The Presbyterian Panel
Listening to Presbyterians

REPORT

Issues in the PC(USA)
The May 2006 Survey

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What Is the Presbyterian Panel?

The Presbyterian Panel consists of three nationally representative samples of groups affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): members, elders (lay leaders) currently on session, and ordained ministers. (The session is the governing body in Presbyterian congregations.) For analysis, ministers are split into two groups based on current call: *pastors*, serving a congregation, and *specialized clergy*, serving elsewhere. New samples are drawn every three years. Panel surveys are conducted quarterly, primarily by mail, but with an online completion option.

For more information on methods used to draw the samples, see the technical appendix in the *Background Report for the 2006-2008 Presbyterian Panel* (see next page for Web availability and ordering information).

The Panel is maintained and directed by the office of Research Services of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The first Panel was created in 1973 to provide a means for informing leaders of the opinions and activities of the rank and file across the church. Survey topics and questions are usually developed at the request of, and in consultation with, staff or elected members of national church entities. However, ultimate decisions on content of Panel surveys and the disposition of Panel data are those of Research Services. Standards developed by the American Association of Public Opinion Research guide Panel surveys.

Current Survey

The current survey is the third completed by the 2006-2008 Panel. Questionnaires were mailed in late April 2006, with returns accepted through July 2006. Most panelists received a copy by U.S. mail*,* but a subset (n =291, or 8%) who had signed up for the service was notified via email. Non-responders were sent a postcard reminder on May 12, 2006. All panelists could complete the survey on the Web, and among respondents, 13% of members 16% of elders, 24% of pastors, and 22% of specialized clergy did so via the Web. Response rates for this survey are: members, 49%; elders, 61%; ministers, 67%.

Sponsor and Topic

The survey was sponsored by the Panel in the interest of having representative opinion from Presbyterians on major issues to come before the 2006 General Assembly. (William Weston, a professor of sociology at Centre College, initially suggested the topic.) Questions were based primarily on the September 2005 report of the Theological Task Force on the Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church, a group set up by the 2001 General Assembly for the purpose of leading the PC(USA) "in spiritual discernment of our Christian identity in and for the 21st century . . . [on] issues of Christology, biblical authority and interpretation, ordination standards, and power." This language aside, it was commonly understood that the major focus of the task force would be the ordination of sexually active gays and lesbians to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

A fuller description of the background for this survey is found on p. 1 of this report.

The 2006 General Assembly approved the task force report with a few modifications. A copy of the approved final report is found at http://www.pcusa.org/peaceunitypurity/finalreport/final-report-revised-english.pdf.

Suggested Citation

Research Services, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). *Issues in the PC(USA): The Report of the May 2006 Presbyterian Panel Survey*. Louisville, KY: 2009.

This Report

The first half of this report uses text and graphics to summarize and explicate findings. A data appendix follows with comparative tables that display the percentage distribution of responses to every question for each of the four Panel groups. Results are subject to sampling and other errors.

In general, differences of less than 8% are not statistically meaningful. Some analyses in this report, including those using age and gender, rely on responses of panelists to the initial questionnaire they completed in the fall of 2005. For more information on this earlier survey and responses of panelists to these questions, see the *Religious and Demographic Profile of Presbyterians 2005: Findings from the Initial Survey of the 2006-2008 Presbyterian Panel*, which may be purchased for $10 from Presbyterian Distribution Services (PDS)—call 800-524-2612 and ask for item #65100-05290. The report is also available for free download in Adobe Acrobat format on the Web (go to www.pcusa.org/research/panel).

Author Note

Jack Marcum, administrator of the Presbyterian Panel, and William Weston, a professor of sociology at Centre College, developed the questions. Sheila Strobel Smith, a Ph.D. candidate at Luther Seminary, wrote this report with assistance from the Panel administrator and other staff members of the office of Research Services.

Staff of Research Services

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Panel on the Web

A list of Panel topics with links to *Summaries* and *Reports* of all surveys since 1994 is available on-line at the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Web site: www.pcusa.org/research/panel/index. A catalogue of all surveys since the first Panel was created in 1973 is available here: www.pcusa.org/research/panel/catalog.htm.

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HIGHLIGHTS

✓ The survey was designed to provide feedback to commissioners at the 2006 General Assembly who would be voting on recommendations from the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church. (p. 1)

✓ Most ministers but many fewer laity are "very familiar" or "generally familiar" with the 2005 report of the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church. (p. 2)

✓ More panelists believe that peace, unity, and purity "differ in importance" than "are the same in importance" for the church, and among those who so respond, more laity and pastors choose purity as the most important of the three, while more specialized clergy choose peace. (p. 3)

✓ Among theological liberals, more choose peace than purity as the most important for the church, while among theological conservatives, the reverse is true. (p. 3)

✓ Large majorities believe that "despite our differences, people from the whole spectrum of positions on contested issues are called to be part of the PC(USA)" and that "every member of the PC(USA) should try to live in harmony with other members of the denomination and avoid actions that might divide the PC(USA)." (p. 4)

✓ Large majorities of laity and pastors, and 47% of specialized clergy, believe that "a church that is not clear about what it believes is not worth belonging to." (p. 5)

✓ Majorities of 80% or more agree that the Bible is "the true Word of God," "a reliable guide in matters pertaining to salvation," and "a measure of what is theologically truthful and spiritually life-giving." (p. 5)

✓ Large majorities in all groups believe that "conflict in the church is inevitable," but panelists are more evenly split on whether "conflict in the church tears the body of Christ and should be ended." (p. 6)

✓ Fewer than one in eight laity and one in three ministers believe that a schism in the PC(USA) is inevitable, and only one in three in every group believe that "schism is about the worst thing that can happen to a denomination." (p. 6)

✓ Panelists reveal diverse opinions on the statement, "What the Bible says about same-sex relationships does not settle the question about whether practicing gays and lesbians may be ordained." (p. 6)

✓ Few panelists agree that "the church would be better off if there were a gracious separation of opposing parties [on controversial issues]." Instead, majorities agree that "Presbyterians should step back from controversies that threaten the peace, unity, and purity of the church and . . . seek the truth together." (p. 7)

✓ By majorities of two-thirds or more, panelists "strongly agree" or "agree" that "the standards for ordination of church officers set forth in the church's constitution apply to the whole of the PC(USA)," and that "higher governing bodies have a right to review whether lower governing bodies were reasonable, prayerful, and deliberate in examining candidates for ordination and installation." (p. 8)

