



The Social Creed The November 2005 Survey

The Presbyterian Panel consists of three nationally representative samples of groups affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): members, elders (lay leaders), and ordained ministers. For most analyses, ministers are split into two groups based on current call: *pastors*, serving congregations, and *specialized clergy*, serving elsewhere. New samples are drawn every three years. These pages summarize major findings from the fourteen and final survey completed by the 2003-2005 Panel, initially sampled in the fall of 2002.

IN THIS SUMMARY

- ✓ *Influences on Financial, Economic Life*.....p. 1
- ✓ *Ethical and Church Matters*p. 2
- ✓ *Labor Unions, International Corporations*p. 3
- ✓ *Government and Taxes*.....p. 4
- ✓ *Investing In and Influencing Corporations* ...p. 5
- ✓ *Globalization and Economic Concerns*p. 6

INFLUENCES ON FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE

Biblical Influence

- ✓ Half of pastors (49%) but many fewer specialized clergy and laity report that “Biblical teachings about the tithe” have been “very influential” in their own “financial and economic life.” Combined “very influential”/“influential” responses are: members, 47%; elders, 61%; pastors, 81%; and specialized clergy, 68%.
- ✓ Even more report “Jesus’s teachings” to be “very influential” or “influential” for their financial and economic life: members, 70%; elders, 79%; pastors, 96% (68% “very”); specialized clergy, 93% (62%).

Church Influence

- ✓ The church has been “very influential” or “influential” for the “financial and economic life” of a majority of panelists: members, 56%; elders, 63%; pastors, 77%; specialized clergy, 73%.

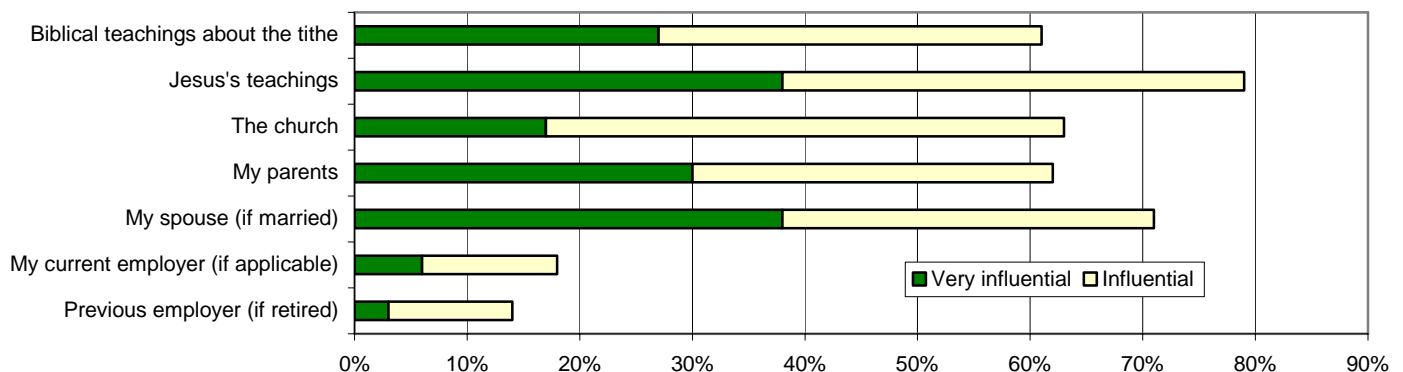
Family Influence

- ✓ Similar majorities in every Panel group report “my parents” as “very influential” or “influential” in their financial and economic life: members, 61%; elders, 62%; pastors, 65%; specialized clergy, 61%.
- ✓ Among married panelists, most report “my spouse” as “very influential” or “influential” for their financial and economic life: members, 64%; elders, 71%; pastors, 72%; specialized clergy, 75%.

Workplace Influence

- ✓ Relatively few employed laity (members, 15%; elders, 18%) or ministers (pastors, 34%; specialized clergy, 27%) report their current employers as “very influential” or “influential” in their financial and economic. Responses are similar for retired persons about their previous employer: members, 15%; elders, 14%; pastors, 17%; specialized clergy, 17%.

