

## WORLD MISSION—THE AUGUST 1998 SURVEY

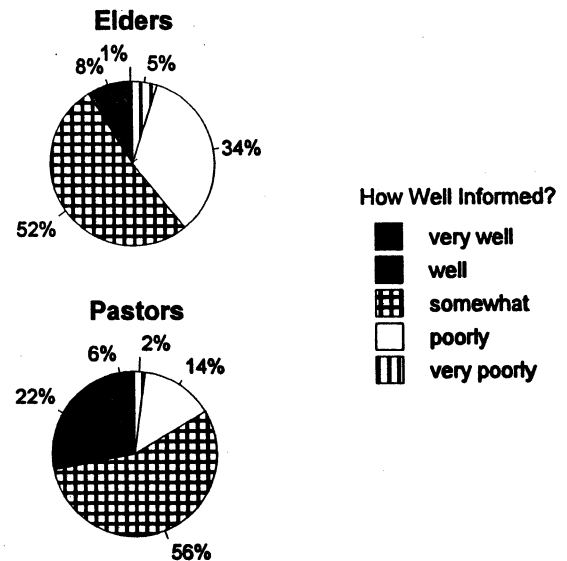
The Presbyterian Panel consists of three nationally-representative samples of groups affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): members, elders (lay leaders), and ordained ministers (for analysis, split into two groups based on current call: *pastors*, serving in a congregation, and *specialized clergy*, serving elsewhere). New samples are drawn every three years. These pages summarize major findings from the eighth survey completed by the 1997-1999 Panel.

### IMAGES OF WORLD MISSION

- ✓ When asked to choose between contrasting images of world mission, on average panelists view it as more:
  - *sacrificial* than *selfish*
  - concerned with *servicing others* than with *being served*
  - *sensitive to other cultures* than *indifferent to other cultures*
  - *sharing the Gospel* than *sharing American culture*
  - *enabling* than *controlling*
  - *difficult to do* than *easy to do*
  - *joyful* than *stern*
  - *respectful of other beliefs* than *contemptuous of other beliefs*
  
- ✓ Compared to the lay samples, pastors view world mission as *relatively*:
  - more *joyful*, less *stern*
  - more *progressive*, less *out-dated*
  - more *modern*, less *traditional*
  - more *carried out by citizens of other countries*, less *carried out by Americans*
  - more *something a specialist does*, less *something a generalist does*
  - more *democratic*, less *authoritarian*
  - more *sharing the Gospel*, less *sharing American culture*
  - more *respectful of other beliefs*, less *contemptuous of other beliefs*
  - more *sensitive to other cultures*, less *indifferent to other cultures*
  - more *enabling*, less *controlling*

- ✓ Member panelists who see themselves as *well-informed* about “Christian mission activity around the world” are much more likely than *poorly* or *very poorly informed* members to view world mission as:
  - *something young* (as opposed to *something older*) *adults do*
  - *progressive* (as opposed to *outdated*)
  - *sharing the Gospel* (as opposed to *sharing American culture*)
  - *enabling* (as opposed to *controlling*)

**Figure 1**  
How Well-Informed Panelists Are About World Mission



## PRIORITIES FOR MISSION

### Ranking Mission Activities

- ✓ From a list of 29 possible PCUSA mission activities, members gave the highest priority to:
  - leading people to faith in Christ
  - helping others help themselves
  - combating hunger and malnutrition
  - providing spiritual guidance
  - teaching basic literacy
  - providing medical care
  - fighting disease
  - combating poverty
- ✓ Pastors gave relatively high priority to many of the same activities as members did, but also gave high priority to:
  - strengthening churches
  - training church leaders
- ✓ Among members and pastors, relatively low priority was found for:
  - resolving conflicts between nations
  - promoting democracy
  - resolving conflicts between faith groups
  - promoting interfaith cooperation
  - providing advanced education
  - preserving the environment

