



## THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FINDINGS FROM THE MAY 2013 SURVEY

The Presbyterian Panel consists of three nationally representative samples of groups affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): members, ruling elders serving on session, and teaching elders (ministers). For most analyses, teaching elders are split into two groups based on current call: *pastors*, serving congregations, and *specialized ministers*, serving elsewhere. New samples are drawn every three years. These pages summarize major findings from the sixth survey completed by the 2012-2014 Panel, sampled in the summer of 2011.

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## KNOWLEDGE OF SEMINARIES

### ***Familiarity with PC(USA) Seminaries***

- ✓ Asked to describe their level of familiarity with each of the 12 PC(USA)-related seminaries, more pastors and specialized ministers express familiarity with each one than do members or ruling elders:
  - More than six in ten members (62%) and three in four ruling elders (77%) are “very” or “somewhat familiar” with one or more PC(USA) seminaries, compared to 99% of teaching elders.
  - Among panelists “very” or “somewhat familiar” with one or more PC(USA) seminaries, the median numbers they are familiar with are: members, two; ruling elders, three; pastors, eight; specialized ministers, nine.
- ✓ More panelists are “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” with Princeton Theological Seminary than any other (members, 39%; ruling elders, 49%; pastors, 92%; specialized ministers, 89%). Louisville has the second highest percentages in each group (26%; 36%; 83%; 82%).
- ✓ Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico had the lowest percentages responding “very familiar” or “somewhat familiar” (members, 1%; ruling elders, 1%; pastors, 9%; specialized ministers, 20%).

### ***Seminaries Attended by Panelists***

- ✓ Very few members (3%) and ruling elders (1%) but more than three-quarters of pastors (78%) and specialized ministers (81%) report graduating from or attending a PC(USA)-related seminary. Of these:
  - Three in ten pastors (29%) and specialized ministers (29%) report going to Princeton Seminary, followed by Columbia Seminary for pastors (19%) and McCormick Seminary for specialized ministers (17%).
  - Very few teaching elders who went to a PC(USA) seminary report going to Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico (pastors, <0.5%; specialized ministers, 1%).

- ✓ Large minorities of pastors (43%) and specialized ministers (45%) report that they attended or graduated from a theological college or seminary not affiliated with the PC(USA). Of these:
  - Fuller Theological Seminary is listed by more teaching elders (26% of those listing a non-PC(USA) school) than any other.
  - Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary is listed second most-often (15%), followed by Yale Divinity School (7%), Union Theological Seminary (6%), Vanderbilt Divinity School (4%), and Duke Divinity School (4%).
  - A total of 111 different seminaries and colleges are listed; half of these are listed by only one respondent apiece.
- ✓ A total of 21% of pastors and 26% of specialized ministers report that they attended or graduated from *both* a PC(USA) *and* a non-PC(USA) seminary.

### ***Seminaries Attended by Their Congregation’s Pastor***

- ✓ Panelists currently involved in congregations were asked where their pastor or other pastoral leader attended seminary.
  - One-half to two-thirds respond that their pastor or pastoral leader attended a PC(USA)-related seminary (members, 52%; ruling elders, 64%; pastors, 76%; specialized ministers, 53%).
  - Many fewer indicate that their pastor or pastoral leader attended a seminary or theological school not affiliated with the PC(USA) (9%; 10%; 37%; 20%).
  - More than one-fourth of members (28%) and almost one-fifth of ruling elders (18%) are “not sure” where their pastor or pastoral leader attended seminary, a response provided by only 2% of pastors and no specialized ministers.