Figure 1. Influences on Financial and Economic Life: Elders’ Responses



Business and Government Ethics

- ✓ Half or more indicate that they believe it is “definitely” or “probably” an ethical question when government or business makes decisions regarding these eight (of nine) issues:
 - workers’ safety and health (members, 93%; elders, 95%; pastors, 97%; specialized clergy, 99%)
 - protecting the environment (88%; 93%; 95%; 99%)
 - doing business with regimes that violate human rights (87%; 91%; 94%; 97%)
 - doing business with countries that suppress religious and civil liberties (84%; 89%; 94%; 97%)
 - substandard salaries paid to unskilled or semi-skilled workers (75%; 80%; 91%; 93%)
 - providing benefits (in addition to jobs) to communities where companies are located (66%; 69%; 82%; 88%)
 - plant relocations to other parts of the world (52%; 50%; 72%; 71%)
 - improving products (51%; 50%; 59%; 65%)
- ✓ For the remaining item, “plant relocations to other parts of the country,” the combined “definitely” and “probably” an ethical question totals a majority for ministers (pastors, 63%; specialized clergy, 71%) but among laity, the combined “definitely” and “probably” *not* an ethical question totals a majority (members, 56%; elders, 63%).

General Assembly Positions

- ✓ Most ministers but fewer laity are aware of two relatively recent General Assembly actions regarding international corporations, and in no group is a majority aware of a third action:
 - boycott of Taco Bell to protest low wages of subcontracted farm workers (familiar: members, 28%; elders, 36%; pastors, 93%; specialized clergy, 78%)
 - consideration of divestment from corporations whose sales or operations support the Israeli occupation of Palestine (44%; 61%; 98%; 93%)
 - divestment from Talisman Oil Company to protest its support of the Sudanese government’s war against people in the southern part of that country (11%; 16%; 38%; 32%)
- ✓ Majorities of ministers agree (“strongly agree” or “agree”) with each of these positions (e.g., for pastors: Taco Bell—63%; Palestine—51%; Talisman—72%). Majorities of laity agree with the Talisman position (elders, 66%), but not the Taco Bell (43%) or Palestine (38%) ones.

Issues’ Fit with Presbyterian Teaching and Practices

- ✓ Of 18 position statements, 65% or more in all Panel groups indicate that these eight “reflect our Presbyterian teaching and practices” either “very closely” or “closely”:
 - as Creator, God is ultimate owner of all creation, so that humans are stewards of the environment and its resources (members, 84%; elders, 88%; pastors, 97%; specialized clergy, 94%)
 - each individual has a vocation or calling to use his/her abilities for the common good (84%; 86%; 87%; 94%)
 - some occupations (crime, torture, terrorism) cannot be justifiable vocations (77%; 77%; 84%; 82%)
 - since “Judgment begins in the house of God,” the church must set an example for fair treatment of employees and ethical investments of its monies (75%; 77%; 81%; 85%)
 - children are a blessing from God and require particular protection, including limits on their participation in the workforce (72%; 80%; 88%; 92%)
 - sharing God’s image is the basis for human equality, so that people have equal rights and equal opportunities under the law (70%; 74%; 85%; 83%)
 - the Sabbath is a day of rest and all people need some time (at least one day per week) for leisure, relaxation, prayer and worship (69%; 72%; 78%; 80%)
 - public education should be provided to all citizens (65%; 70%; 85%; 87%)
- ✓ At the other extreme, only a minority believe these three statements “reflect Presbyterian teaching and practices” either “very closely” or “closely”:
 - fairly regulated markets are the most efficient distribution mechanisms of goods and services, and efficiency is a virtue (31%; 30%; 35%; 33%)
 - work is necessary for all people and laziness is a form of theft (35%; 38%; 47%; 39%)
 - competition can lead to great inequality and thus must be balanced by democratically determined forms of redistribution (whether or not these lead to greater economic demand and greater growth) (13%; 16%; 35%; 47%)
- ✓ Statements that a majority of ministers (but not laity) believe “reflect Presbyterian teaching and practices” either “very closely” or “closely” include:
 - government must provide for the common welfare as much as to the common defense (38%; 40%; 68%; 73%)
 - profit from the production of war materials must be strictly regulated (31%; 34%; 57%; 62%)