### The Budget for World Mission

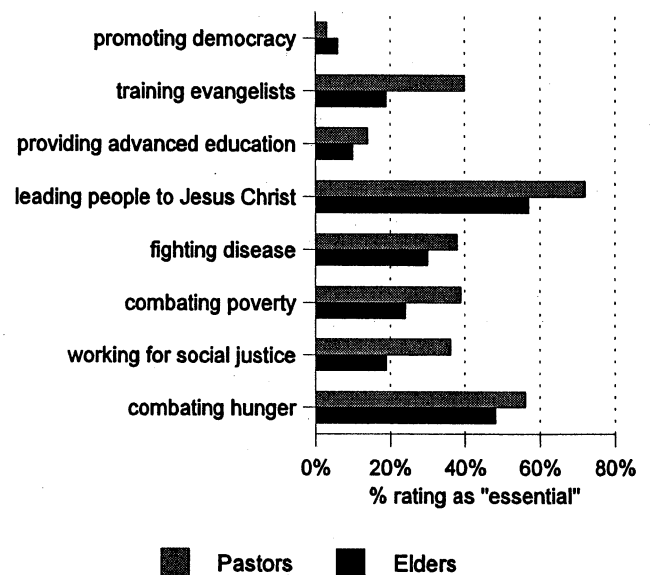
- ✓ When asked to guess the proportion of the General Assembly Council (i.e., national church) budget of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that is expended on world mission, *on average* panelists came very close to the actual figure of 23%. The mean estimate of members, elders, and pastors was 22%, and of specialized clergy, 21%.

### Mission Services to Congregations & Presbyteries

- ✓ According to members, few “mission-related services or programs” are *essential* for the Worldwide Ministries Division of the PCUSA to provide for congregations and presbyteries. The highest percentage of *essential* responses is found for:
  - briefings about ways to spend mission dollars (13% of members so respond)
  - people-to-people exchanges (11%)

- briefings about the church in other countries (10%)
- reports about the impact of PCUSA mission around the world (10%)
- promotion of opportunities to serve internationally (10%)
- ✓ Among pastors, the percentage who view various types of Worldwide Ministries Division programs as *essential* is highest for:
  - personal contacts with PCUSA mission personnel (43%)
  - reports about the impact of PCUSA mission around the world (32%)
  - promotion of opportunities to serve internationally (31%)
  - opportunities for mission trips to other countries (30%)
  - assessment and placement of mission personnel (28%)
  - people-to-people exchanges (27%)

**Figure 2**  
**PCUSA Priority Ratings:**  
**Selected Mission Activities**

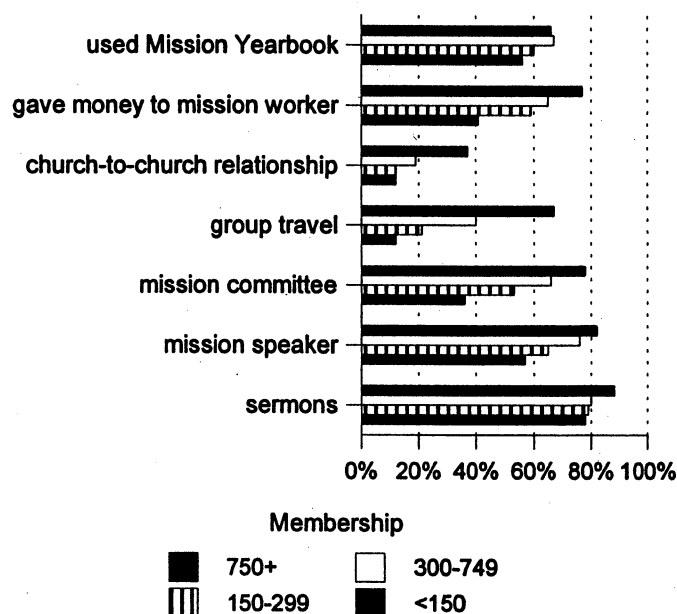


- ✓ Panelists place the least relative importance on the provision of “a global mission magazine” by the Worldwide Ministries Division. More than a third of members and elders, and one in four pastors and specialized clergy, see such a periodical as *not too important* or *not at all important*.

**What Congregations Are Doing**

- ✓ Around one in six pastors (18%) and elders (18%) respond *yes, always* when asked whether their churches “regularly include world mission in . . . worship and educational programs.” Another third report that their congregations *usually* include world mission in its programming. Only 1% of elders and pastors report that their church *never* does so.
- ✓ Two-thirds of pastors (68%) report that their congregation contributed directly to a mission program or mission worker in the past year. Among the most common recipients are: Habitat for Humanity (70% of contributing churches report giving some support to Habitat), Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (37%), Presbyterian Hunger Program (37%), and the Medical Benevolence Foundation (30%).
- ✓ A majority of pastors (52%) and four in ten elders (41%) report that their congregations have *increased* their level of world mission involvement over that of five years ago. Only one in 20 pastors or elders believe that the level of involvement has *decreased*.
- ✓ A majority of pastors report that the following mission-related events or activities took place in their congregations over the last two years:
  - had a sermon or sermons on world mission (84% so report)
  - hosted a talk given by a current or former mission worker (72%)
  - observed a special-theme Sunday on world mission (65%)
  - prayed for a mission worker (66%)
  - used the *Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study* (65%)
  - directed financial support to a specific person serving in mission (63%)
  - had an on-going committee on world mission (60%)
  - received regular correspondence from a mission worker (58%)
  - had one or more members travel out of the country for mission learning or service (54%)

