



The Presbyterian Panel

Listening to Presbyterians



SUMMARY

CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP FINDINGS FROM THE NOVEMBER 2010 SURVEY

The Presbyterian Panel consists of three nationally representative samples of groups affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): members, elders serving on session (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 ninth survey completed by the 2009-2011 Panel, sampled in the fall of 2008.

IN THIS SUMMARY

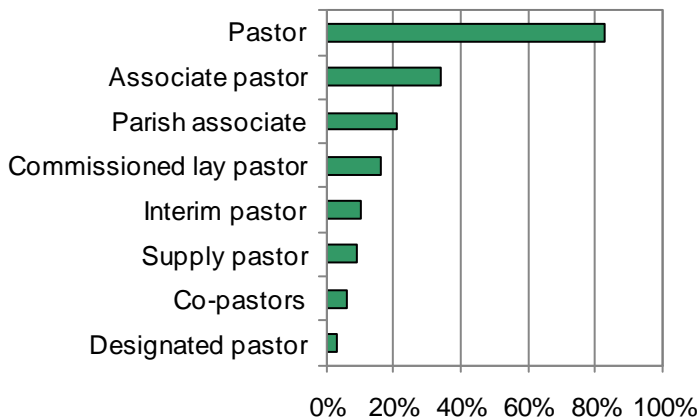
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LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

Congregational Leadership Arrangements

- ✓ About five in six elders (83%) report that a pastor serves their congregation.
- ✓ Fewer elders report that other kinds of pastoral leaders serve their congregation:
 - Associate pastor (34%).
 - Parish associate (21%).
 - Commissioned lay pastor (16%).
 - Interim pastor (10%).
 - Supply pastor (9%).
 - Co-pastors (6%).
 - Designated pastor (3%).

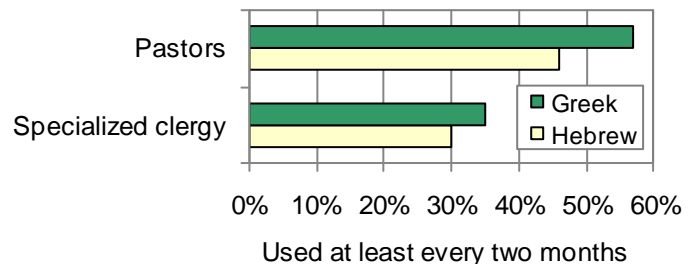
Figure 1. Elders Who Report Each Type of Pastoral Leader in Their Congregation



Language Use

- ✓ During the past 12 months, about half of pastors used Greek (57%) and Hebrew (46%) in their ministry at least once every two months.
- ✓ About one-third of specialized clergy used Greek (35%) and Hebrew (30%) at least once every two months during the same period.

Figure 2. Ministers' Use of Biblical Languages During the Past 12 Months



- ✓ About one in ten ministers (pastors, 10%; specialized clergy, 12%) used Spanish at least once every two months during the past 12 months. Only 2% of each used Korean that often.
- ✓ During the same time period, very few members and elders used Hebrew (members, 6%; elders, 4%), Greek (5%; 4%), Spanish (3%; 5%), or Korean (1%; 1%) at least once every two months.

Language Skills

- ✓ Small majorities of ministers who have an opinion—but only about one-third of members and elders—*strongly agree* or *agree* that it is important for pastors of PC(USA) congregations to be able to read the following two languages:
 - Hebrew (members, 31%; elders, 38%; pastors, 53%; specialized clergy, 58%).
 - Greek (31%; 32%; 56%; 62%).
- ✓ One-quarter of members (26%), elders (25%), and pastors (25%) and about one-third of specialized clergy (36%) who have an opinion *strongly agree* or *agree* that it is important for pastors of PC(USA) congregations to be fluent in a modern language other than English.