✓ More members, elders, and pastors agree than disagree that the church's constitution should "specify the essential tenets of the Reformed faith," but the total who agree is considerably less than 50% for all groups. Among specialized clergy, the pattern is reversed, with almost half in disagreement. (p. 9)

✓ Half of members, small majorities of elders and pastors, and 38% of specialized clergy agree that "the 2006 General Assembly should not change current denominational policy on any of the major issues being contested in the church today, including Christology, biblical interpretation, essential tenets, and sexuality and ordination." (p. 10)

✓ Small majorities of members, elders, and pastors "strongly oppose" or "oppose" the elimination of the "chastity and fidelity" section or "Amendment B" (G-6.0106b) of the *Book of Order*, in contrast to 62% of the specialized clergy who "strongly favor" or "favor" the elimination of this section. (p. 10)

Prior to the 213th General Assembly (2001) in Louisville, the PC(USA) News Service reported that the "peace, unity, and purity of the church" was being threatened by a number of issues.

> While the overriding issue threatening the unity of the church for a number of years has been human sexuality and the role of gay and lesbian Presbyterians in the life of the Church, the underlying issues are more fundamental. They include the authority and interpretation of scripture, the person and role of Jesus Christ, such doctrines as salvation and atonement, and the nature and purpose of the church.[1]

In addition to these issues, recent controversies over the Rev. Dirk Ficca's suggestion in a speech that Jesus Christ may not be the only way to salvation, and the defeat of Amendment O, which would have prohibited same-sex union ceremonies, prompted several presbyteries to submit overtures to the 213th General Assembly calling for theological clarification and church-wide unity. Overture 01-33 from the Presbytery of John Calvin asked the Assembly to appoint a theological commission to study the spiritual condition of the PC(USA) and causes for unrest, reporting its findings to the 217th General Assembly (2005). In response, the 213th General Assembly approved an alternative action directing the moderators of the 213th, 214th, and 215th General Assemblies to appoint a theological task force (not a commission) of seventeen members.[2] The Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church (TTFPUP) was given the following mandate by the 213th General Assembly:

> The Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church is directed to lead the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in spiritual discernment of our Christian identity in and for the 21st century, using a process which includes conferring with synods, presbyteries, and congregations seeking the peace, unity, and purity of the church. This discernment shall include but not be limited to issues of Christology, biblical authority and interpretation, ordination standards, and power. The task force is to develop a process and an instrument by which congregations and governing bodies throughout our church may reflect on and discern the matters that unite and divide us, praying that the Holy Spirit will promote the purity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). (*Minutes*, 2001, Part I, p. 29).

The TTFPUP submitted interim reports to the 215th (2003) and 216th (2004) General Assemblies. (There was no Assembly in 2005.) The final draft of the TTFPUP report, containing seven recommendations, was published in September 2005 so it could be reviewed by the presbyteries prior to the 217th General Assembly (2006).

The purpose of this survey, conducted immediately prior to the 217th General Assembly meeting, was to provide the General Assembly commissioners and other interested persons with a current snapshot of Presbyterian opinion on some of the issues and recommendations discussed in the August 2005 draft of the TTFPUP report. This survey was developed independently by the staff of the Presbyterian Panel, as the cover letter sent to the Panel respondents indicated, to facilitate "informed debate" at the Assembly, "not to influence any particular direction."

However, due to concerns expressed by the stated clerk of the General Assembly, the Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick, the results from this survey were not published prior to the 217th General Assembly. The stated clerk was concerned that providing results at the last minute might unfairly influence commissioners (or be perceived as an effort by the General Assembly Council to do so) and interfere with their discernment process, especially since neither the task force itself nor the General Assembly requested the survey.[3] A four-page summary was released in July 2006. This report presents a more detailed analysis of responses. Note that the survey was based on the September 2005 draft of the TTFPUP report, not the final report approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006), published under the title "*A Season of Discernment: The Final Report of the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church.*"

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[1] Jerry Van Marter, "General Assembly Backgrounder: Unity and Diversity," *PC(USA) News*, May 8, 2001.

[2] In September 2001, the three moderators actually appointed 21 persons from over 500 nominations. One person was unable to serve so the Task Force proceeded with 20 members from its first meeting in December 2001.

[3] A memorandum from the Panel administrator explaining this decision is found at http://www.pcusa.org/research/panel/summaries/statement-053006-revised.pdf.

Awareness of the Task Force Report

✓ Most pastors (86%) and specialized clergy (61%) are "very familiar" or "generally familiar" with the report of the Theological Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church, in contrast to members (12%) and elders (25%). In particular, 43% of members and 25% of elders are "not at all familiar" with the report, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Awareness of Task Force Report

Legend: ■ Very Familiar ■ Generally Familiar ■ Somewhat Familiar □ Not Too Familiar □ Not at All Familiar
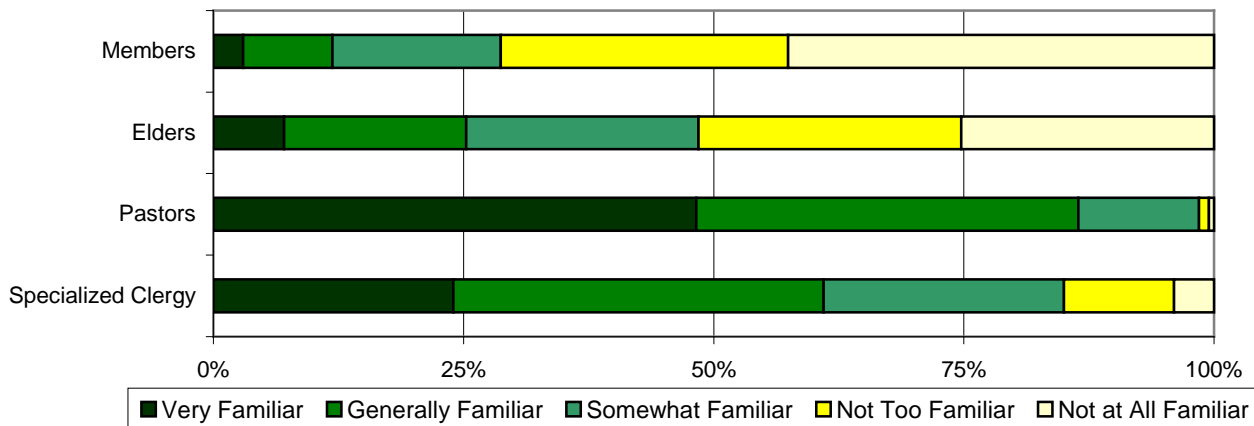
✓ Few members (6%) or elders (15%) but most pastors (72%) and four in ten specialized clergy (41%) have read "most or all of the report" of the task force. Another 8%, 22%, 23%, and 33%, respectively, have read "some" of it.

