



The Presbyterian Panel

Listening to Presbyterians



SUMMARY

Pastoral Leadership, Personal Outreach, and the *Directory for Worship* The February 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 eleventh survey completed by the 2003-2005 Panel, initially sampled in the fall of 2002.

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PASTORAL STRENGTHS

Leadership

- ✓ Large majorities of members and elders *strongly agree* or *agree* that their pastor “has the trust and respect of those in the church”(87%; 89%); “uses effectively others’ talents and abilities” (81%; 81%); “provides effective leadership to the church in establishing priorities” (80%; 82%); and “creates a positive work environment” (76%; 83%).
- ✓ Even more pastors indicate that each of these items is *definitely a strength of mine* or is *somewhat a strength of mine*: “having the trust and respect of those in my church” (99%); “using effectively others’ talents and abilities” (94%); “providing effective leadership to the church in establishing priorities” (91%); and “creating a positive work environment” (98%).

Communication

- ✓ More than three in four laity *strongly agree* or *agree* that their pastor “is effective in oral communication” (87%; 89%); “listens respectfully to other individuals” (84%; 87%); “is effective in written communication” (83%; 87%); “represents the PC(USA) positively to the community” (78%; 81%); “shares appropriate information” (76%; 80%); and “communications expectations clearly” (76%; 76%)
- ✓ On the same items, similar or higher percentages of pastors rate each as *definitely a strength of mine* or *somewhat a strength of mine* (98%; 99%; 96%; 83%; 98%; 88%).

Administration

- ✓ More than seven in ten members and elders *strongly agree* or *agree* that their pastor “demonstrates an awareness of the problems and issues facing the church” (83%; 89%); “follows through on commitments” (78%; 82%); “works well with members” (74%; 83%); and “works well with staff” (72%; 82%).
- ✓ More than nine in ten pastors indicate that each of the same items is *definitely a strength of mine* or is *somewhat a strength of mine* (93%; 94%; 99%; 97%).
- ✓ In addition, 85% of elders *strongly agree/agree* that their pastor “works well with elders on session,” and 98% of pastors themselves report that “working well with elders on session” is *definitely* or *somewhat a strength of mine*.

Other Strengths

- ✓ At least seven in ten members and elders *strongly agree* or *agree* that their pastor “demonstrates an understanding and respect for members” (84%; 88%), “maintains confidentiality” (75%; 88%), “respects diverse opinions” (72%; 80%), and “respects diverse beliefs” (70%; 77%).
- ✓ On parallel items, more than nine in ten pastors indicate that each is *definitely a strength* or *somewhat a strength of mine*: 99%; 99%; 97%; 92%.

PASTORAL SKILLS

Preaching and Teaching

- ✓ Almost all elders rate their pastor’s abilities as *excellent*, *very good*, or *good* when it comes to these important ministerial tasks:
 - Preaching (*excellent*, 48%; *very good*, 28%; *good*, 15%) (total of *excellent*, *very good*, *good* = 91%)
 - Biblical exposition (51%; 31%; 13%) (95%)
 - Leading worship (51%; 30%; 14%) (95%)
 - Leading others in prayer (53%; 29%; 14%) (96%)
- ✓ Similar percentages of pastors rate their own abilities in these same areas as *excellent*, *very good*, or *good*, although fewer pastors than elders choose *excellent* on most items:
 - Preaching (*excellent*, 32%; *very good*, 49%; *good*, 16%) (total of *excellent*, *very good*, *good* = 97%)
 - Biblical exposition (25%; 44%; 25%) (94%)
 - Leading worship (44%; 39%; 16%) (99%)
 - Leading others in prayer (33%; 37%; 22%) (92%)