Options for Pastoral Leadership

- ✓ Almost all panelists in each group who have an opinion *strongly agree* or *agree* that, in the future, fewer PC(USA) congregations will be able to afford a full-time, installed pastor (members, 93%; elders, 93%; pastors, 98%; specialized clergy, 95%).
- ✓ Among those who have an opinion, large majorities of members (83%) and elders (73%)—but only minorities of ministers (pastors, 43%; specialized clergy, 36%)—*strongly agree* or *agree* that it is important for every PC(USA) congregation to have a full-time, installed pastor.
- ✓ Large majorities in each group who have an opinion *strongly agree* or *agree* that it is good that PC(USA) congregations have the option of calling as a pastoral leader:
 - A temporary pastor, instead of an installed pastor (members, 95%; elders, 94%; pastors, 90%; specialized clergy, 94%).
 - A person who is also employed in work outside of pastoring a congregation (a tentmaker or a bi-vocational pastor) (77%; 83%; 94%; 95%).
 - A commissioned lay pastor, instead of a minister of the Word and Sacrament (73%; 83%; 84%; 73%).

Mandatory Retirement Age?

- ✓ Only one in five members (21%) and elders (21%) and one-third of ministers (pastors, 35%; specialized clergy, 34%) who have an opinion *strongly agree* or *agree* that pastors of PC(USA) congregations should be required to retire by the time they reach age 70.

Pastoral Transitions

- ✓ Four in five panelists in each group (members, 78%; elders, 80%; pastors, 80%; specialized clergy, 82%) who have an opinion *strongly agree* or *agree* that the time it takes congregations to call a new installed pastor is too long.
- ✓ Majorities of panelists in each group who have an opinion *strongly agree* or *agree* that having presbytery leaders present a pastor-seeking congregation with two or three choices (which is now part of the designated pastor call process) would:
 - Be a good option for many congregations (members, 89%; elders, 82%; pastors, 64%; specialized clergy, 75%).
 - Speed up pastoral transitions (84%; 83%; 74%; 84%).

Possible Reasons Why Churches Lack Pastors

- ✓ Panelists were asked to evaluate five possible reasons why, instead of having a minister of the Word and Sacrament serve as an installed pastor, some congregations have a commissioned lay pastor, supply pastor, informal pastoral leader, or no pastoral leader at all. Large majorities in each group who have an opinion believe that congregations' inability to pay salary and benefits for an installed pastor accounts *a great deal* or *quite a bit* for this phenomenon (members, 69%; elders, 69%; pastors, 86%; specialized clergy, 82%).
- ✓ Of those with an opinion, minorities of panelists in each group believe the following other factors account *a great deal* or *quite a bit* for why some congregations are served by a commissioned lay pastor, supply pastor, informal pastoral leader, or no pastoral leader:
 - There are not enough new seminary graduates to meet the needs of congregations (members, 36%; elders, 35%; pastors, 8%; specialized clergy, 25%).
 - Most ministers of the Word and Sacrament are married and are unwilling to accept a call in an area where job opportunities for their spouse are limited (29%; 29%; 45%; 40%).
 - These congregations are able to find people who are not PC(USA) ministers of the Word and Sacrament to provide effective leadership (for example, commissioned lay pastors or ministers associated with other denominations) (24%; 28%; 23%; 25%).
 - These congregations prefer someone without a seminary degree (11%; 8%; 4%; 3%).