✓ Other ways that panelists had learned about the report and the percentages who had done so include:
  - Read press accounts (members, 22%; elders, 28%; pastors, 83%; specialized clergy, 64%)
  - Met with or listened to a member of the task force talk about the report (7%; 11%; 68%; 40%)
  - Read or heard accounts of the task force before they issued the report (11%; 18%; 77%; 50%)

Concern with Task Force Topics

✓ Besides church conflict in general, the task force was assigned by the General Assembly to deal with four topics. Large majorities of panelists are "very concerned" or "generally concerned" about each:
  - The role of Jesus Christ in salvation (members, 73%; elders, 79%; pastors, 80%; specialized clergy, 63%)
  - How to interpret the Bible (73%; 78%; 85%; 78%)
  - What standards the church should have on sexuality and ordination (79%; 84%; 86%; 77%)
  - How power is exercised in the church (75%; 80%; 88%; 85%)

Awareness of Affinity Group Positions

✓ Several PC(USA) affinity groups (informally associated with the denomination, but not official church bodies) took positions on the task force report. Few laity are aware of the position of eight such groups—the most, 15% of members and 24% of elders, for that taken by the Presbyterian Lay Committee/*Presbyterian Layman*.

✓ More ministers, especially pastors, indicate awareness of group stands. However, besides the Lay Committee (aware of stand: pastors, 76%; specialized clergy, 51%), a majority of both pastors and specialized clergy are aware of the stand of only one other group, the Covenant Network (72%; 59%). A majority of pastors are also aware of the stands of Presbyterians for Renewal (68%), the Presbyterian Coalition (63%), and More Light Presbyterians (52%).

Ranking and Rating Peace, Unity, and Purity

✓ In every group, more panelists believe that peace, unity, and purity "differ in importance" (members, 52%; elders, 50%; pastors, 49%; specialized clergy, 46%) than "are the same in importance" (30%; 32%; 42%; 38%) for the church.

✓ Among those who believe there are differences in importance, more laity and pastors choose purity as the most important for the church (e.g., overall, 26% of elders choose purity), followed by peace (16%) and unity (8%). Among specialized clergy, most choose peace as most important (overall, 22%), followed by unity (13%) and purity (12%). (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2. Purity, Unity, and Peace: Element Most Important to the Church
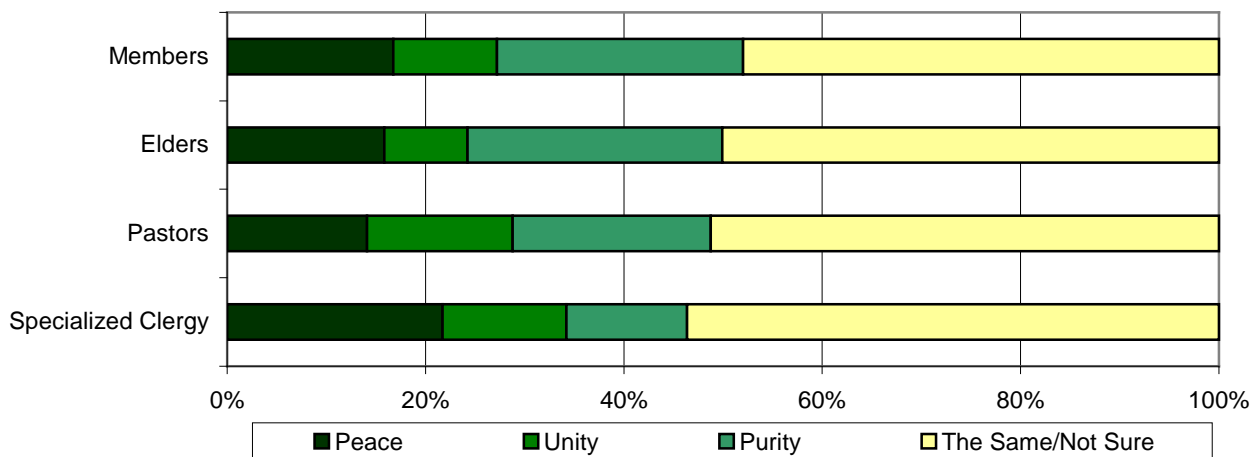
✓ Opinions on the relative importance of peace, unity, and purity for the church vary significantly by theological orientation. Among members, for example, almost three times as many liberals (29%) as conservatives (10%) view peace as the most important of the three, while six times as many conservatives (38%) as liberals (6%) view purity as most important. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3. Opinions on Relative Importance of Peace, Unity, and Purity, by Theological Orientation
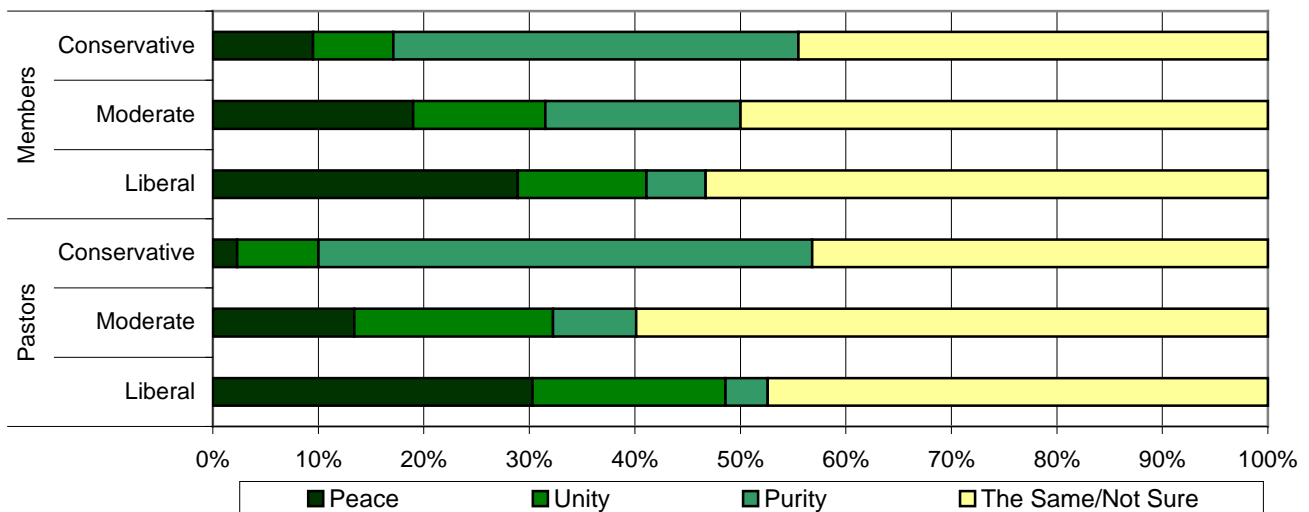
Ranking and Rating Peace, Unity, and Purity (cont.)