Other Pastoral Skills

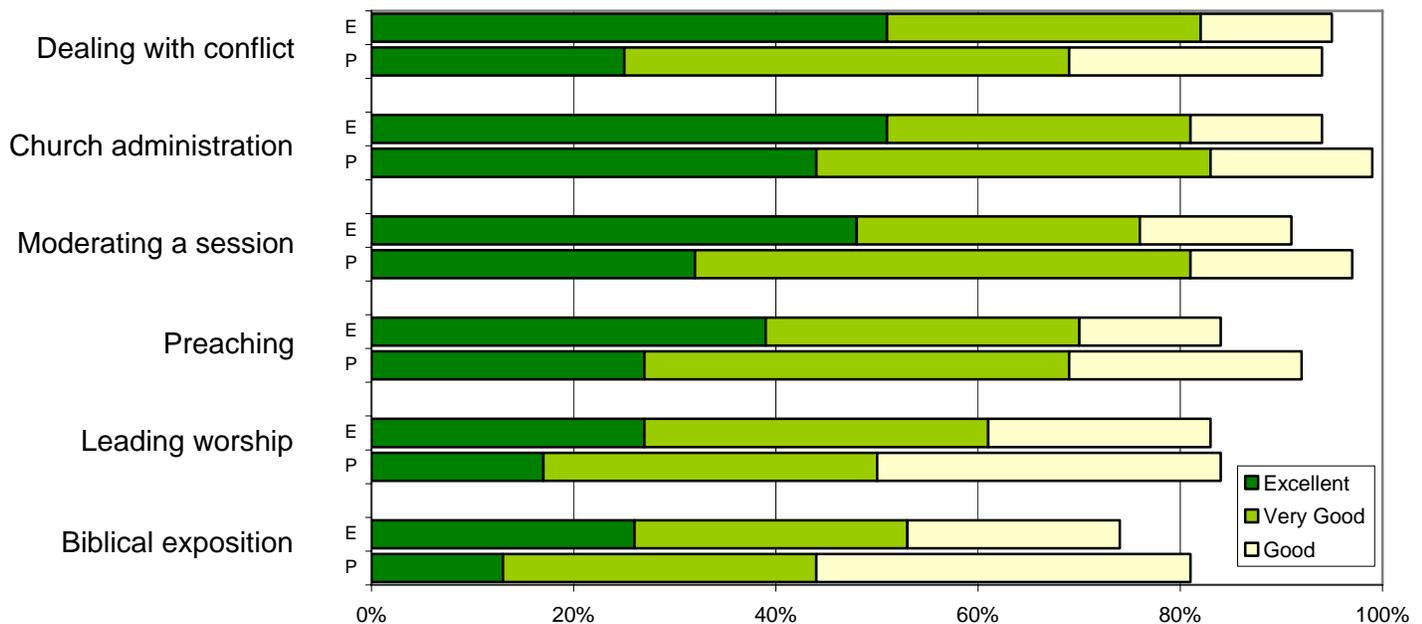
- ✓ Most elders rate their pastor’s abilities in other ministerial-related areas as *excellent*, *very good*, or *good*:
 - Getting along with others (*excellent*, 42%; *very good*, 36%; *good*, 16%) (total of *excellent*, *very good*, *good* = 94%)
 - Leading a small group (42%; 28%; 16%) (86%)
 - Moderating a session (39%; 31%; 14%) (84%)
 - Church administration (27%; 34%; 22%) (83%)
 - Dealing with conflict (26%; 27%; 21%) (74%)

- ✓ Similar or higher percentages of pastors rate their own abilities in these same areas as *excellent*, *very good*, or *good*, although many fewer pastors would describe their abilities in “church administration” or “dealing with conflict” as *excellent*:
 - Getting along with others (*excellent*, 43%; *very good*, 46%; *good*, 10%) (total of *excellent*, *very good*, *good* = 99%)
 - Leading a small group (29%; 42%; 25%) (96%)
 - Moderating a session (28%; 44%; 23%) (95%)
 - Church administration (13%; 40%; 32%) (85%)
 - Dealing with conflict (10%; 37%; 35%) (82%)

Role Models

- ✓ Most members (81%) and elders (88%) *strongly agree* or *agree* that “Our pastor demonstrates in daily life the virtues that the church seeks to develop in its members.” Even more pastors (93%) *strongly agree* or *agree* that they themselves “demonstrate in daily life the virtues that the church seeks to develop in its members.”
- ✓ Similarly, most members (80%) and elders (85%) *strongly agree* or *agree* that “Our pastor demonstrates in daily life the virtues that the church seeks to develop in its leaders,” and even more pastors (91%) *strongly agree* or *agree* that they themselves “demonstrate in daily life the virtues that the church seeks to develop in its leaders.”