ACTIVITIES AND SKILLS OF PASTORS

Importance of Possible Activities of Pastors

- ✓ Majorities of panelists in each group believe it is *essential* for pastors of PC(USA) congregations to be willing and able to engage in 13 of 21 listed activities:
 - Praying with and for the congregation (members, 97%; elders, 97%; pastors, 98%; specialized clergy, 95%).
 - Administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (96%; 96%; 98%; 97%).
 - Administering the sacrament of Baptism (95%; 94%; 98%; 96%).
 - Preaching and teaching the Bible (93%; 94%; 98%; 93%).
 - Encouraging people in service to and worship of God (92%; 92%; 95%; 96%).
 - Leading worship (92%; 92%; 92%; 89%).
 - Providing pastoral care, devoting special attention to the poor, the sick, the troubled, and the dying (90%; 92%; 92%; 88%).
 - Studying the Bible (87%; 90%; 98%; 94%).
 - Living in a way that communicates the gospel's joy and justice (87%; 85%; 88%; 90%).
 - Living in a way that commends the gospel to all persons (86%; 86%; 93%; 90%).
 - Equipping and enabling people for tasks within the church (70%; 70%; 86%; 80%).
 - Helping the church serve the wider community (67%; 64%; 70%; 72%).
 - Helping make church decision-making more participatory and inclusive (60%; 58%; 60%; 66%).
- ✓ About half of members and majorities of elders and ministers believe it is *essential* for pastors to be willing and able to:
 - Equip and enable people for mission in the world (members, 50%; elders, 55%; pastors, 82%; specialized clergy, 80%).
 - Equip others to share the gospel with unchurched people (50%; 55%; 71%; 68%).
 - Share the gospel with unchurched people (47%; 54%; 66%; 60%).
- ✓ Three in five members (58%), half of elders (49%) and specialized clergy (49%), and four in nine pastors (43%) believe it is *essential* for pastors to be willing and able to participate in ministries of the presbytery.
- ✓ Minorities of panelists in each group believe it is *essential* for pastors to be willing and able to facilitate relationships with people of:
 - Other Christian denominations (members, 44%; elders, 41%; pastors, 33%; specialized clergy, 42%).
 - Non-Christian faiths (36%; 29%; 27%; 37%).

- ✓ Minorities of panelists in each group believe it is *essential* for pastors to be willing and able to participate in the ministries of:
 - The synod (members, 35%; elders, 22%; pastors, 7%; specialized clergy, 15%).
 - The General Assembly (32%; 21%; 10%; 16%).

Importance of Possible Skills and Characteristics

- ✓ From a list of 21 possible skills and characteristics, at least four in five panelists in each group identify the following four as *essential* for pastors of PC(USA) congregations to demonstrate or be:
 - Emotionally healthy (members, 90%; elders, 84%; pastors, 85%; specialized clergy, 90%).
 - Active listening (90%; 84%; 80%; 87%).
 - Competent (88%; 84%; 80%; 90%).
 - A personal spiritual life that is genuine and heartfelt (85%; 85%; 87%; 83%).
- ✓ Five in six members (87%) and elders (82%) and three-quarters of ministers (pastors, 75%; specialized clergy, 74%) believe it is *essential* for pastors to be strong spiritual leaders.
- ✓ Smaller majorities of panelists in each group believe it is *essential* for pastors to demonstrate these skills and characteristics:
 - Good preacher and worship leader (members, 79%; elders, 75%; pastors, 57%; specialized clergy, 62%).
 - Available, approachable, and warm person with good "people skills" (76%; 72%; 54%; 61%).
 - Confident (75%; 68%; 53%; 59%).
 - Able to lead change (71%; 72%; 67%; 72%).
 - Team leader (70%; 63%; 56%; 55%).
 - Able to adapt his or her leadership style for different situations (66%; 67%; 63%; 69%).
 - Not anxious; levelheaded (55%; 57%; 52%; 52%).
- ✓ About four in five ministers—but only half of members and elders—believe it is *essential* for pastors to demonstrate these two skills:
 - Able to maintain boundaries between himself or herself and other people in the congregation (members, 50%; elders, 49%; pastors, 82%; specialized clergy, 83%).
 - Able to equip others to carry out their own ministries (49%; 56%; 76%; 79%).
- ✓ Minorities in each group believe it is *essential* for pastors to have these other characteristics or skills:
 - Strategic planner (members, 33%; elders, 30%; pastors, 18%; specialized clergy, 24%).
 - Married (2%; 4%; 2%; 1%).

