to belong to Guild. I have to think what have they done for me? I would love to do the exams, but again how can I afford it and the materials needed?

More help for us part-time folks (playing and registering) in print, online, and in local chapters offerings!

AGO needs to find relevance to the average organist and not the few professional church musicians and recitalists. You need to court the large mass of those of us who are part-time organists that do the job week after week for years at a time.

Many of the questions lead me to believe that the AGO considers itself currently oriented mainly to full-time musicians. If this is the case, that is a grave mistake. I'm sure the majority of your members are part-time. During my career, I've always had to have a full-time day job to support my part-time music career (health and other benefits required for living are hard to come by in an organist/choir director position).

You have got to get real about fees for part-timers.

One of the classes I attended was designed to acquaint us with new music publications. One of the performers—the piano/harpsichordist—was obviously insulted by the fact that he had to perform on a digital harpsichord instead of a "real" harpsichord. He let everyone know he was insulted by the remarks he made about the instrument. I thought to myself, "Oh my, how rude and arrogant can one be?" When I perform in a church, I feel honored to be their *guest*. As such, I have a responsibility to treat them and their facilities with the utmost respect.

If the AGO is going to attract new members, they first of all need to learn how to bring new members into their group and treat them as if they are truly valuable and welcome. That will require that the members spend less time in their own little cliques and reach out to those who are new. Secondly, they need to get past their snooty attitude that the pipe organ and other "real" (acoustic?) instruments are the only true, valid, worthy instruments on which to perform. The world is a-changing, folks, and you need to adapt lest you completely disappear.

As a musician in an historically African American church, I feel offended by the AGO's position on the Hammond and other electronic organs. Like it or not, the Hammond B3 is a fixture in our churches; other contemporary churches are adopting electronic or digital organs as their main worship instrument. Therefore, as long as AGO insists that genuine pipe organs are the only "true" organs, AGO will never have the support of an increasing number of organists. You need to rethink this problem if you wish to survive and thrive into the 21st century. You also need to address the educational and other needs of those whose instrument is the B3.

It seems as though the AGO is becoming more inclined towards digital instruments. This represents a major concern and seems to be something of a sellout.

In this area, too [*St. Lawrence*], the pipe organ is rapidly becoming a dinosaur. Small, three-extended-rank pipe organs are being replaced by electronic organs with more aural options—even prerecording, if the necessity arises. I do not like this, but it is a reality up here, which brings me to my next point: classes, workshops, demonstrations of what can be done to better assist church services with electronic instruments.

In general, the genre of music does not meet the interest of most congregations. It has been focused more on the very large and sophisticated congregations. Not applicable to contemporary services and churches without a pipe organ. Very limited opportunities in this category and for the part-time church musician. I didn't attend much because I always taught in the evenings. In my 60 years of playing for churches, most congregations liked the music better when I didn't play "highbrow" music I learned in college. The general public is not nearly musically sophisticated as they were years ago. Now the music needs to "rock" and appeal to a generation that has an iPod and lots of repetition. Unfortunately.

AGO has a segment that is overlooked, ignored, and not encouraged—lesser, unknown, not contacted, social outsiders, part-time organists/pianists/musicians who work in churches of different denominations, who never come or are never invited because they don't have a pipe organ or don't feel they are talented enough to belong. The AGO is too narrow in its focus to include these people. Maybe that's good for the strengths of the AGO. But there is a wider band of church musicians who are ignored, neglected, and deemed unworthy by current membership. I know the elite, higher-ups, and socially exclusive and the programs they put on for pipe organ churches. Somehow my love for organ music and music making is wanting to go to these outcasts, and I find the society and circles of activity of AGO associates exclusive and tiring. Fresh approaches and insights on music for organ (digital or pipe) and other church musicians in a worship or concert setting leads me away from the AGO. Sorry.

I think the AGO could increase its membership by broadening the scope to include information and programs relevant to organists working in more contemporary worship environments. I *love* playing organ and have been playing organ in churches off and on for 30 years. I play arrangements on hymns and contemporary worship songs. I have accompanied choirs and played along with rhythm bands and orchestras. I use MIDI frequently (I play a 3-manual Rodgers organ with MIDI). I don't play any classical music. All of the AGO material, programs, certifications, and conventions seems to be geared towards those playing only classical music. The organ is an awesome instrument that is rapidly being kicked out of churches. AGO needs to help market the organ to churches by spotlighting those churches that are using the organ in more modern ways and help teach organists how to play in those settings. This is not my church, but check out Shadow Mountain Community Church in San Diego (www.shadowmountain.org) and see how the organ is being used with choir, orchestra, rhythm section, etc. My church is nothing like this—we just have piano and organ, but our music is very similar. My point is there are a lot of churches not doing classical music on the organ. I don't dislike classical music—

played it all through college—but classical music is not used in a lot of churches where organ is still being used.

The AGO is out of touch with the modern church. Churches are using all kinds of music today, including handbells, children's choirs, jazz, gospel, contemporary Christian music, piano, brass, and other instruments. I am not able to make a living in music because I play organ. I am able to thrive as a musician because I can program a diversity of music. Many of today's organists can only play repertoire. They can't arrange, improvise, run a sound system, work with handbells, and they lack knowledge of modern worship.