**Figure 3**  
**Frequency of Mission Activities by Church Size:**  
**Pastors' Responses**



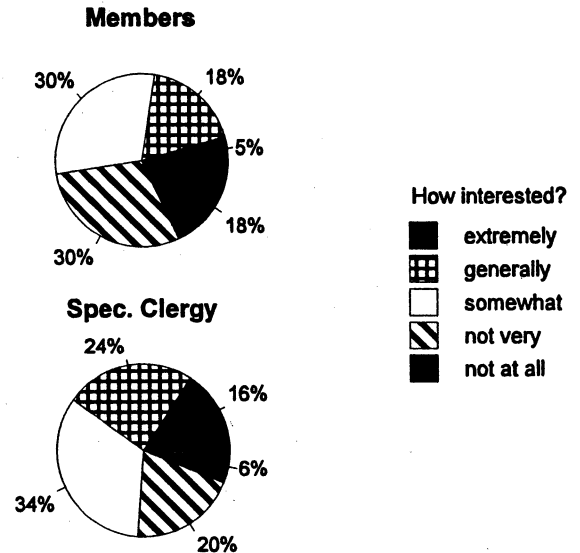
**Mission Workers from Congregations**

- ✓ A majority of pastors report that at least one person from their congregation has “served as a mission worker outside the U.S.” at some time during the previous five years.
- ✓ Most mission workers from PCUSA congregations spent a relatively brief time on their assignment: according to pastors, 79% served *3 months or less*. Only 8% served *more than a year*.
- ✓ Assignments for about one-half of mission workers from PCUSA congregations were arranged directly between the congregation and the overseas host. In another quarter, arrangements were coordinated by “other denominations or independent mission agencies.” Only 20% served on an assignment arranged by the PCUSA’s Worldwide Ministries Division.
- ✓ One in 20 members, one in 12 elders, and one in 4 pastors and specialized clergy report that they themselves have “served in mission outside the U.S.”

## MISSION KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST

- ✓ Only 3 (of 14 listed) PCUSA mission programs are either *very familiar* or *generally familiar* to 10% or more of members:
  - Presbyterian Hunger Program (24% so report)
  - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (19%)
  - Mission Volunteers (10%)
- ✓ Pastors are most familiar with these PCUSA mission programs:
  - Presbyterian Hunger Program (80% either *very familiar* or *generally familiar*)
  - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (78%)
  - Self Development of People (63%)
  - Year with Latin Americans (55%)
  - Year with Africa (54%)
  - Mission Volunteers (52%)
- ✓ Among laity, some prominent nondenominational mission programs are better known than most of those sponsored by the PCUSA, including:
  - Habitat for Humanity (77% of members and 83% of elders either *very familiar* or *generally familiar*)
  - World Vision (24% and 24%, respectively)
  - Wycliffe (19% and 20%)
- ✓ 5% of members, 7% of elders, 27% of pastors, and 16% of specialized clergy are *very interested* "in becoming more personally involved in world mission."

**Figure 4**  
**Interest in Becoming More Personally Involved in Mission**



- ✓ Few panelists in any sample consider themselves *very well informed* about international events.
- ✓ Most panelists consider themselves no better than *somewhat informed* about "Christian mission activity around the world" in general and "the world mission activity of the PCUSA" in particular.

	Members	Elders	Ordained Ministers*
Number of surveys mailed .....	1,238	1,263	1,823
Number returned .....	540	634	1,050
Response rate .....	44%	50%	58%

\* Of the 1,050 returned surveys, 720 were from pastors and 330 were from specialized clergy.

This survey was initially mailed in August 1998, and returns were accepted until November 1998. Results are subject to sampling and other errors. Small differences should be interpreted cautiously. As a general rule, differences of less than 6% between samples are not statistically meaningful.

*For more numbers and interpretation* of the August 1998 Presbyterian Panel results, a longer report with additional charts and graphs is available for \$5. Contact PDS (call 1-800-524-2612) and order PDS # 65100-98257. Included is a data appendix that presents the percentage responses to each survey question separately for members, elders, pastors, and specialized clergy.

*For more information on the worldwide mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.),* contact Theresa Chrappa of the Worldwide Ministries Division at 502-569-5347.

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