Figure 1. Pastors’ Abilities: Self-Ratings and Ratings by Elders



PERSONAL OUTREACH

Invitations to Church

- ✓ Majorities of members (59%) and elders (68%) report that they have invited at least one person to attend worship at their church in the last year.
- ✓ The most common reasons mentioned by laity who had not invited anyone to worship for why they had not done so include:
 - I don't know anyone who doesn't already attend services somewhere (members, 36%; elders, 39%)
 - I'm not comfortable doing this (23%; 26%)
 - I don't know anyone who would be interested in our services (19%; 16%)
 - The services are not impressive (18%; 16%)
- ✓ Somewhat higher totals reported inviting someone to "a function other than worship" at their church (members, 61%; elders, 77%).
- ✓ The median number of hours pastors report spending in a typical month "directly reaching out to individuals who are not currently members of any church to invite them to participate in or join your (or another) congregation" is 2. 19% of pastors report spending no time doing this form of outreach in a typical month, while 10% report spending ten or more hours.

Training in Evangelism

- ✓ Around one-half of members (50%) and elders (57%) report that their congregations offered "classes or programs or provided other resources to promote personal evangelism" in the prior year. About half of them, in turn, report "taking advantage of these resources" (44%; 49%).

- ✓ Pastors were asked whether "training in evangelism or faith sharing" had taken place in the congregation in the last two years among these groups:
 - A committee of the session (42% respond yes)
 - The entire session (30%)
 - Selected members (48%)
 - The congregation at large (26%)

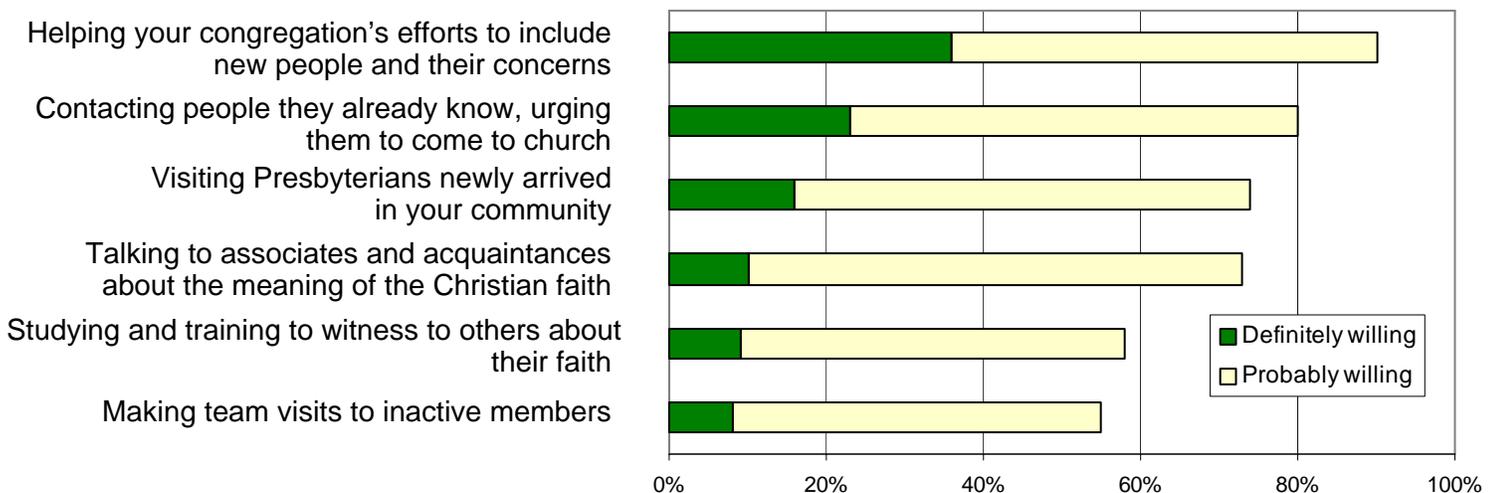
Personal Outreach by Members: Pastors' Assessment

- ✓ Few pastors report that their congregations are involved to a *great extent* in various outreach activities, and the combined *great extent* and *some extent* responses exceed a majority for only one of these:
 - Contacting people they already know, urging them to come to church (*great extent*, 9%; *some extent*, 46%)
 - Talking to associates and acquaintances about the meaning of the Christian faith (7%; 40%)
 - Studying and training to witness to others about their faith (5%; 22%)
 - Visiting Presbyterians newly arrived in the community (5%; 19%).

