



THE SACRAMENTS FINDINGS FROM THE FEBRUARY 2009 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 second survey completed by the 2009-2011 Panel, sampled in the fall of 2008.

IN THIS SUMMARY

- ✓ **Lord's Supper Practices**..... p. 1
- ✓ **Beliefs about the Lord's Supper**..... p. 2
- ✓ **Baptism Practices**..... p. 3
- ✓ **Beliefs about Baptism**..... p. 4

LORD'S SUPPER PRACTICES

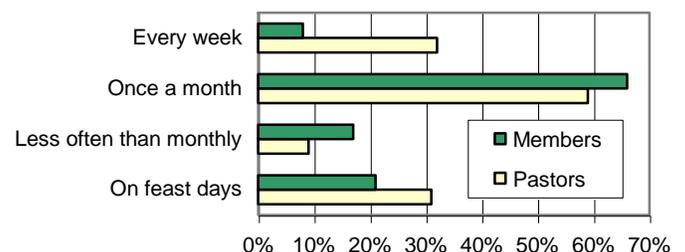
Most Recent Lord's Supper Celebration

- ✓ At least seven in ten panelists in each group (members, 73%; elders, 85%; pastors, 94%; specialized clergy, 84%) attended a worship service in the last month that included celebration of the Lord's Supper.
- ✓ At the most recent Lord's Supper celebration, the elements were served in one or both of these ways:
 - The elements were distributed to worshipers where they were, at services that three-quarters of members (75%), elders (74%), and pastors (73%) and half of specialized clergy (51%) attended.
 - Individuals came to the Table for intinction or use of a common cup, at services that about one-third of members (31%) and elders (37%) and 57% of pastors and specialized clergy attended.
- ✓ The bread was served at the most recent Lord's Supper celebration in one or both of these forms:
 - Small pieces, broken before the service, at services that around two-thirds of members (66%), elders (64%), and pastors (62%) and 45% of specialized clergy attended.
 - A whole loaf, broken during distribution, at services that one-third of members (34%), two in five elders (41%), and about three in five pastors (64%) and specialized clergy (56%) attended.
- ✓ The fruit of the vine was served at the most recent Lord's Supper in one or both of these forms:
 - Grape juice, in the services that almost all panelists in each group attended (members, 98%; elders, 99%; pastors, 99%; specialized clergy, 94%).
 - Wine, in the services that one in twenty members (5%), one in ten elders (9%) and pastors (10%), and one in five specialized clergy (20%) attended.

Frequency of Lord's Supper Celebrations

- ✓ Three-quarters of panelists (members, 72%; elders, 78%; pastors, 75%; specialized clergy, 72%) are part of congregations that celebrate the Lord's Supper every month.
- ✓ Fewer than one in five panelists in each group (members, 6%; elders, 5%; pastors, 9%; specialized clergy, 16%) are part of a congregation that celebrates the Lord's Supper every week.
- ✓ At least one in five panelists (members, 22%; elders, 31%; pastors, 41%; specialized clergy, 22%) are part of congregations that celebrate the Lord's Supper on feast days (special days and seasons).
- ✓ One-third of ministers (pastors, 32%; specialized clergy, 32%)—but fewer laypeople (members, 8%; elders, 10%)—would like their congregations to celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Preferences for the Frequency of Lord's Supper Celebrations in Their Congregations*



* Percentages add to more than 100% because panelists could check more than one response.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE LORD'S SUPPER

Relevant Theological Themes

- ✓ The following theological themes are *very significant* or *significant* for how at least three-quarters of panelists in each group understand the Lord's Supper:
 - Remembrance of Jesus Christ (members, 95%; elders, 98%; pastors, 98%; specialized clergy, 96%).
 - Thanksgiving to God (89%; 92%; 94%; 93%).
 - Spiritual nourishment in Christ (80%; 85%; 91%; 83%).
 - Communion of the faithful (78%; 80%; 88%; 87%).
- ✓ Fewer panelists (but still majorities in each group) say the following theological themes are *very significant* or *significant* for how they understand the Lord's Supper:
 - Invocation of the Holy Spirit (members, 73%; elders, 78%; pastors, 81%; specialized clergy, 79%).
 - Meal of the covenant community (57%; 60%; 85%; 83%).
 - Mystical presence of Jesus Christ (55%; 60%; 80%; 72%).

