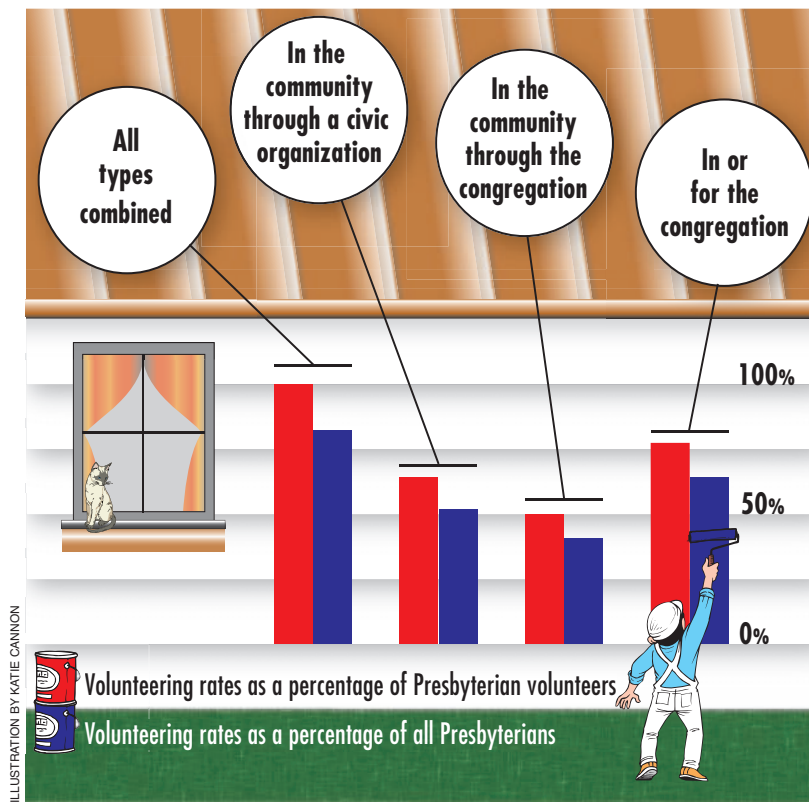


GO FIGURE

JACK MARCUM

Volunteering rates among Presbyterians



Volunteering in church and community

A 2008 survey asked Presbyterians about their volunteering activities. Here are some key findings:

- **Four in five Presbyterians report doing volunteer work** in the previous year (81 percent).
- **Of these, three in four did volunteer work in or for their congregations** (77 percent of the volunteers, or 63 percent of all survey respondents).
- **Almost two-thirds of the volunteers had done volunteer work in their community through a civic organization** (63 percent of the volunteers, or 51 percent of all survey respondents), and **half had done volunteer work in their community through their congregation** (50 percent; 40 percent).
- **The median time spent in volunteer work per month** is five hours for those volunteering in congregations, six hours for those volunteering in the community through a civic organization, and three hours for those volunteering in the community through their congregations.
- **Overall, the median time that volunteers spend per month in all types of volunteering** is 10 hours; adding in those who report no volunteer activity brings the median time spent per month for all Presbyterians to seven hours.

OTHER FINDINGS www.pcusa.org/research

What the research shows

Presbyterians are generous with their volunteer time, especially within congregations. Anyone who has spent five minutes in a church can't help but notice the volume of work that volunteers perform. Still, it's helpful to track such activity.

The information on volunteer service in the community is especially interesting. While around the same portion of individual Presbyterians volunteer in their communities (60 percent) as in congregations (63 percent), the amount of time community volunteers devote per month is greater. As a result, 58 percent of all volunteer hours are spent in the community, compared to 42 percent in congregations.

It's also noteworthy that around 45 percent of all volunteer hours that Presbyterians provide to their communities is carried out through congregations. This finding makes clear that volunteering beyond the congregation is something that congregations view as part of their mission. And the two types of community volunteering reinforce each other: of all those serving in communities, 41 percent volunteer both through their congregation and through a civic organization.

One of my favorite Bible verses is James 1:22: "Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers . . ." These results suggest that, by their actions, many Presbyterians have also taken that verse to heart. □