



The Presbyterian Panel



Listening to Presbyterians

SUMMARY

RACISM AND RACIAL JUSTICE The November 2000 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, ministers are 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 fifth survey completed by the 2000-2002 Panel, initially sampled in the fall of 1999.

✓ IN THIS SUMMARY

- Congregations and Race* (p. 2)
- Societal Issues* (p. 3)
- Personal Experiences* (p. 4)
- 2000 Presidential Vote* (p. 4)

Note: Panel samples are almost entirely white and non-Hispanic, reflecting denominational composition: nationally, 94% of members, 92% of elders, and 92% of ministers in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are white, non-Hispanic.

PC(USA) NATIONAL ISSUES

Membership Goal

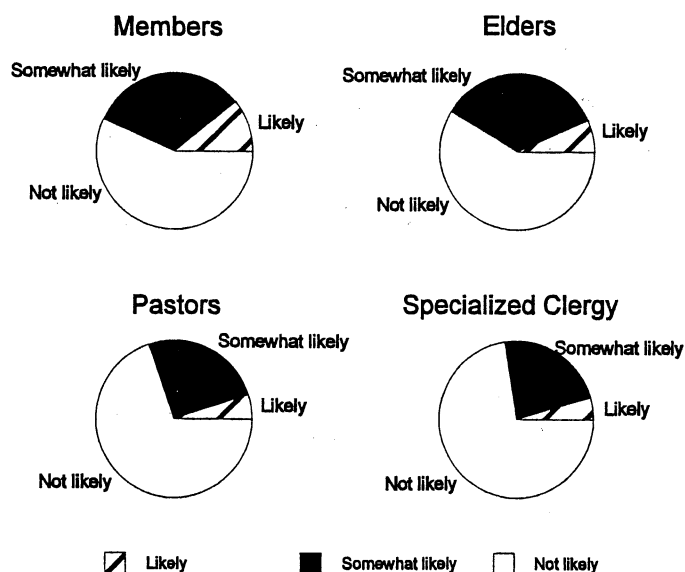
- ✓ Two-thirds of pastors (66%) but only 7% of members and 16% of elders are aware of the denominational goal of increasing racial ethnic membership to 20% by 2010.
- ✓ Small majorities of members and elders, and larger majorities of pastors and specialized clergy, believe that this goal is *not likely* to be attained.
- ✓ More members oppose (46%) than favor (22%) using “significantly more money and resources” to try to reach the 20% racial ethnic membership goal, while the reverse is true among pastors (41% favor more expenditures, while 32% oppose them). Support declines sharply in all groups when such funds would come from other PC(USA) programs.

Strategies for Racial Ethnic Growth

- ✓ The most preferred means for increasing racial ethnic membership in the PC(USA) is to “help existing racial ethnic congregations to grow,” an approach most favored by a third or more of all groups (e.g., pastors, 33%; elders, 39%).

Figure 1

Opinions on Likelihood of Achieving 20% Racial Ethnic Membership by 2010



- ✓ The least preferred strategy for racial ethnic growth is “encouraging white congregations to make greater efforts to reach out to racial ethnic persons.” 27% of members, 32% of elders, and a majority of pastors (51%) responded *least prefer*.

CONGREGATIONAL ISSUES

Activities

- ✓ Three-fourths of pastors report that at least one sermon on racial justice issues was preached in their congregation during the previous year.
- ✓ Two in three pastors (65%) report that, in the past year, their congregation had one or more guest preachers of a different racial ethnic group than the majority of the members.
- ✓ Fewer pastors (40%) report joint worship services with another congregation whose members are mostly of a different racial ethnic background.

Calling a Pastor

- ✓ Few panelists (elders, 8%; pastors, 17%) report that their congregation made “a special effort to identify candidates whose racial ethnic backgrounds differ from those of most members” when it last called a pastor.
- ✓ Majorities in all groups *disagree* that they’d “be uncomfortable with a pastor from a different racial ethnic background” than their own.
- ✓ Nevertheless, only 12% of members, 15% of elders, and 25% of pastors *agree* that “predominantly white congregations should make serious efforts to hire pastors who come from other racial ethnic groups.”