LABOR UNIONS AND INTERNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

Evaluating International Corporations

- ✓ In every Panel group, more indicate that each of these statements “generally applies” than “generally does *not* apply” to international corporations:
 - exercise tremendous power (generally applies: members, 75%; elders, 81%; pastors, 91%; specialized clergy, 90%)
 - manipulate government(s) (62%; 54%; 68%; 77%)
 - are secretive about many of their activities (57%; 59%; 65%; 66%)
 - are misunderstood by the public (44%; 51%; 54%; 56%)
- ✓ For other statements, more in all groups respond “generally does *not* apply” than “generally applies”:
 - will behave responsibly whether or not bound by laws (generally does *not* apply: 65%; 60%; 77%; 82%)
 - foster equality among Americans (58%; 65%; 74%; 80%)
 - are overly regulated by government (53%; 60%; 72%; 82%)
 - are generous with their profits (65%; 66%; 69%; 80%)
 - help less developed countries (44%; 45%; 55%; 70%)
- ✓ For the three remaining statements, more laity respond “generally applies” than “generally does *not* apply,” while the reverse is true for ministers:
 - create a better future for the world (generally applies: members, 41%, and elders, 45%; generally does *not* apply: pastors, 47% and specialized clergy, 59%)
 - serve American society well (42% and 44%; 44% and 55%)
 - serve their employees well (39% and 46%; 45% and 48%)