✓ The results are similar among pastors (Figure 3, previous page) and, while not shown, also among elders and specialized clergy. Among pastors, 30% of theological liberals but only 2% of theological conservatives view peace as most important; and only 4% of liberals but 47% of conservatives choose purity as the most important.

Paths to Peace

✓ Majorities "strongly agree" or "agree" that "Presbyterians should step back from controversies that threaten the peace, unity, and purity of the church and take time to seek the truth together" (members, 62%; elders, 67%; pastors, 62%; specialized clergy, 70%).

✓ One possible response by governing bodies to ongoing conflicts in the church—forming groups "representing diverse views to engage in intensive discernment about those conflicts"—is supported by sizable majorities ("strongly agree" or "agree"): members, 67%; elders, 66%; pastors, 62%; specialized clergy, 68%.

✓ More ministers than laity "strongly agree" or "agree" that "the church's governing bodies should explore the use of alternative forms of decision making besides parliamentary procedure, especially in dealing with potentially divisive issues" (members, 44%; elders, 41%; pastors, 55%; specialized clergy, 63%).

✓ Large majorities "strongly agree" or "agree" that "all church members should conciliate, mediate, and adjust differences without strife, prayerfully and deliberately, and institute administrative or judicial proceedings only when other efforts fail" (members, 79%; elders, 79%; pastors, 81%; specialized clergy, 85%).

Unity in Diversity

✓ Large majorities "strongly agree" or "agree" with this statement: "Despite our differences, people from the whole spectrum of positions on contested issues are called to be part of the PC(USA)" (members, 72%; elders, 76%; pastors, 85%; specialized clergy, 84%).

✓ Many fewer panelists in all groups "strongly agree" or "agree" with a related statement: "In general, Presbyterians on all sides of the debate on sexuality, ordination, and same-sex relationships are sincere and trying to be guided by Scripture" (members, 47%; elders, 44%; pastors, 55%; specialized clergy 59%). More members and elders are "neutral or not sure" (30%; 27%) in comparison to pastors and specialized clergy (18%; 18%).

✓ Approximately two in three panelists "strongly agree" or "agree" that "every member of the PC(USA) should try to live in harmony with other members of the denomination and avoid actions that might divide the PC(USA)" (members, 68%; elders, 62%; pastors, 63%; specialized clergy, 67%).

✓ There are significant differences by age group among members, elders, and pastors (but not specialized clergy) to the statement, "every member of the PC(USA) should try to live in harmony with other members of the denomination and avoid actions that might divide the PC(USA)." Among pastors, for example, in all age groups more than half "strongly agree" or "agree" (less than age 40, 59%; 40-49, 51%; 50-59, 68%; 60 or older, 71%) with the statement. The percentage less than 50 years old who "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (less than age 40, 27%; 40-49, 33%), though, is greater than for pastors age 50 or older (50-59, 20%; 60 or older, 13%).

✓ Most ministers but somewhat fewer members and elders "strongly agree" or "agree" that "the church should be united on a few essentials, and not worry about other differences" (members, 44%; elders, 42%; pastors, 53%; specialized clergy, 65%).

Opinions on Purity

✓ Only a minority "strongly agree" or "agree" (members, 35%; elders, 36%; pastors, 28%; specialized clergy, 19%) with the statement, "if the church is not pure, it will be corrupt." More "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (43%; 42%; 55%; 65%). The rest respond "neutral or not sure" (22%; 23%; 16%; 17%). (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4. Opinions on Purity Among Elders and Pastors
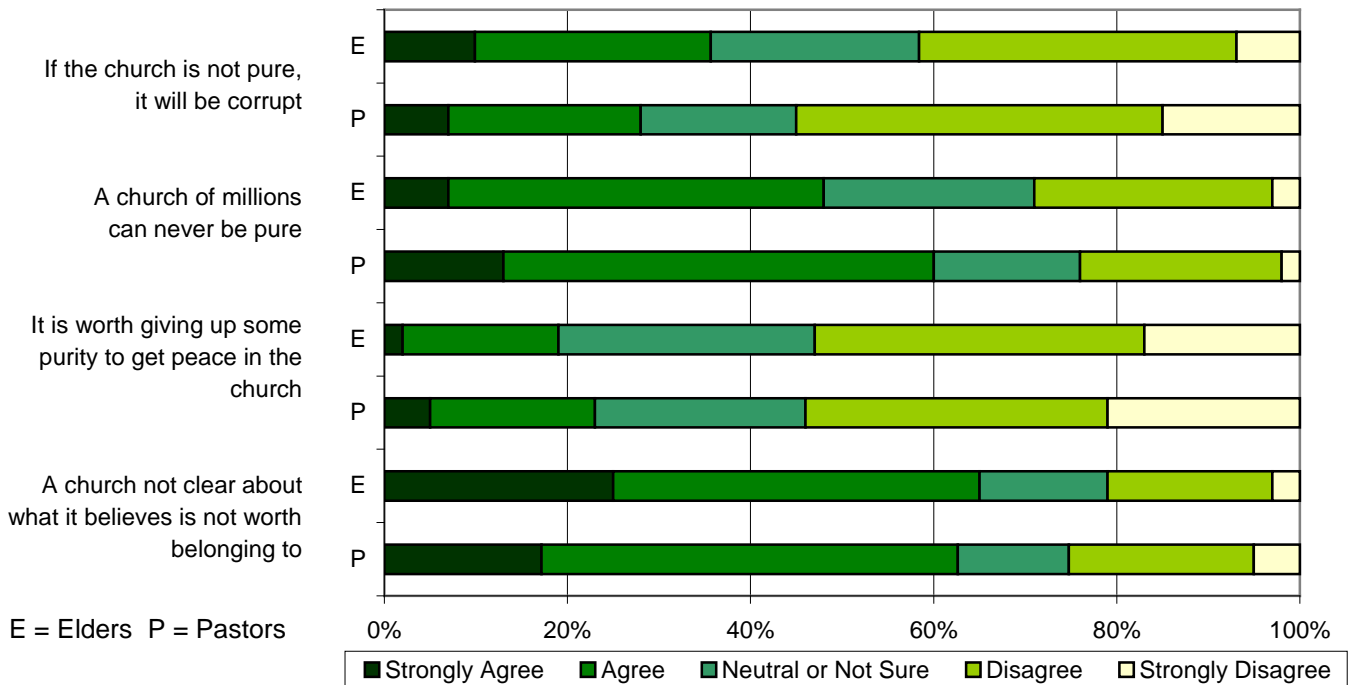
✓ More laity "strongly agree" or "agree" (members, 43%; elders, 48%) than "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (30%; 29%) with the statement, "A church of millions can never be pure." Among ministers, the gap between those in agreement (pastors, 60%; specialized clergy, 69%) and disagreement (24%; 17%) is greater.