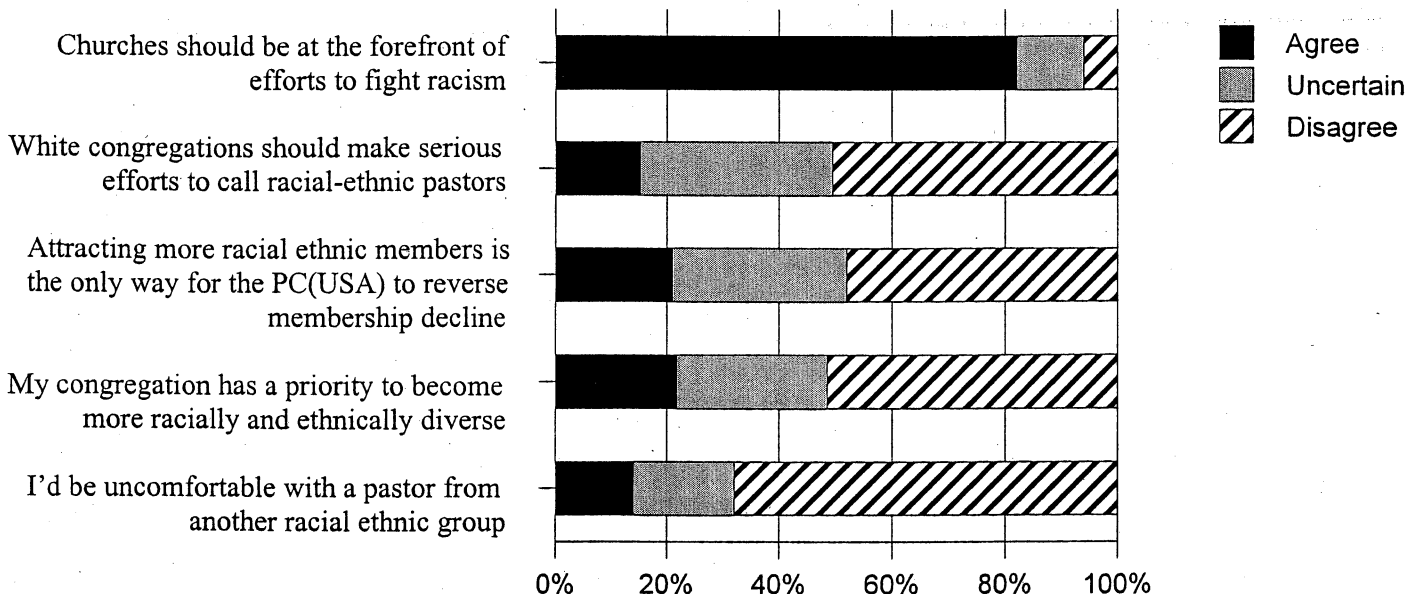
Current Membership

- ✓ Majorities of elders (52%) and pastors (57%) and 43% of members *disagree* that their congregation “has made it a priority to become more racially and ethnically diverse.”
- ✓ Majorities in all groups *agree* that “congregations will become truly racially and ethnically diverse” only when their neighborhoods become racially and ethnically diverse.
- ✓ Majorities of members and elders and a quarter of both clergy groups prefer to live in a *mostly white* neighborhood.

Preferred Membership

- ✓ If they were to move to a new community, 55% of members and 46% of elders would look for a *mostly white* church to join. One in five members (20%) and one in four elders (27%) would look for a *mixed half and half* congregation, but only 1% and 2%, respectively, would look for a *mostly racial ethnic* one. A quarter in both samples are *not sure*.
- ✓ Four in ten pastors would prefer a congregation with a *mixed half and half* racial ethnic composition for their next call. Another three in ten want one that is *mostly white*. Only 3% want a congregation that is *mostly racial ethnic*. 28% are *not sure*.

Figure 2
Elders' Opinions on Racial Ethnic Issues and the Church



SOCIAL ISSUES

Immigration

- ✓ Large majorities in all Panel groups, ranging from 65% of members to 92% of specialized clergy, oppose a law to “stop all legal immigration into the U.S.” over the next five years. At the same time, more members would like to see the number of legal immigrants *decreased* (29%) than *increased* (4%). Another 31% want legal immigration *kept at the present level*, and 36% are *not sure*.
- ✓ Majorities of members (78%) and elders (71%) want “the federal government to do significantly more to stop illegal . . . immigration[.]” Ministers are more divided: more pastors favor (46%) than oppose (36%) such action, but the reverse is true among specialized clergy (40% favor and 44% oppose).
- ✓ More panelists, especially ministers, have positive than negative views of the contributions immigrants make to U.S. society. Around one-half of members (49%) and majorities of the other groups (elders, 57%; pastors, 81%) believe that “immigrants become productive citizens and pay their fair share of taxes.”

A National Assessment

- ✓ Views are divided on the “state of relations between whites and racial ethnic persons in the U.S.” A few more members respond *good* (39%) than *bad* (35%), while the opposite is true among pastors (33% and 46%, respectively).
- ✓ Around half of members (53%) and elders (50%) and four in ten pastors (41%) and specialized clergy (37%) think “conditions for racial ethnic people” have *improved* in recent years. Most others think conditions have *stayed about the same*.
- ✓ Majorities in every group, ranging from 55% of members to 83% of specialized clergy, *agree* that “it’s good for the U.S. that its population is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse.”