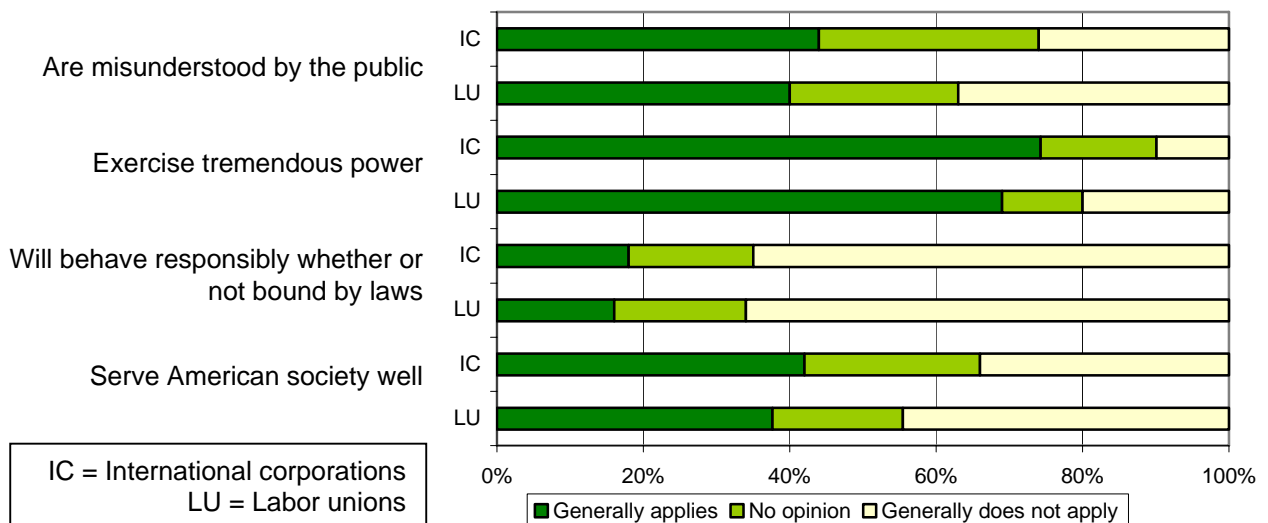
Evaluating Labor Unions

- ✓ More panelists indicate that these statements “generally apply” than “generally do *not* apply” to labor unions:
 - serve their members well (generally applies: members, 53%; elders, 55%; pastors, 60%; specialized clergy, 66%)
 - exercise tremendous power (69%; 77%; 58%; 57%)
 - manipulate government(s) (55%; 58%; 45%; 45%)
 - enhance the dignity and self-determination of workers (46%; 49%; 68%; 70%)
 - are misunderstood by the public (40%; 42%; 56%; 60%)
- ✓ For other statements, more laity indicate that each “generally does *not* apply” than “generally applies” to labor unions, while the reverse is true for ministers:
 - are at a disadvantage in relation to corporate power and secrecy (generally does *not* apply: members, 43%, and elders, 46%; generally applies: pastors, 47% and specialized clergy, 65%)
 - serve American society well (45% and 51%; 54% and 62%)
- ✓ A majority in all groups responds “generally does *not* apply” to “will behave responsibly whether or not bound by laws” (66%; 71%; 72%; 71%).

Panelists’ Corporate and Union Connections

- ✓ Most members (63%) and elders (62%) “receive income from one or more corporations through salary, pension, or investment income,” while a majority of pastors (65%) and specialized clergy (57%) do *not*.
- ✓ Very few panelists report that they personally “benefit from labor union membership in salary, pension, or investment income” (11%; 10%; 8%; 7%).

Figure 2. Members’ Opinions on International Corporations and Labor Unions



Appropriate Roles for the U.S. Government

- ✓ More than two in three in every Panel group find 10 of 11 socioeconomic roles as either “very appropriate” or “appropriate” for the U.S. government to play in American life. Responses include:
 - guaranteeing the banking system and a stable currency (members, 99%; elders, 99%; pastors, 99%; specialized clergy, 99%)
 - protecting investors’ rights to accurate accounting information, efficient securities markets, and orderly corporate governance (97%; 97%; 98%; 99%)
 - protecting citizens from risks and hazards (95%; 95%; 96%; 99%)
 - guaranteeing old age and disability insurance (82%; 81%; 91%; 95%)
 - protecting workers’ rights (91%; 91%; 95%; 97%)
 - stimulating the economy to provide as near “full employment” as possible and minimize depressions (93%; 91%; 93%; 92%)
 - guaranteeing medical care (78%; 76%; 86%; 91%)
 - requiring adequate minimum wages (79%; 78%; 87%; 92%)
 - providing goods and services where market forces do not function or where natural monopolies seem most efficient (e.g., utilities) (74%; 69%; 82%; 86%)
 - providing anti-poverty programs to assist those left out by private marketplace (77%; 81%; 89%; 92%)

- ✓ Most believe it is “not very” or “not at all appropriate” for the government to provide “subsidies to large agricultural corporations and other once-established industrial sectors in need of ‘protection’” (members, 68%; elders, 73%; pastors, 73%; specialized clergy, 75%).

Changing the Tax Code

- ✓ Most “strongly agree” or “agree” that “the tax code needs to be radically simplified, dropping all loopholes that subsidize special interests” (members, 87%; elders, 88%; pastors, 78%; specialized clergy, 81%).

- ✓ Of five possible changes in the tax code, half or more in all Panel groups “strongly agree” or “agree” on two:
 - off-shore tax havens and tax shelters should be eliminated (members, 73%; elders, 79%; pastors, 82%; specialized clergy, 80%)
 - luxury taxes should be increased and mortgage interest deductions eliminated on second (and third or more) homes (50%; 56%; 70%; 74%)

- ✓ The number who “strongly agree” or “agree” is less, especially among laity, for four other changes:
 - the deficit burden on future generations requires phasing out tax reductions in upper income brackets (members, 44%; elders, 44%; pastors, 61%; specialized clergy, 74%)
 - the estate tax currently affects inheritances over \$1,500,000 and should be continued to moderate social inequality across generations (49%; 48%; 66%; 76%)
 - investment (or “unearned”) income should be taxed at a higher rate than wage and salary income, much of which goes to workers without substantial investments (17%; 21%; 38%; 41%)
 - taxation is generally an unproductive burden on private enterprise, so corporate taxes should be eliminated (11%; 10%; 6%; 5%)