Relevant Bible Passages

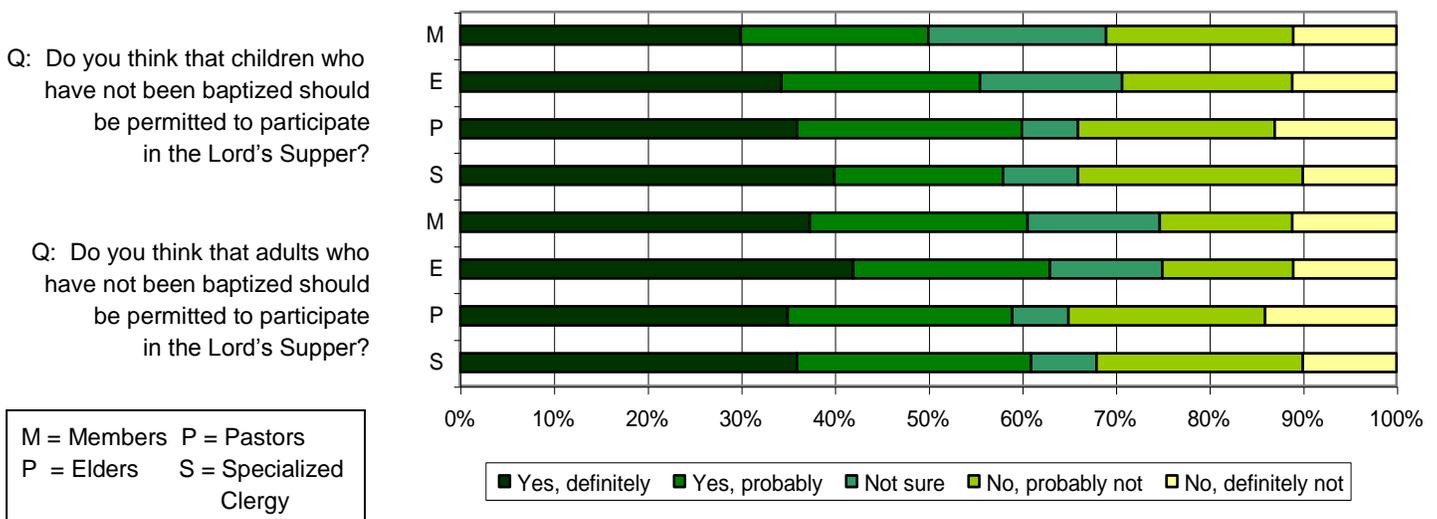
- ✓ The following Bible passages are *very significant* or *significant* for how at least three-quarters of panelists in each group understand the Lord's Supper:
 - Do this in remembrance of me (Luke 22) (members, 95%; elders, 97%; pastors, 98%; specialized clergy, 93%)
 - As often as you eat this bread (I Corinthians 11) (88%; 92%; 96%; 93%).
 - I am the bread of life (John 6) (88%; 90%; 93%; 87%).

- ✓ Fewer panelists report that the following Bible passages are *very significant* or *significant* for how they understand the Lord's Supper:
 - I am the vine; you are the branches (John 15) (members, 73%; elders, 76%; pastors, 82%; specialized clergy, 78%).
 - You prepare a table before me (Psalm 23) (67%; 67%; 49%; 45%).
 - Commandment to love one another (John 13) (67%; 64%; 72%; 71%).
 - The feeding of the multitude (Matthews 14) (51%; 50%; 50%; 46%).
 - The Passover meal in Exodus (Exodus 12) (50%; 54%; 69%; 65%).
 - Our paschal lamb, Christ (36%; 40%; 61%; 46%).
 - Manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16) (35%; 37%; 49%; 46%).
 - The early church after Pentecost (Acts 2) (32%; 37%; 54%; 47%).
 - The road to Emmaus (Luke 24) (31%; 34%; 66%; 48%).