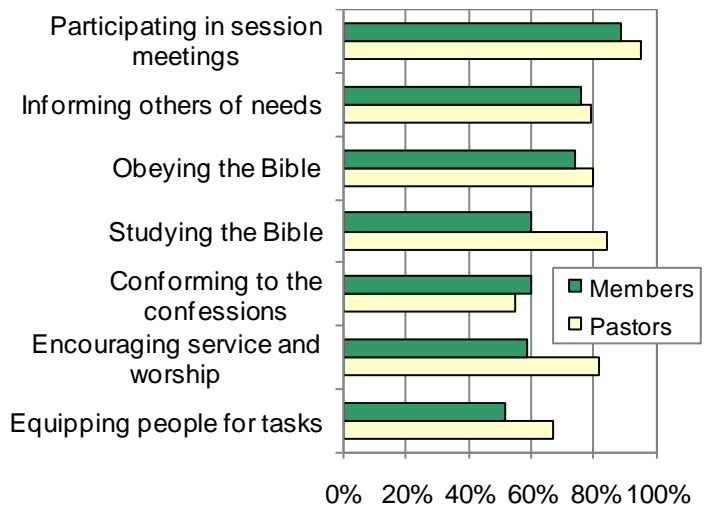
ACTIVITIES OF ELDERS

Importance of Possible Activities of Elders

- ✓ Of 13 possible activities in which elders serving on session might engage, more panelists in each group identify participating in session meetings as *essential* than any other activity. About nine in ten in each group (members, 89%; elders, 91%; pastors, 95%; specialized clergy, 90%) believe participating is *essential*.
- ✓ Smaller majorities of panelists in each group believe it is *essential* for elders serving on session to be willing and able to engage in the following activities:
 - Informing the pastor and session colleagues of persons and ministries that need special attention (members, 76%; elders, 75%; pastors, 79%; specialized clergy, 77%).
 - Living in obedience to the Bible (74%; 78%; 80%; 72%).
 - Studying the Bible (60%; 68%; 84%; 77%).
 - Living in conformity to the confessional standards of the church (60%; 65%; 55%; 51%).
 - Encouraging people in service to and worship of God (59%; 70%; 82%; 83%).
 - Equipping and renewing people for tasks within the church (52%; 60%; 67%; 69%).
- ✓ About three in five ministers (pastors, 63%; specialized clergy, 59%)—but fewer members (29%) and elders (39%)—believe it is *essential* for elders on session to be willing and able to equip and renew people for mission in the world.
- ✓ Half of members (50%), elders (48%), and pastors (50%) and three in five specialized clergy (58%) believe it is *essential* for elders to be willing and able to visit, comfort, and care for people, especially the poor, the sick, the lonely, and the oppressed.

- ✓ Half of members (49%), elders (51%), and specialized clergy (50%) and four in nine pastors (44%) believe it is *essential* for elders on session to be willing and able to assist in worship.
- ✓ Half of ministers (pastors, 48%; specialized clergy, 52%)—but fewer members (27%) and elders (40%)—believe it is *essential* for elders to be willing and able to equip others to share the gospel with unchurched people.
- ✓ Minorities in each group believe it is *essential* for elders to be willing and able to:
 - Share the gospel with unchurched people (members, 26%; elders, 37%; pastors, 42%; specialized clergy, 43%).
 - Teach the Bible (22%; 23%; 25%; 22%).

Figure 3. Possible Activities of Elders that Majorities in Each Group View as *Essential*



	Members	Elders	Ministers
Number of surveys sent	622	899	1,225
Number of undeliverable surveys and ineligible respondents	5	4	18
Number of surveys completed	290	448	712‡
Response rate	47%	50%	58%

‡Of the 712 returned surveys, 471 came from pastors and 236 from specialized clergy; 5 could not be classified.

The survey was mailed on November 29, 2010, with returns accepted through February 10, 2011. Results are subject to sampling and other errors. Small differences should be interpreted cautiously. In general, differences of less than 8% between samples are not statistically meaningful.

For more numbers and interpretation of these results, a report will be available on the web or for \$15 from Presbyterian Distribution Service (800-524-2612; order PDS# 02056-10309). It will include tables with percentage responses to each survey question.

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