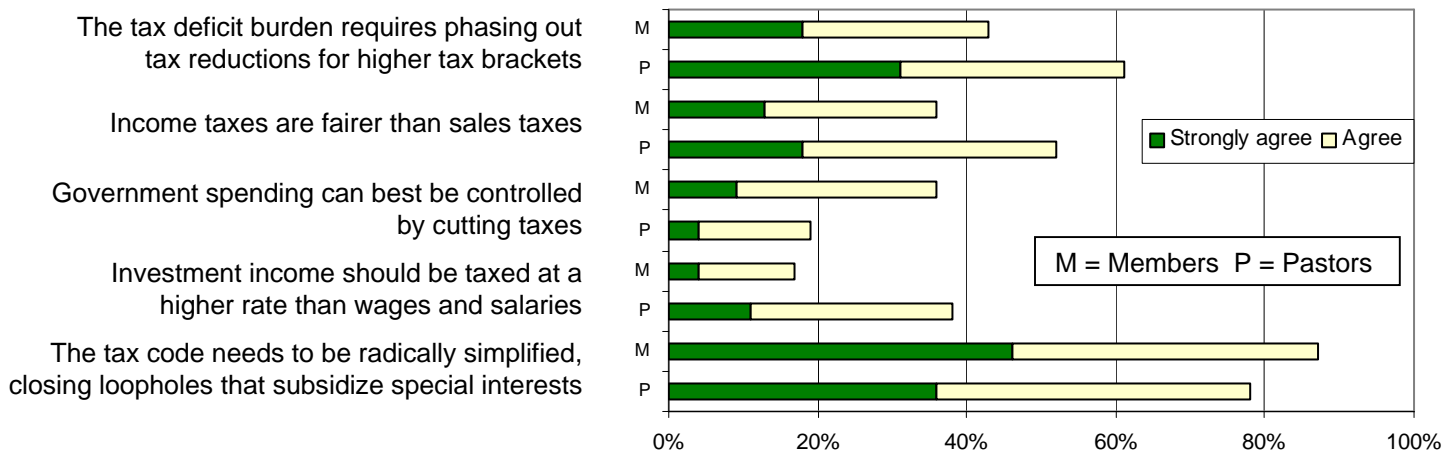
Other Taxation Issues

- ✓ Majorities of ministers but somewhat fewer laity believe “income taxes are fairer than sales taxes” (members, 36% “strongly agree” or “agree”; elders, 42%; pastors, 52%; specialized clergy, 63%).

- ✓ A third of members (36%) and elders (34%) but fewer than one in five pastors (19%) or specialized clergy (14%) “strongly agree” or “agree” that “government spending can best be controlled by cutting taxes.”

- ✓ Majorities find property taxes “appropriate ways for cities to fund services” (68%; 71%; 82%; 79%).

Figure 3. Opinions on Selected Tax-Related Issues



Deciding Where to Invest

Imagine yourself as having a sizable amount of money to invest in stocks. Your financial adviser has suggested that purchasing stock in any of the following corporations would be a sound and profitable investment with the probability of high returns on your money. From your reading you are informed about each firm's business operations and know the following [eight statements] to be true. Please indicate how this information would affect your decision to invest in each corporation by checking one response for each.