Lord's Supper Participation without Baptism

- ✓ At least half of panelists from each group (members, 50%; elders, 56%; pastors, 60%; specialized clergy, 58%) think that children who have not been baptized should *definitely* or *probably* be permitted to participate in Lord's Supper celebrations.
- ✓ About three in five panelists (members, 60%; elders, 63%; pastors, 59%; specialized clergy, 61%) think that adults who have not been baptized should be permitted to participate in Lord's Supper celebrations (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Opinions about Participation in the Lord's Supper



BAPTISM PRACTICES

Panelists' Baptisms

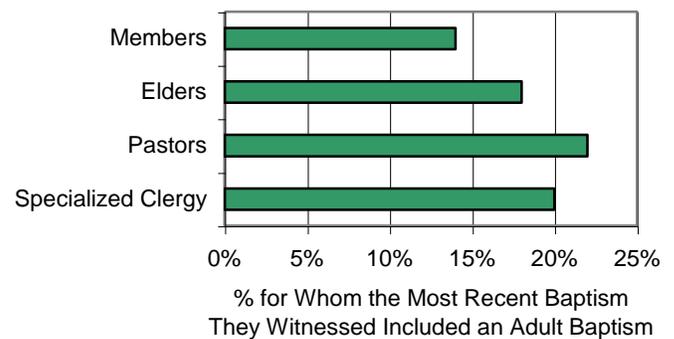
- ✓ Although majorities of panelists in each group were baptized when they were 2 years old or younger, some panelists were baptized at other ages:
 - At age 2 or younger (members, 54%; elders, 58%; pastors, 69%; specialized clergy, 64%).
 - Between ages 3 and 7 (7%; 5%; 5%; 4%).
 - Between ages 8 and 12 (18%; 18%; 11%; 15%).
 - Between ages 13 and 17 (8%; 7%; 8%; 12%).
 - As an adult (10%; 8%; 5%; 4%).
- ✓ A few panelists were baptized more than once (members, 3%; elders, 4%; pastors, 2%; specialized clergy, 2%) or indicate they have not been baptized.
- ✓ Large majorities of panelists in each group (members, 74%; elders, 74%; pastors, 82%; specialized clergy, 82%) were baptized by sprinkling from the hand. About one in eight (15%; 15%; 13%; 12%) were baptized by immersion in a pool. Very few (4%; 4%; 2%; 3%) were baptized by pouring from a vessel.
- ✓ Four in nine laypeople (members, 44%; elders, 47%) and three in five ministers (pastors, 60%; specialized clergy, 60%) were baptized in a Presbyterian church.
- ✓ Among those baptized at churches other than Presbyterian churches, at least one in twelve in each group was baptized in:
 - Methodist churches (members, 24%; elders, 27%; pastors, 22%; specialized clergy, 23%).
 - Baptist churches (16%; 21%; 16%; 16%).
 - Roman Catholic churches (14%; 14%; 12%; 9%).

Practices at Recent Baptisms

- ✓ Most panelists (members, 89%; elders, 94%; pastors, 96%; specialized clergy, 86%) witnessed or participated in a baptism in a PC(USA) congregation within the past two years.
- ✓ Although majorities of these recent baptisms involved the baptism of one person only, some involved more than one:
 - One person (members, 68%; elders, 72%; pastors, 69%; specialized clergy, 69%).
 - Two people (19%; 17%; 19%; 20%).
 - Three or four people (10%; 8%; 8%; 7%).
 - Five or more people (2%; 2%; 4%; 4%).
- ✓ Sprinkling of water from the hand was the means used in at least nine in ten recent baptisms (members, 94%; elders, 94%; pastors, 91%; specialized clergy, 90%).

- ✓ Majorities of these recent baptisms involved the baptism of infants, but people of other ages were also baptized. Those baptized included:
 - An infant 2 years old or younger (members, 87%; elders, 81%; pastors, 75%; specialized clergy, 84%).
 - A child between ages 3 and 7 (11%; 9%; 12%; 15%).
 - A child between ages 8 and 12 (4%; 7%; 7%; 4%).
 - An adolescent between ages 13 and 17 (4%; 5%; 8%; 6%).
 - An adult (14%; 18%; 22%; 20%) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Adult Baptisms as Part of Recent Baptisms at PC(USA) Congregations



Preferred Baptism Schedule

- ✓ At least three-quarters of panelists in each group (members, 83%; elders, 88%; pastors, 85%; specialized clergy, 76%) prefer that congregations schedule baptisms whenever needed. Many fewer (11%; 8%; 13%; 18%) prefer that congregations schedule baptisms at regular intervals throughout the year.
- ✓ Panelists who prefer that congregations schedule baptisms at regular intervals during the year favor various schedules:
 - No more often than once a month (members, 58%; elders, 48%; pastors, 62%; specialized clergy, 32%).
 - No more often than every six weeks (17%; 27%; 5%; 26%).
 - No more often than quarterly (11%; 13%; 14%; 21%).
 - Less than quarterly but more than once a year (3%; 3%; 6%; 5%).
 - Only once a year (2%; 2%; 1%; 0%).
 - Only on feast days (special days and seasons) (0%; 2%; 5%; 10%).