**Individual Involvement with Seminaries**

- ✓ Very few members (7%) or ruling elders (12%) report visiting a PC(USA)-related seminary campus in the past five years, but a majority of pastors (76%) and specialized ministers (64%) report doing so.
- ✓ Of panelists who visited a PC(USA) seminary in the past five years:
  - Around nine in ten members (90%) and ruling elders (86%) have only visited one.
  - More than half of pastors (55%) and specialized ministers (62%) have visited at least two.
- ✓ Among panelists who visited a PC(USA)-related seminary in the past five years, the three activities reported by the highest percentages while on campus (from a list of eight possibilities) are, for each group (see Table 1 for complete responses for teaching elders):
  - Members: toured the campus (50%), attended a lecture or seminar (27%), and attended other on-campus special event (23%)
  - Ruling elders: attended a lecture or seminar (39%), toured the campus (38%), and attended a worship service (36%)
  - Pastors: attended a lecture or seminar (69%), took a continuing education class or attended a continuing education event (58%), and attended a worship service (50%)
  - Specialized ministers: attended a lecture or seminar (65%), attended a special event (46%), and attended a worship service (44%)

**Table 1. Percentage of Teaching Elders Who Took Part in Various Activities on Their Most Recent Visit to a PC(USA)-Related Seminary in the Past Five Years**

	Pastors	Specialized Ministers
Attended a lecture or seminar	69%	65%
Took or attended a continuing education class	58%	32%
Attended a worship service on the campus	50%	44%
Attended other on-campus special event	41%	46%
Used the library	44%	40%
Attended an alumni/ae gathering	31%	28%
Toured the campus	28%	26%
Attended training for ruling elders or deacons	3%	1%

- ✓ Given a list of seven seminary-related actions and asked whether they have done any of them during the past five years, more panelists (members, 39%; ruling elders, 46%; pastors, 86%; and specialized ministers, 82%) report that they have “read an article in a magazine published by a

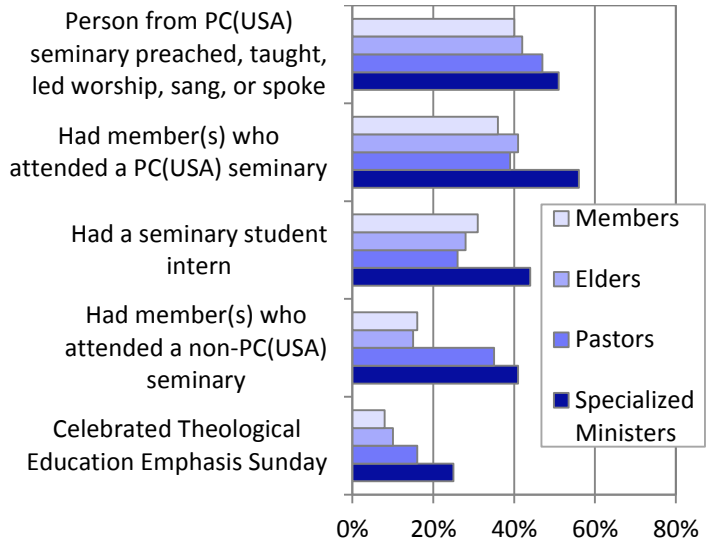
PC(USA)-related seminary” than any other action.

- ✓ Similarly, more pastors and specialized ministers report undertaking each of the other six seminary-related actions than members or ruling elders:
  - Reviewed printed materials about PC(USA)-related seminaries produced by the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) (members, 13%; ruling elders, 17%; pastors, 24%; specialized ministers, 22%)
  - Visited the website or blog of a PC(USA)-related seminary (12%; 16%; 72%; 65%)
  - Read online materials about PC(USA)-related seminaries produced by COTE (8%; 11%; 24%; 22%)
  - Watched a video about a PC(USA)-related seminary (8%; 7%; 23%; 18%)
  - Followed a PC(USA)-related website on Facebook or Twitter (4%; 2%; 23%; 21%)
  - Viewed or listened to a podcast about or produced by a PC(USA)-related seminary (5%; 5%; 17%; 14%)

**Congregational Involvement with Seminaries**

- ✓ Panelists who are involved in a PC(USA) congregation were asked about their congregation’s involvement with PC(USA)-related seminaries, students, or staff members within the past five years. (See Figure 1.)