My hopeful wisdoms gained through multiple decades of learning and growing as a Christian, musician, and Presbyterian have made me sensitive to all of God's people. The design of worship has to be carefully woven so that all of God's people are included and can give God the praise that is due His/Her Name. The distasteful arrogance that can surround traditional worship vs. contemporary worship must leave our arenas of thought. We must work together to establish the kind of worship that is expressive of our faith and understandings of God. I am not dismissing the great organ works and choral works of our history; they have their place. I am simply saying that we must approach the subject of worship with humility and grace if we are to be effective as an organization.

The AGO has no bearing on Catholics. Recently our Archdiocese threw out everyone's contract, and we are now "at-will employees." This came out of left field. AGO's response? Not a word. Catholic musicians are furious, but since we're a huge minority in the AGO, I don't feel like we're heard.

The need to increase the pay and benefits of organists. A living wage and position of importance needs to be stressed with churches, worship committees, ministers, etc. We are qualified professionals and need to be acknowledged as such and paid as such.

I wish the AGO could have more power or clout when it comes to protecting the rights of church musicians vis a vis congregations, clergy, and committees. It's a pity that the AGO recommendations for organist compensation are essentially meaningless in the eyes of employers. I was annoyed by the online listings of positions available. I made inquiries about a couple of the positions listed and was astonished to see the same contact name given for different positions at different churches, making me suspicious that the Guild was screening applications. I think the Guild has no business meddling in the employment applications, and that the applications should be strictly between the organist and the employer. Also, I hate it that the online listings are accessible to members only now.

After my next-to-last experience as a church organist (the church advertised for an organist while I was there, and I had no bad reviews), and the total silence from the local chapter after I was terminated, I have a bad taste for the AGO in my mouth. If the AGO will not back up someone who was, as our local president said to me, "clearly wronged," then why be a part of the AGO? Forget the free CD and such: when your guidelines for employment or code of ethics is violated by a church, and nothing is done to defend one of your members (a lowly member notwithstanding), then who will come to my aid in time of need? It does not seem to be the AGO.

Unless the AGO becomes involved and *engaged* in retirement benefits for professional church musicians, it will fail to recognize the serious nature of our employment as essential to liturgy.

One thing that has frustrated me is the fact you have to pay dues in order to sometimes find job postings and/or view newsletters online. If I could see the job postings, I may find a job that's a

perfect match, and then I would probably join AGO again. Since I'm not working in that field right now, it doesn't seem like a good use of discretionary funds in this economy. Creating a free public listing of job openings might generate new members. The trick is to let every church know that they can post jobs for free and reach an audience they normally may not know exists.

A revision of salary guidelines must also be implemented. The majority of organists that serve in churches such as I have for the last 35 years never are able to earn what these current guidelines state. The focus should be more on the clergy-staff relationship and made more user friendly/practical.

I think the AGO should ditch the certification program. It's out of touch with the reality of the church music scene today, and what was said earlier in one of your questions is right: a college education in music should be adequate.

This [*rural churches who use volunteer musicians*] would be a group to reach out to and encourage them to study for certification. The online resources mentioned in this survey would be excellent for that purpose. As a former pianist, I find that the AGO approaches the certification process from the professional organist point of view. Would it be possible to set up a pre-category of certification that is a little easier than the SPC? This would be encouraging for the pianist who wants to become an organist. If you look at it from a pianist point of view, there is an awful lot to learn that is specifically organ: voice leading, independent voicing, two or more manuals, stops, repeated notes, coordination, and I haven't even mentioned pedals yet! Setting up a category that is a little easier than the SPC might encourage "pianists who have to play an organ." As an aside, since I have been studying organ, I find that I love it so much more than piano that I wonder why I waited so long to give it a try!

Comments of National Leaders

I love the AGO. It is very important to me as a church musician—even though I am part-time. My best friends are AGO members. Our chapter members are very supportive of one another—even during tough times. I *love* the TAO, and both regional and national conventions. You folks in AGO administration do a *great* job. Thank you for all you do.

I think the Guild does a wonderful job of providing support to all types of organists, whether part-time/full-time, church/academic, young/old, male/female, etc. I appreciate the opportunities that I have had through both local and national events.

I have had difficulty with contacts with the insurances. They seem to speak another language, and we can't talk, so I didn't buy the insurance I want and need.

To gain control of the budget, it is vital to move the headquarters out of NYC to a more fiscally approachable area, e.g. the Midwest, relatively close to an airport. The hub of an airline would be very wise to choose.

Chapter study groups for AGO certification are an important benefit of membership, and should be encouraged.

Having been dean of a large urban chapter for several years, I feel the future for effective chapter programming is to work in partnerships and cosponsorships of programs with local concert halls, churches, and music schools. This instantly engages a larger public, gains publicity for the AGO as an organization, and helps both the chapter and the institution to continue to provide high quality programming in these challenging financial times.

Coming from a state with one chapter, I love getting together with fellow organists/musicians, learning new techniques, bringing new ideas back to my congregation/area. Conventions are great for this gathering of music lovers, whether it is the national or regional convention or related gatherings. When chapter members live a great distance apart, there is not as much interest in meeting as a group. E-mailings seem to keep the chapter together.

The virtual chapter concept is a vital one, especially for those of us who live in remote areas. Membership in these areas is in the decline, and distances between members and potential new members are too great to allow monthly meetings. This is going to be critical for our future growth as a viable organization.

If the guild is to survive, it *must* reach out to those who hold part-time employment to help develop their skills. Much more emphasis needs to be placed on the realistic demands of church musicians and less on the concert stage.

The AGO needs to pay more attention to part-time church musicians, including those who have much advanced training.

We need to find ways to make the general public more aware of the AGO and the significance we can have in sacred as well as secular venues.