Future Training and Outreach

- ✓ A small majority of members report being either *very interested* (18%) or *generally interested* (39%) in their "congregation providing training, guidance, or other help for members in inviting others to church." More elders indicate such an interest (29%; 45%).
- ✓ Most pastors believe that members would be either *definitely willing* or *probably willing* "to increase significantly the amount of time they now spend" in each of several outreach activities. (See Figure 2.)

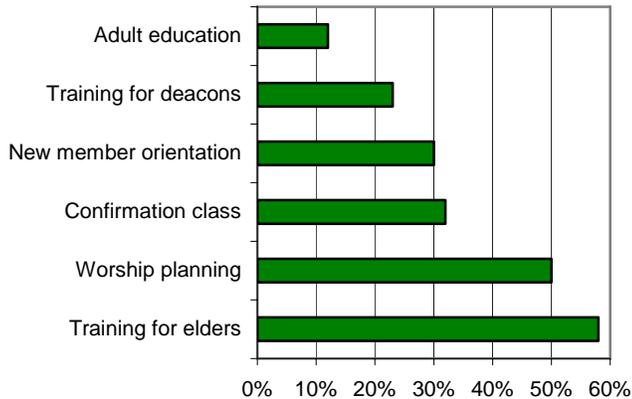
Figure 2. Pastors' Opinions: Willingness of Members to Increase Significantly the Time Spent in Specific Outreach Activities



Familiarity and Use

- ✓ Only a minority of laity (members, 27%; elders, 42%) but most ministers (pastors, 85%; specialized clergy, 82%) are either *very familiar* or *familiar* with the PC(USA) *Directory for Worship*.
- ✓ Of those at least *somewhat familiar* with the *Directory for Worship*, only 16% of members, 13% of elders, 23% of pastors, and 22% of specialized clergy have “personally consulted” it *at least once a month*, on average, in the last two years.
- ✓ The most common uses of the *Directory for Worship* in the past two years include *training for elders* (58% of pastors so report), *worship planning* (50%), and *confirmation class* (32%) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Congregational Uses of Directory for Worship in Last Two Years: Pastors’ Responses



- ✓ A large minority of pastors report that their congregation either puts *a great deal of emphasis* (14%) or *some emphasis* (34%) on “the *Directory for Worship* as a guideline for Christian worship.”

Evaluation

- ✓ Pastors at least *somewhat familiar* with it are more likely to describe the *Directory for Worship* as:
 - *Clear* (79%) than *unclear* (3%)
 - *Well organized* (75%) than *poorly organized* (5%)
 - *Helpful* (66%) than *not helpful* (7%)
 - *Effective* (60%) than *ineffective* (9%)
 - *Too long* (27%) than *too short* (11%) (58% indicate it is neither)
 - *Too complicated* (21%) than *too simple* (11%) (52% indicate it is neither)

Suggestions

- ✓ Majorities of pastors believe it is *very important* (30%) or *somewhat important* (39%) for the PC(USA) “to promote the use of the *Directory for Worship*.” Responses of elders are similar (21%; 38%).
- ✓ Around four in ten pastors believe it is *very important* (11%) or *somewhat important* (27%) for the PC(USA) “to simplify the *Directory for Worship*.” Even more elders express the same view (13%; 32%).
- ✓ Somewhat fewer pastors and elders believe it is *very important* (10%; 11%) or *somewhat important* (20%; 24%) for the PC(USA) “to revise the *Directory for Worship*.”

	Members	Elders	Ordained Ministers
Number of surveys mailed.....	711	1,045	1,202
Number returned.....	364	570	734‡
Response rate.....	51%	54%	61%

‡Of the 734 returned surveys, 472 came from pastors and 262 from specialized clergy.

This survey was initially mailed in February 2005, and returns were accepted through May 2005. 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 February 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# 65100-05286). It includes tables showing percentage responses to each survey question separately for members, elders, pastors, and specialized clergy.

For more information on evangelism in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), contact Doug Wilson (888-728-7228 ext. 5229; dwilson@ctr.pcusa.org), and for more information on the *Directory for Worship*, contact Chip Andrus (888-728-7228 ext. 5772; candrus@ctr.pcusa.org).

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