**Figure 1. Percent Reporting That Their Congregation Has Had Each of Five Seminary-Related Connections in the Past Five Years**



- ✓ Large minorities of members (40%) and ruling elders (42%) and slightly more pastors (47%) and specialized ministers (51%) report that someone associated with a PC(USA)-related seminary, such as a student, professor, or administrator, has visited the congregation in the past five years “to preach, teach, lead worship, sing, or speak.”
- ✓ Around four in ten members (36%), ruling elders (41%), and pastors (39%), but more than half of specialized ministers (56%), report that at least one member of their congregation has been enrolled in a PC(USA)-related seminary over the same period.

**Likelihood of Using Seminary Resources**

- ✓ Panelists were presented a list of actions that individuals might take in connection with eight seminary-produced resources, and asked how likely they would be to take each action in the next year were a PC(USA) seminary to produce the associated product.
- ✓ Overall, pastors and specialized ministers express a greater likelihood of taking each action than do members and ruling elders. (See Figure 2, which shows results for members and pastors.)

**Figure 2. Percent of Members and Pastors Who Would Be “Very” or “Somewhat Likely” to Take a Particular Action in the Next Year with Regard to Each of Eight Resources a PC(USA)-Related Seminary Might Provide**

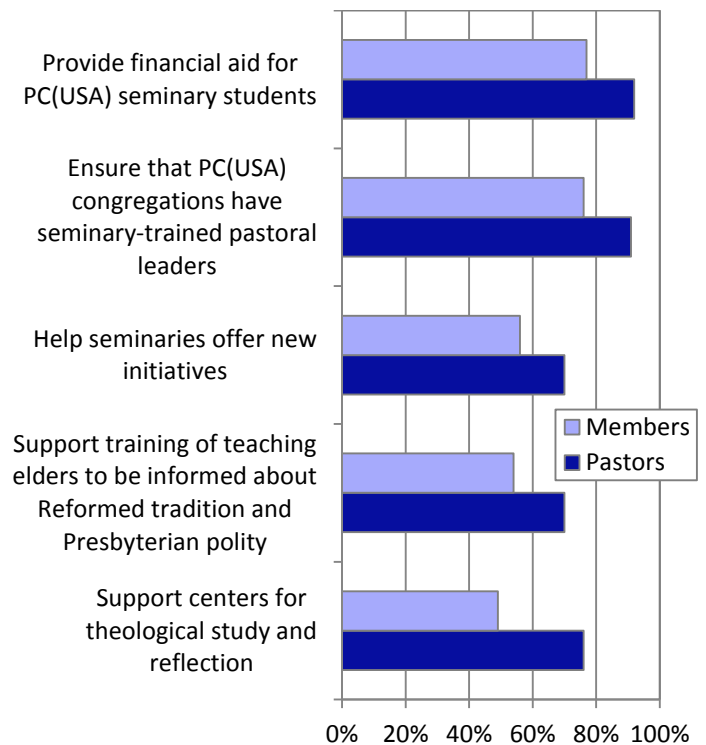


- ✓ Two actions receive the most “very” or “somewhat likely” responses in each Panel group:
  - Going online for Bible studies or devotional materials (members, 52%; ruling elders, 67%; pastors, 84%; specialized ministers, 72%)
  - Regularly reading a blog about ethical, theological, or other current issues and how they relate to faith (13%; 16%; 54%; 38%)

**Support for Seminaries**

- ✓ Panelists currently involved in congregations were presented a list of four options for how their congregations might help to financially support PC(USA)-related seminaries, and then asked to choose the *one* they most prefer. The two options picked as the top choice by the most in each group—though not always in the same order—are:
  - Give to one or more individual students to help pay for their seminary education wherever they may attend (members, 39%; ruling elders, 34%; pastors, 29%; specialized ministers, 32%)
  - Give to the Theological Education Fund (TEF), a fund that aids *all* PC(USA)-related seminaries (19%; 20%; 29%; 37%)
- ✓ Asked to indicate the importance of each of five reasons for the PC(USA) to provide financial support for its seminaries, two receive the most “very important” and “somewhat important” responses in each Panel group (see Figure 3, which shows results for members and pastors):
  - To provide financial aid for PC(USA) students who attend PC(USA) seminaries (members, 41%; ruling elders, 43%; pastors, 75%; specialized ministers, 75%)
  - To ensure that PC(USA) congregations have seminary-trained pastoral leaders (48%; 53%; 72%; 74%)