Affirmative Action

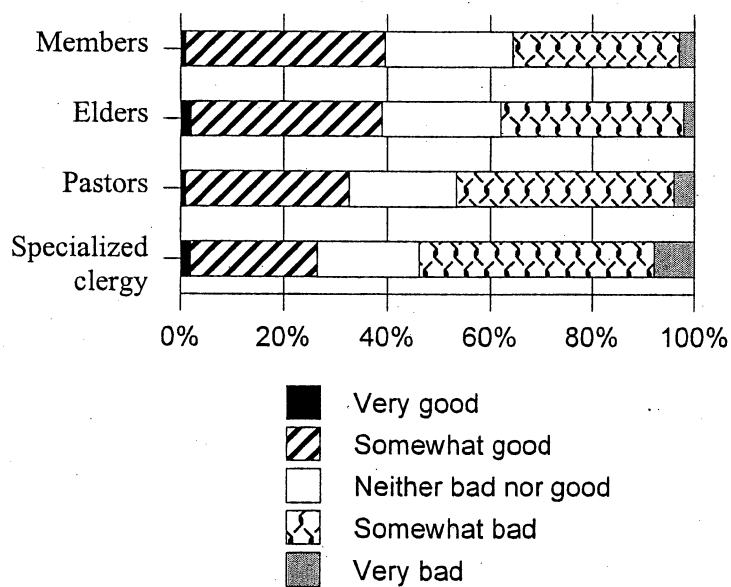
- ✓ Large majorities of pastors (67%) and specialized clergy (72%) *agree* that “because of past and present discrimination it is sometimes necessary for colleges and universities to reserve openings for racial ethnic students.” Laity are more evenly divided.

- ✓ 47% of members believe it *likely* and 42% *not likely* that, today, “a white person won’t get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified racial ethnic person gets one instead.”

Race Relations Locally

- ✓ Many panelists believe that racial ethnic people are treated *not as well as whites* in their community (e.g., members, 46%; specialized clergy, 79%).
- ✓ The percentage of elders and pastors who think that racial ethnic people have as good a chance as whites to:
 - get any kind of job for which they are qualified is 49% among elders, and 28% among pastors
 - get any housing they can afford is 60% and 46%, respectively
 - get a good education for their children is 68% and 49%
- ✓ Similarly, more pastors than laity perceive racial ethnic persons as receiving *less fair* treatment than whites in their community:
 - at work (pastors, 37%; members, 13%)
 - in stores and shops (43%; 25%)
 - in dealings with the police (72%; 49%)

Figure 3
Opinions on State of Relations between Whites and Racial Ethnics in U.S. Today



PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

Activities and Relationships

- ✓ In the last two years, 44% of members, 56% of elders, and 84% of pastors have participated in activities or taken actions related to racial justice issues. The most frequent types of activities include:
 - giving money to an organization concerned with racial justice (members, 23%; pastors, 61%)
 - participating in a multi-cultural awareness program (members, 24%; pastors, 60%)
 - anti-racism training (members, 12%; pastors, 26%)
- ✓ Almost all panelists interact once in a while with persons of other racial ethnic groups in their local community, and many do so often. Among members, 17% do so *very frequently* and 28%, *frequently*.
- ✓ Encounters with persons of other races and ethnicities are more common in the workplace (57% of members have them *frequently*) than in the church (20%), home (15%), or other social settings (24%).

Discrimination and Privilege

- ✓ A third of pastors (31%) and specialized clergy (32%) but fewer members (17%) and elders (19%) have ever “experienced discrimination, harassment, violence, or prejudicial statements” because of their race ethnicity.
- ✓ 46% of pastors, 36% of specialized clergy, 16% of elders, and 13% of members report that they have “observed discriminatory behavior, or harassment toward, or heard prejudicial statements about a person or group of persons in your congregation based on their racial or ethnic background.”

2000 Presidential Election Choice +				
	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Bush	63%	57%	35%	22%
Gore	35%	40%	62%	73%
Other	2%	3%	3%	6%

+ Among panelists who reported voting

	Members	Elders	Ordained Ministers*
Number of surveys mailed	1,154	1,089	1,467
Number returned	577	580	859
Response rate	50%	53%	58%

*Of the 859 returned surveys, 669 came from pastors and 190 from specialized clergy.

This survey was initially mailed in November 2000, and returns were accepted through January 2001. 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 2000 Presbyterian Panel results, a longer report with additional charts and graphs is available for \$5. Contact PDS (1-800-524-2612) and order PDS #65100-00267. 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 racial justice ministries in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) contact Helen Locklear of the National Ministries Division at 888-728-7228 ext. 5696 or <helenl@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
<http://www.pcusa.org/rs/panhtml.htm>