

Demographic Characteristics (cont.)

Now let's turn to our diversity as a denomination. First, members and ministers are reverse images of each other in terms of gender. Among members, 59% are women, and 41% are men. Among ministers, it is exactly the opposite: 59% are men, and 41% are women.

Second, while members' political party identification is varied, ministers are more heavily Democratic. Four in ten members (39%) identify as Democrats, along with 31% as Republican, 19% as Independent, and 10% with no political party. On the other hand, 55% of ministers are Democratic, 18% are Independent, 13% are Republican, and 13% do not identify with a party. Fewer members and ministers are Republicans than in the past. This finding mirrors our earlier one regarding the denomination's shift towards liberal theology; if trends continue, political orientation may join the list of demographic traits in which our denomination does not have diversity.

Although our denomination trends toward the older age groups, there is some age diversity present. About one in six members (18%) and ministers (15%) are younger than 40. Two in ten members (20%) and one-quarter of ministers (25%) are between 40 and 54 in age. A quarter of members are age 55-64, while one in six ministers (16%) are age 65 or older. The largest age group for members is age 65 or older (43%), while the largest age group for ministers is between 55 and 64 (45%).

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2015 Religious and Demographic Profile

The Presbyterian Panel is made up of representative samples of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ministers of the Word and Sacrament and members of PC(USA) congregations. The Panel is re-sampled every three years. The first survey that members of each new Panel complete is a background survey on their spiritual practices, beliefs, and demographics.

During 2015 and 2016 a new Panel was assembled. Ultimately, 1,051 members and 1,372 ministers were identified as panelists. Detailed information on how panelists responded to each question on the background survey and how the samples were drawn and the survey was conducted is available in appendices.

Overview of Findings

Discipleship and Congregational Engagement

Ministers are generally more engaged than members in the life of the Church in at least two areas: spiritual/religious practices and financial involvement.

First, more ministers than members attend worship and engage in a range of spiritual practices. Most ministers (83%) lead or attend worship weekly; a small majority of members (54%) attend worship weekly. That most ministers are in worship weekly should be no surprise, as three-quarters of ministers (73%) are pastors.

Discipleship and Congregational Engagement (cont.)

Prayer is more prevalent than reading the Bible among both members and ministers. Three-quarters of ministers (77%) and two-thirds of members (63%) pray privately *daily/almost daily*. About four in ten ministers (44%)—but only two in ten members (19%)—read the Bible privately *daily/almost daily*.

Second, ministers also give more money to their congregation (about 50% more) than do members. The median amount of money given by minister households (counting no giving as \$0) in 2014 was \$4,700. Median 2014 giving by member households was \$3,100.

Presbyterian Identity and Theology

Although sense of denominational identity varies, Presbyterians are increasingly united in basic theological perspective.

Members are more likely than ministers to have become Presbyterian later in life. Two-thirds (63%) of ministers and slightly less than half of members (47%) were raised in the PC(USA) or one of its predecessor denominations. Being part of the PC(USA) is *very important* to about four in ten members (41%) and half of ministers (51%). Being raised Presbyterian and valuing being Presbyterian are linked. Being Presbyterian is *very important* to more of those who were raised Presbyterian (member, 48%; ministers, 55%) than to those who were not (35%; 42%)

Although Presbyterians are still relatively diverse theologically, the denomination is becoming more liberal. Currently, 42% of members and 46% of ministers label themselves theological *very liberal* or *liberal*.

This represents a shift from 2011, when only 22% of members and 38% of ministers were theologically *very liberal* or *liberal*. Additionally, about a third are theologically *moderate* (members, 33%; ministers, 34%), and about a fourth of members (26%) and a fifth of ministers (20%) are theologically *very conservative* or *conservative*.

Because the Panel is reconstituted every three years, there is no way of following individuals across time to know for sure whether theological conservatives left the denomination, theological liberals arrived, or individuals shifted from being conservative to liberal. It is possible that all three were factors.

There is some evidence that recently-ordained ministers are more liberal than longtime ministers. Significantly more ministers who were ordained since 2011 are theologically *very liberal* or *liberal* (51%) or *moderate* (41%) than those who had already been ordained (46%; 33%). There is no theological difference between members who became Presbyterian since 2011 and those who became members in 2011 or earlier.

Demographic Characteristics

Presbyterians are relatively homogenous when it comes to level of education, marital status, and race; however, they are more diverse when it comes to gender, political party identification, and age.

First let's look at how Presbyterians are similar. At least seven in ten members and ministers have at least a four-year college degree, are married, and are White:

- 83% of members and 99% of ministers have earned at least a four-year college degree
- 74% of members and 82% of ministers are married
- 93% of members and 89% of ministers are White