**Figure 3. Percent of Members and Pastors Responding “Very Important” for Each of Five Reasons for the PC(USA) to Provide Financial Support to its Seminaries**



## IMPORTANCE OF SEMINARIES

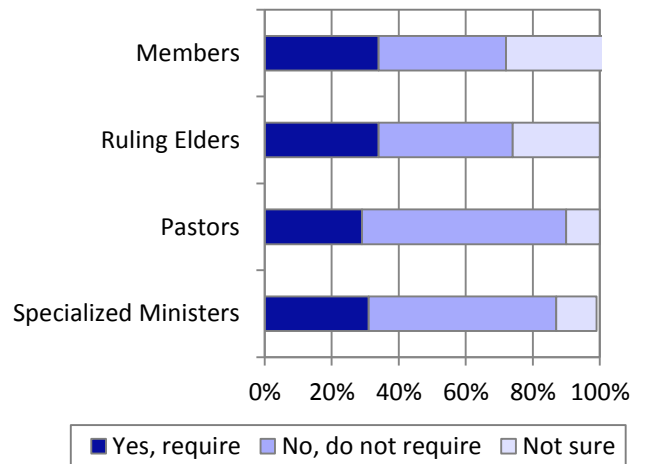
### Recommending a Seminary

- ✓ Asked whether they would be able to recommend any of the PC(USA)-related seminaries if asked by a prospective student, a third of members (35%), almost half of ruling elders (46%), and large majorities of pastors (87%) and specialized ministers (90%) respond in the affirmative.
- ✓ Given a list of statements about the *one* PC(USA) seminary they would *most* recommend:
  - A majority of respondents in all groups state that they had a relative or friend who attends or attended this seminary (members, 57%; ruling elders, 59%; pastors, 68%; specialized ministers, 66%).
  - Very few members (4%) and ruling elders (3%) but a majority of pastors (65%) and specialized ministers (64%) respond that they had been or were currently students at this seminary.
  - About a quarter in each Panel group currently live or have lived within an hour's drive of this seminary (28%; 28%; 27%; 31%).
  - Few members (22%) and ruling elders (29%) but small majorities of pastors (59%) and specialized ministers (62%) report that they have given money to this seminary.
  - Very few panelists in any group report being or having been an employee at the recommended school (members, 1%; ruling elders, 1%; pastors, 6%; specialized ministers, 9%).

### PC(USA) Seminary Requirement for Pastors

- ✓ Respondents were asked whether the PC(USA) should require Presbyterians preparing for the ministry to attend a PC(USA)-related seminary. (See Figure 4.)

**Figure 4. Opinions on Requiring Presbyterians Preparing for the Ministry to Attend a PC(USA)-Related Seminary**



- ✓ Members and ruling elders are fairly evenly divided in their responses, with 34% saying “yes,” a few more responding “no” (38% and 40%, respectively), and the remainder answering “not sure” (29%; 26%).
- ✓ A majority of pastors (61%) and specialized ministers (56%) said the PC(USA) should not require attendance at a PC(USA)-related seminary. About half as many respond “yes” (29%; 26%).

	Ruling Members	Teaching Elders	Elders
Number of surveys sent .....	949	1,354	1,423
Number of ineligible respondents .....	4	3	3
Number of surveys completed .....	351	615	825‡
Response rate .....	37%	45%	58%

‡Of the 825 returned surveys, 584 came from pastors and 241 from specialized ministers.

**The survey was distributed on** May 10, 2013, with returns accepted through August 20, 2013. Results are subject to sampling and other errors. Small differences should be interpreted cautiously. In general, differences of less than 8% between samples are not statistically meaningful.

**For more numbers and interpretation** of these results, a report will be available for free downloading on the web or (for \$15 for a paper copy) from Presbyterian Distribution Service (800-524-2612; order PDS# 20056-14320). It will include tables with percentage responses to each survey question.

**For more information about** the Committee on Theological Education, the entity that sponsored this survey, visit: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/seminaries/cote/>.

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