BELIEFS ABOUT BAPTISM

Relevant Theological Themes

- ✓ The following theological themes are *very significant* or *significant* for how majorities of panelists in each group understand baptism:
 - The gift of the Holy Spirit (members, 82%; elders, 87%; pastors, 88%; specialized clergy, 81%).
 - Incorporation into the body of Christ (81%; 86%; 98%; 94%).
 - Entry into covenant community or relationship (80%; 85%; 96%; 95%).
 - Conversion, pardon, and cleansing (73%; 77%; 77%; 60%).
 - Participation in Christ's death and resurrection (66%; 74%; 90%; 83%).
 - Sign and seal of the Word (60%; 66%; 83%; 74%).
 - The sign of the Kingdom (52%; 60%; 82%; 71%).

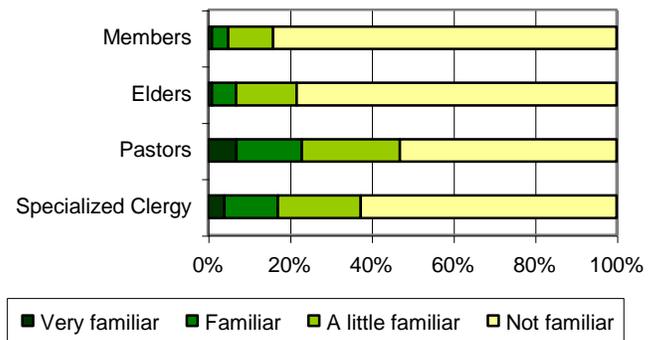
Relevant Bible Passages

- ✓ The following Bible passages are *very significant* or *significant* for how majorities of panelists in each group understand baptism:
 - Jesus' baptism by John (Matthew 3) (members, 90%; elders, 96%; pastors, 93%; specialized clergy, 95%).
 - One Lord, one faith, one baptism (Ephesians 4) (80%; 84%; 93%; 92%).
 - Jesus welcomes the little children (Matthew 19) (72%; 72%; 73%; 63%).
 - Go make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28) (70%; 73%; 91%; 71%).
 - The gift of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2) (55%; 59%; 74%; 65%).

Invitation to Christ Report

- ✓ At least one-third of ministers (pastors, 47%; specialized clergy, 38%)—but only about one in five laypeople (members, 15%; elders, 21%)—are at least *a little familiar* with the 2006 report, *Invitation to Christ: A Guide to Sacramental Practices* (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Panelists' Familiarity with the *Invitation to Christ* Report



- ✓ Among panelists who are at least *a little familiar* with *Invitation to Christ*, only a few have:
 - Used it in personal study (members, 23%; elders, 20%; pastors, 29%; specialized clergy, 24%).
 - Used it in teaching or discussion groups (17%; 22%; 18%; 14%).
 - Visited the *Invitation to Christ* Web site (www.pcusa.org/sacraments/) (14%; 15%; 25%; 28%).

	Members	Elders	Ordained Ministers
Number of surveys mailed*	904	1,092	1,450
Number returned.....	578	779	1,087‡
Response rate	64%	71%	75%

‡Of the 1,087 returned surveys, 741 came from pastors and 346 from specialized clergy

The survey was mailed on March 6, 2008, with returns accepted through early May 2008. 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 these results, a longer report with more charts will be available for free on the Web (www.pcusa.org/research/panel) or for \$15 from PDS (1-800-524-2612; order PDS# 02056-09302). It will include tables showing percentage responses to each survey question separately for members, elders, pastors, and specialized clergy.

For more information about *Invitation to Christ* resources, go to <http://www.pcusa.org/sacraments/>.

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