✓ Majorities in three groups "strongly disagree" or "disagree" that "it is worth giving up some purity to get peace in the church" (members, 53%; elders, 53%; pastors, 54%). More members and elders are "neutral or not sure" (25%; 28%) than "strongly agree" or "agree" (22%; 19%), while the reverse is true for pastors (neutral or not sure, 22%; strongly agree or agree, 33%). Specialized clergy are more evenly split than any of the other groups, with 40% responding in disagreement; 31%, in agreement; and 30%, "neutral or not sure."

✓ More than six in ten members (67%), elders (65%), and pastors (62%) "strongly agree" or "agree" with the statement, "A church that is not clear about what it believes is not worth belonging to." That compares to 47% of specialized clergy, although even in this group the percentage in agreement is greater than the percentage in disagreement (38%). In all groups, the share responding "neutral or not sure" is lowest for this statement than for any of the other three discussed in this section (14%; 14%; 12%; 14%).

✓ Views on any one of the statements in Figure 4 tend to be consistent with views on the other three statements. For example, among members, more of those who agree (29%) than disagree (14%) that "a church of millions will never be pure" agree that "it is worth giving up some purity to get peace in the church," while fewer of those who agree (44%) than disagree (70%) that "a church of millions will never be pure" disagree that "it is worth giving up some purity to get peace in the church."

The Bible

✓ Large majorities in all groups "strongly agree" or "agree" that the Bible is:
  - The true Word of God (members, 83%; elders, 86%; pastors, 91%; specialized clergy, 81%)
  - A reliable guide in matters pertaining to salvation (91%; 96%; 96%; 91%)
  - A measure of what is theologically truthful and spiritually life-giving (90%; 92%; 92%; 94%)

✓ Many fewer "strongly agree" or "agree" that:
  - Freedom of conscience in the interpretation of the Bible is an absolute right for church officers (members, 43%; elders, 52%; pastors, 55%; specialized clergy, 69%)
  - Freedom of conscience in the interpretation of the Bible by church officers should be subject to church standards (52%; 52%; 72%; 59%)

  Despite being rough opposites, many panelists respond similarly to both of these statements. For example, among elders and pastors who "strongly agree" or "agree" that church officers should have absolute freedom of conscience in biblical interpretation, 48% and 60%, respectively, also agree that such freedom of conscience should be subject to church standards.

✓ Panelists reveal diverse opinions on the statement, "What the Bible says about same-sex relationships does not settle the question about whether practicing gays and lesbians may be ordained" (see Figure 5):
  - More specialized clergy "strongly agree" or "agree" (65%) than "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (27%) with this statement. Other panelists are more evenly divided between agreement (members, 36%; elders, 40%; pastors, 49%) and disagreement (43%; 43%; 44%).
  - More members and elders are "neutral or not sure" (21%; 17%) in comparison to pastors and specialized clergy (7%; 7%).

Figure 5. Opinions on What the Bible Says About Same-sex Relationships

Q3c. Agree or disagree? What the Bible says about same-sex relationships does not settle the question about whether practicing gays and lesbians may be ordained.
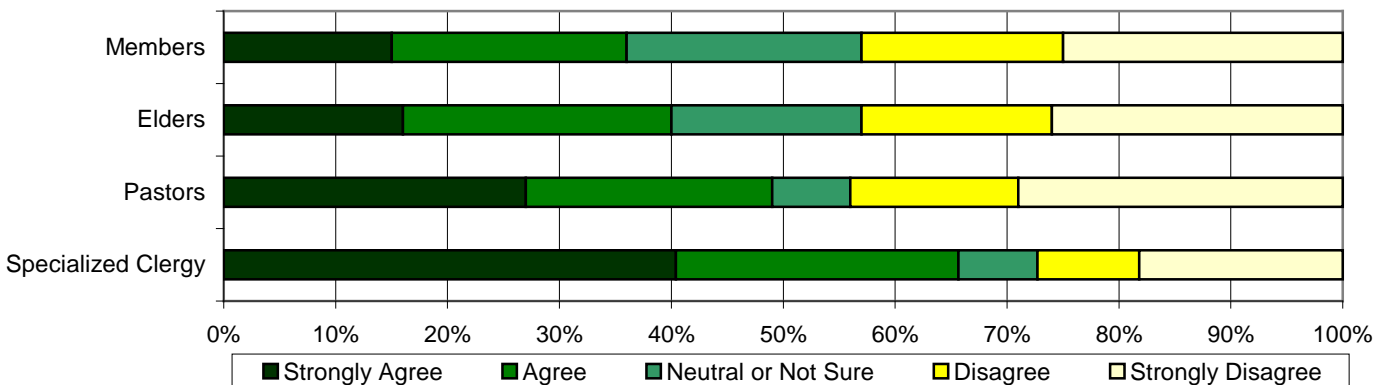
Basic Beliefs

✓ Large majorities "strongly agree" or "agree" with each of three statements:
  - Salvation rests not in any merit of our own but in the sovereign love of God that has been made known to us in Jesus Christ (members, 92%; elders, 94%; pastors, 99%; specialized clergy, 97%)
  - My faith is in the God of Israel who raised Jesus Christ bodily from the dead (91%; 93%; 95%; 84%)
  - Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through him (83%; 85%; 81%; 64%)

✓ In a series of items, large majorities in all Panel groups (84% or more) "strongly agree" or "agree" that "the love of God extends to all people" regardless of their: religious perspective; social/economic class; race or ethnicity; sex/gender; or sexual orientation.