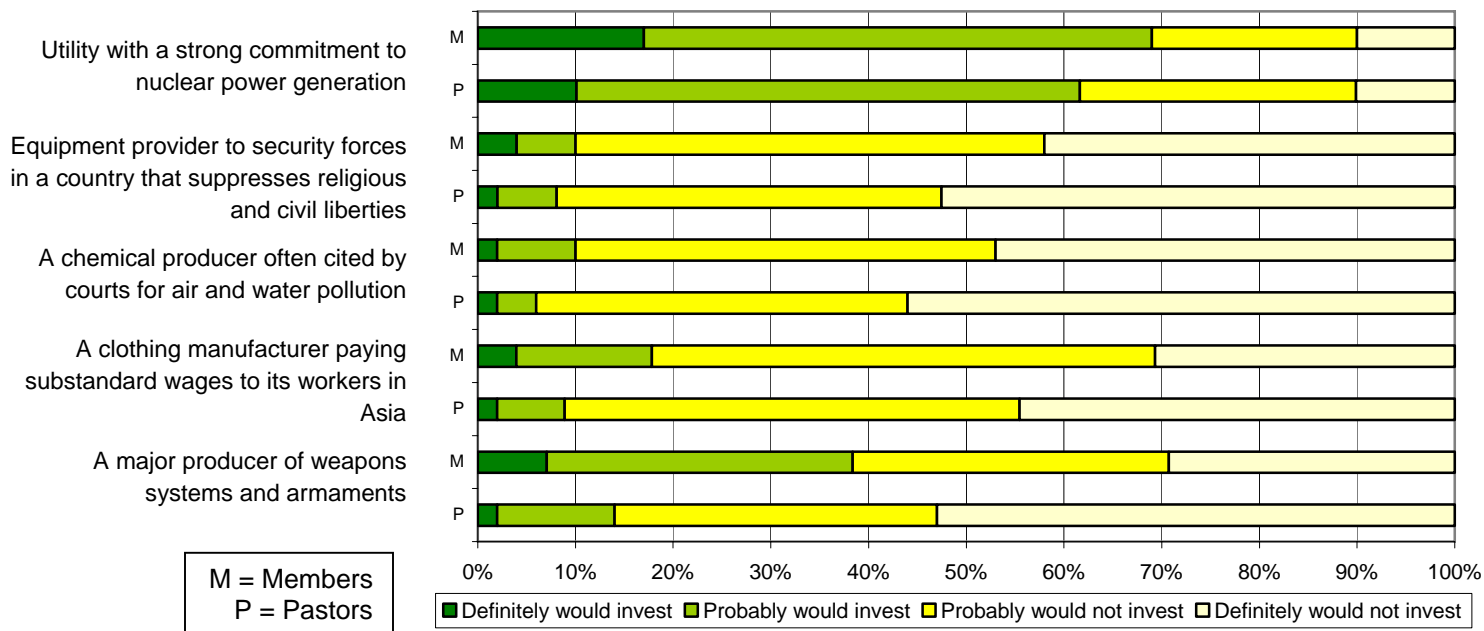
- ✓ When presented with the above hypothetical situation, in only one company would a majority of panelists “definitely” or “probably” invest: “a utility with a strong commitment to nuclear power generation” (members, 69%; elders, 72%; pastors, 61%; specialized clergy, 55%).
- ✓ A majority in all groups would “definitely” or “probably” *not* invest in a corporation that:
 - provides equipment to the security forces in a country that suppresses religious and civil liberties (90%; 90%; 91%; 96%)
 - is a chemical producer often cited by courts for air and water pollution (90%; 93%; 94%; 98%)
 - is a clothing manufacturer paying substandard salaries to its workers in Asia (83%; 84%; 92%; 91%)
 - is a major producer of weapons systems and armaments (61%; 66%; 86%; 87%)
 - is a major producer of alcoholic beverages (55%; 61%; 74%; 75%)

- ✓ A majority of laity “definitely” or “probably” would, but most ministers would *not*, invest in a company that “controls most of the mining of an important mineral, and is reaping very high profits” (would invest: members, 68%, and elders, 64%; would *not* invest: pastors, 51%, and specialized clergy, 55%,).
- ✓ Half of members (50%) and elders (52%) “definitely” or “probably” would invest in a company that “has fought successfully against unionization of its workers,” while even more ministers would *not* (pastors, 68%; specialized clergy, 73%).

Influencing Corporate Policy

- ✓ Of seven methods “for encouraging changes in the policies of international corporations,” majorities in all groups believe six are “very effective” or “somewhat effective”:
 - court actions (members, 85%; elders, 87%; pastors, 89%; specialized clergy, 93%)
 - consumer boycotts (70%; 73%; 78%; 83%)
 - stockholders’ resolutions (67%; 71%; 79%; 76%)
 - promoting government intervention (through letter writing, etc.) (57%; 60%; 63%; 72%)
 - efforts of Christian executives within such corporations, influenced by sermons (54%; 58%; 69%; 65%)
 - demonstrations and other highly visible public actions (53%; 59%; 64%; 70%)
- ✓ One action that fewer believe is “very” or “somewhat effective” is “personal appeals to top corporate executives or directors” (43%; 47%; 44%; 45%).