Conflict in the Church

✓ Large majorities "strongly agree" or "agree" that "conflict in the church is inevitable" (members, 83%; elders, 84%; pastors, 92%; specialized clergy, 94%). (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6. Opinions of Elders and Pastors on Church Conflict and Schism

E = Elders P = Pastors

Legend: ■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral or Not Sure ■ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree
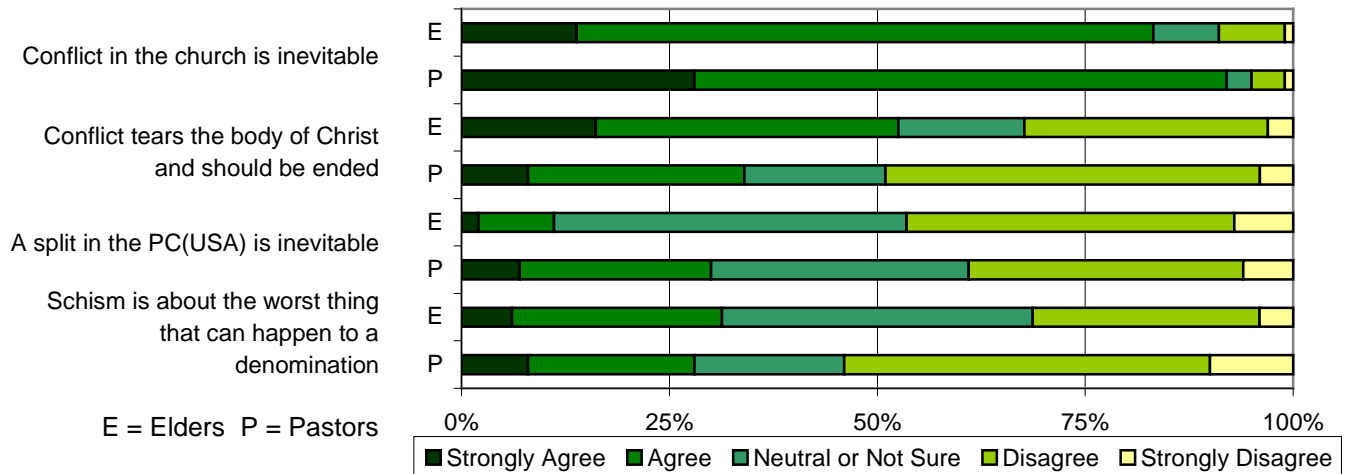
✓ Small majorities of laity "strongly agree" or "agree" that "conflict in the church tears the body of Christ and should be ended" (members, 51%; elders, 52%), compared to 34% of pastors and 37% of specialized clergy. In fact, approximately half of both minister groups "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (49%; 53%).

✓ There is a significant difference of opinion among members by age on this issue. Among the youngest (age 40 or younger), only 39% "strongly agree" or "agree," a share that is higher with each older age group (40-54, 43%; 55-69, 45%; and 70 or older, 67%). The age pattern of those responding "strongly disagree" or "disagree" is the reverse (51%; 44%; 37%; 22%).

Splitting the Church

✓ Few laity (members, 11%; elders, 11%) and specialized clergy (16%) but three in ten pastors (30%) "strongly agree" or "agree" that "a split in the PC(USA) is inevitable" (Figure 4). Large segments of each Panel group are "neutral or not sure" (members, 43%; elders, 42%; pastors, 31%; specialized clergy, 34%).

✓ To the statement, "schism is about the worst thing that can happen to a denomination," laity are evenly split between "strongly agree" or "agree" (members, 33%; elders, 31%), "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (33%; 31%), and "neutral or not sure" (35%; 37%). Among ministers, however, many more "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (pastors, 54%; specialized clergy, 50%) than "strongly agree" or "agree" (28%; 33%).

✓ Few panelists "strongly agree" or "agree" that "the church would be better off if there were a gracious separation of opposing parties [on controversial issues]" (members, 19%; elders, 19%; pastors, 22%; specialized clergy, 31%). However, around four in ten laity are "neutral or not sure" (42%; 39%) (among pastors it is 24%, and among specialized clergy, 25%).

✓ A large segment of each Panel group responds "neutral or not sure" to the statement, "If controversy in the PC(USA) continues, we will lose a few members, but there will not be a large split (members, 45%; elders, 46%; pastors, 37%; specialized clergy, 46%). More laity "strongly agree" or "agree" (members, 37%; elders, 30%) than "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (19%; 23%), but the opposite is true of pastors (strongly agree or agree, 24%; strongly disagree or disagree, 39%), and specialized clergy are evenly divided (28%; 26%).

Ordination Standards

✓ By majorities of 80% or more, panelists "strongly agree" or "agree" that "the standards for ordination of church officers set forth in the church's constitution apply to the whole of the PC(USA)" (members, 81%; elders, 87%; pastors, 87%; specialized clergy, 80%).

✓ Similar-sized majorities "strongly agree" or "agree" that "ordaining and installing bodies have the responsibility to apply constitutional standards when examining candidates for ordination" (members, 84%; elders, 86%; pastors, 94%; specialized clergy, 88%).

✓ However, many fewer "strongly agree" or "agree" that "when an ordination candidate disagrees with one of the church's constitutional standards, ordination should still be allowed to proceed if the disagreement is not over an essential tenet of Reformed faith or polity" (members, 39%; elders, 37%; pastors, 49%; specialized clergy, 56%).