Figure 4. How Certain Company Characteristics Would Affect Investment Decisions



World Trade

- ✓ Two-thirds of laity and smaller majorities of ministers “strongly agree” or “agree” that “free trade should be allowed as widely as possible” (members, 66%; elders, 67%; pastors, 59%; specialized clergy, 53%).
- ✓ Majorities agree that each nation should develop its own resources “and resist over-dependence on exports or imports of any commodity” (81%; 80%; 71%; 75%).

Immigration

- ✓ Few “strongly agree” or “agree” that “immigration should be encouraged to provide needed workers in developed countries” (members, 19%; elders, 25%; pastors, 26%; specialized clergy, 33%). But majorities “strongly agree”/“agree” that “immigration from poorer countries should be lessened by debt relief, favorable trade terms, and encouragement of local traditions and appropriate technology” (52%; 56%; 68%; 80%).

International Standards

- ✓ Large majorities “strongly agree” or “agree” that both “international environmental, labor, health, and safety standards” (members, 79%; elders, 81%; pastors, 89%; specialized clergy, 95%) and “international copyright, patent, and intellectual property rights” should be “strengthened and enforced” (78%; 80%; 75%; 78%).
- ✓ Most members (63%) and elders (56%) but less than half of pastors (45%) and specialized clergy (42%) “strongly agree” or “agree” that “standards for members in the United Nations should be strengthened so that undemocratic states have less influence.”

Social Issues

- ✓ Almost all “strongly agree” or “agree” that “trafficking in poor women and children for sexual and other servitude must be abolished” (members, 98%; elders, 98%; pastors, 97%; specialized clergy, 99%). Similar but smaller majorities agree that “the United Nations should be strengthened to help alleviate poverty as well as prevent war” (63%; 63%; 70%; 78%).

Concern for Economic Issues

- ✓ As panelists “view the economy in light of your faith,” a majority are “very concerned” or “generally concerned” about these issues:
 - energy independence, conservation, and use of renewable resources (members, 89%; elders, 92%; pastors, 90%; specialized clergy, 94%)
 - educational competitiveness of Americans internationally (78%; 79%; 70%; 76%)
 - health insurance for all (76%; 82%; 84%; 91%)
 - Social Security for baby boomers and those younger (76%; 80%; 79%; 82%)
 - costs of college education (76%; 76%; 75%; 77%)
 - impact of housing costs and wages on family life, (73%; 77%; 86%; 89%)
 - veterans’ benefits (70%; 69%; 65%; 72%)
 - racial equality and protection from discrimination (70%; 78%; 84%; 89%)
 - increased distance between the most wealthy and most poor (63%; 69%; 79%; 90%)
 - global warming, climate change, and environmental sustainability (59%; 66%; 76%; 82%)
 - public transportation (56%; 55%; 66%; 76%)
 - non-military assistance to foreign countries (49%; 51%; 64%; 72%)

	Members	Elders	Ordained Ministers
Number of surveys mailed.....	670	1,006	1,164
Number returned.....	262	473	618‡
Response rate.....	39%	47%	53%

‡Of the 618 returned surveys, 391 came from pastors and 227 from specialized clergy.

This survey was initially mailed in November 2005, and returns were accepted through January 2006. Results are subject to sampling and other errors. Small differences should be interpreted cautiously. As a general rule, differences of less than 8% between samples are not statistically meaningful.

For more numbers and interpretation of the November 2005 Presbyterian Panel results, a longer report with additional charts is available for free on the Web (www.pcusa.org/research/panel/index) or for \$10 from PDS (1-800-524-2612; order PDS# 65100-05289). It includes tables showing percentage responses to each survey question separately for members, elders, pastors, and specialized clergy.

For more information on the Social Creed, contact Chris Iosso (888-728-7228 ext. 5814; ciosso@ctr.pcusa.org).

LISTENING TO PRESBYTERIANS SINCE 1973

The Presbyterian Panel, A Ministry of the General Assembly Council
 Research Services, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville KY 40202-1396
panel@ctr.pcusa.org
<http://www.pcusa.org/research>