✓ There are significant differences among pastors by age group on ordination and disagreement with the constitution (see Figure 7). Among pastors age 50 and older, more than half "strongly agree" or "agree" (50-59, 51%; 60 or older, 54%) and three in ten "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (50-59, 31%; 60 or older, 33%) that candidates who disagree with the constitution should be ordained as long as that disagreement isn't with an essential tenet. Pastors in the 40-49 age group are more evenly split between those who "strongly agree" or "agree" (42%) and those who "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (41%). Almost half of pastors younger than age 40 "strongly agree" or "agree" (47%) but the rest are more evenly split between "neutral" (28%) and "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (26%).

Figure 7. Pastors' Opinions on Ordination and Constitutional Disagreements, by Age Group

Q3j. Agree or Disagree? When an ordination candidate disagrees with one of the church's constitutional standards, ordination should still be allowed to proceed if the disagreement is not over an essential tenet of Reformed faith or polity
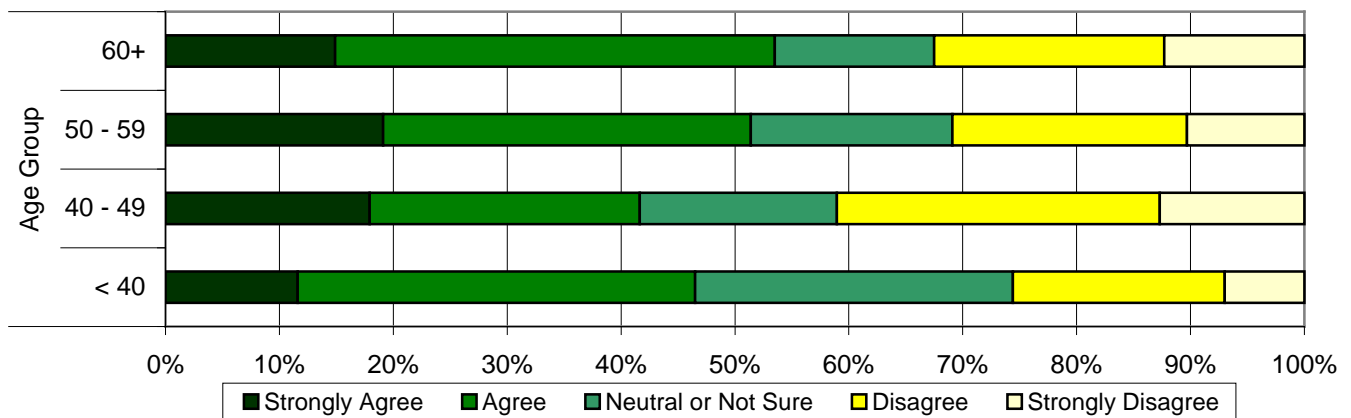
Reviewing Ordination Decisions

✓ Large majorities "strongly agree" or "agree" that "higher governing bodies have a right to review whether lower governing bodies were reasonable, prayerful, and deliberate in examining candidates for ordination and installation" (members, 72%; elders, 69%; pastors, 87%; specialized clergy, 81%).

✓ In addition, majorities in all groups "strongly agree" or "agree" that "the General Assembly and its Permanent Judicial Commission should have the power to review decisions of the lower governing bodies in cases of ordination and installation of church officers" (members, 62%; elders, 59%; pastors, 77%; specialized clergy, 67%).

Defining Essentials of Faith

✓ Should "the church's constitution specify the essential tenets of the Reformed faith, rather than leaving it up to ordaining bodies to discern them on a case-by-case basis"? (See Figure 8.)
  - Among laity, four in ten are "neutral or not sure" (members, 44%; elders, 41%), but overall, more "strongly favor" or "favor" this idea (37%; 38%) than "strongly oppose" or "oppose" it (19%; 21%).
  - More pastors "strongly favor" or "favor" the idea (44%) than "strongly oppose" or "oppose" it (36%), while the reverse is true among specialized clergy (31%; 48%). Approximately one in five in both groups are "neutral or not sure" (18%; 21%).

Figure 8. Opinions on Specifying Essential Tenets in the Constitution

Q-10b. Some Presbyterians think that the church's constitution should specify the essential tenets of the Reformed faith, rather than leaving it up to ordaining bodies to discern them on a case-by-case basis. What is your opinion on this idea?
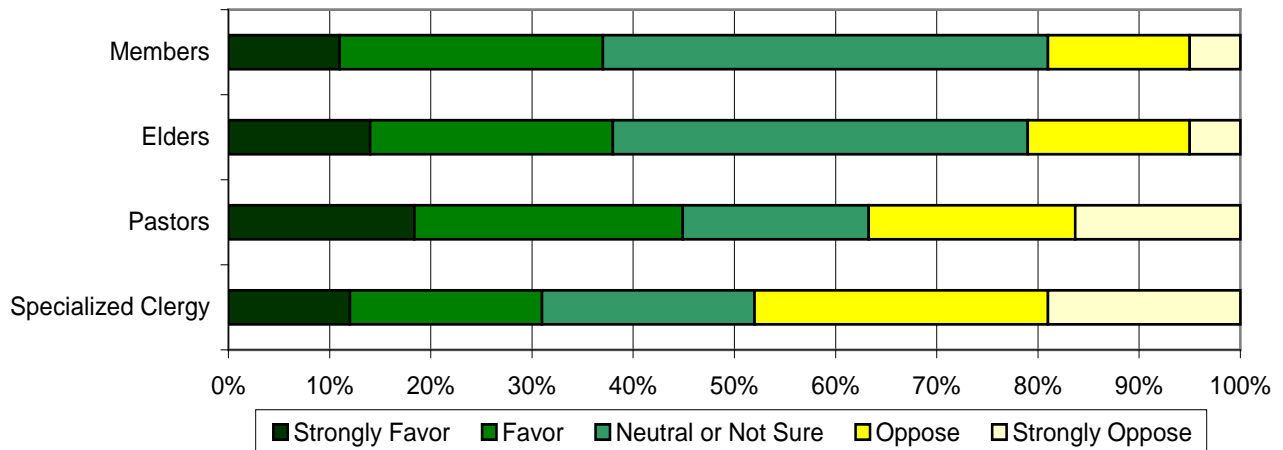
✓ In all groups, more "strongly agree" or "agree" (members, 40%; elders, 44%; pastors, 50%; specialized clergy, 61%) than "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (28%; 30%; 37%; 24%) that "letting local ordaining bodies decide whether their members are in essential agreement with the Presbyterian and Reformed faith is a good custom." However, around twice as many laity (members, 31%; elders, 26%) as ministers (pastors, 14%; specialized clergy, 14%) are "neutral or not sure."

✓ More laity (members, 47%; elders, 49%) and pastors (49%) "strongly agree" or "agree" than "strongly disagree" or "disagree" (28%; 29%; 38%) that "if local ordaining bodies are allowed to decide what is essential and inessential, there will be chaos." The reverse is found for specialized clergy (35%; 50%). Again, more laity (25%; 22%) than ministers (13%; 15%) are "neutral or not sure."

Changing the Constitution

✓ Around half of members (48%), small majorities of elders (54%) and pastors (56%), and 38% of specialized clergy "strongly agree" or "agree" that "the 2006 General Assembly should not change current denominational policy on any of the major issues being contested in the church today, including Christology, biblical interpretation, essential tenets, and sexuality and ordination."

✓ About half of members (48%) and majorities of elders (57%), pastors (66%), and specialized clergy (78%) "strongly oppose" or "oppose" a proposal whereby "a congregation could switch presbyteries if two-thirds of those attending a congregational meeting wanted to switch, and if a majority of the new presbytery voted to accept the congregation." Among laity, three in ten are "neutral or not sure" (members, 37%; elders, 30%), in contrast to pastors (18%) and specialized clergy (14%).

Changing the Constitution (cont.)

✓ Small majorities of members, elders and pastors "strongly oppose" or "oppose" the elimination of the "chastity and fidelity" section or "Amendment B" (G-6.0106b) of the *Book of Order* (members, 59%; elders, 58%; pastors, 53%), in contrast to specialized clergy, 62% of whom "strongly favor" or "favor" the elimination of this section. (See Figure 9.)

Figure 9. Opinions on the Elimination of Chastity and Fidelity Amendment (G-6.0106b)
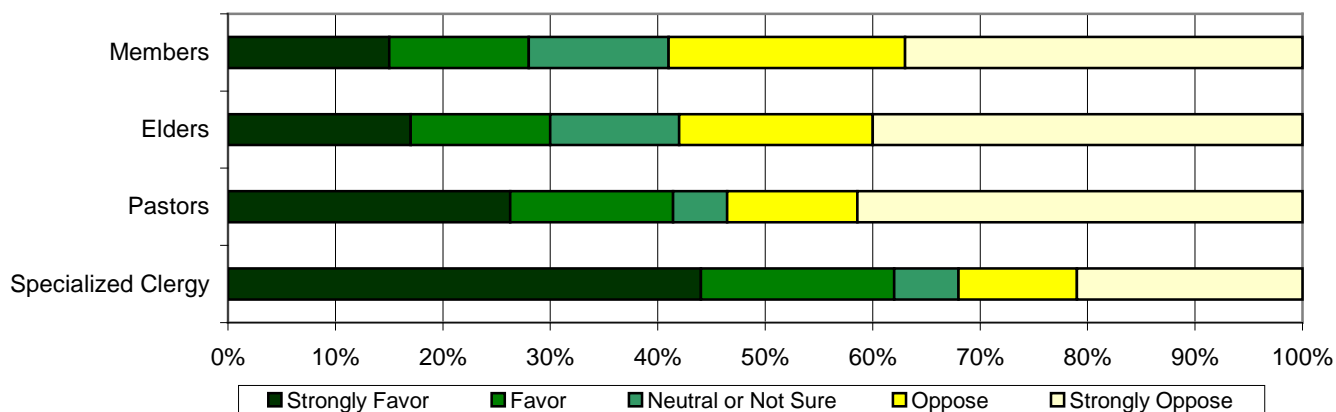
✓ Opinions regarding the elimination of G-6.0106b differ significantly by age only for pastors. The majority of pastors age 49 and younger "strongly oppose" or "oppose" (61%) the elimination of G-6.0106b, while fewer "strongly favor" or "favor" (35%) that action. In contrast, pastors age 50 and older are more evenly split between "strongly oppose" or "oppose" (49%) and "strongly favor" or "favor" (45%).

✓ The vast majority of the panelists who "oppose" or "strongly oppose" the elimination of G-6.0106b also "strongly disagree" or disagree" with the statement, "What the Bible says about same-sex relationships does not settle the question about whether practicing gays and lesbians may be ordained" (members, 92%; elders, 92%; pastors, 98%; specialized clergy, 84%).

✓ For almost every panelist, opinions on removal of G-6.0106b are consistent with opinions on ordination to the ministry of sexually active gays and lesbians, based on responses to a prior Panel survey (Fall, 2005). For example, of elders who favored gay and lesbian ordination in the earlier survey, 81% also favor removal of G-6.0106b in the current survey. Among pastors, the corresponding figure is 88%. At the other extreme, among those who opposed gay and lesbian ordination in the earlier survey, 83% of elders and 94% of pastors also oppose removal of G-6.0106b. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Opinions on G-6.0106b and Ordination of Gays and Lesbians to Ministry

Q9. Opinion on the General Assembly removing G-6.0106b from the *Book of Order*	Elders			Pastors		
	Would you like the PC(USA) to permit ordination to ministry of sexually active gays and lesbians? (Fall, 2005)					
	Yes	**Not Sure**	**No**	**Yes**	**Not Sure**	**No**
Favor	81%	35%	9%	88%	31%	2%
Neutral or Not Sure	10%	39%	9%	4%	31%	4%
Oppose	8%	27%	83%	8%	38%	94%

Issues in the PC(USA)

The May 2006 Presbyterian Panel Survey

Appendix

	Members	Elders	Ministers
Number of questionnaires mailed	1,079	1,163	1,456
Number of questionnaires returned	538	678	979‡
Percent returned	49%	58%	67%

‡660 pastors; 314 specialized clergy; 5 not classified

Q1.   Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on matters of faith.

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
a. My faith is in the God of Israel who raised Jesus Christ bodily from the dead				
Strongly agree	66%	71%	76%	57%
Agree	25%	22%	19%	27%
Neutral or not sure	7%	6%	3%	7%
Disagree	1%	1%	2%	7%
Strongly disagree	*	1%	1%	1%
b. Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through him				
Strongly agree	63%	68%	58%	38%
Agree	20%	17%	23%	26%
Neutral or not sure	9%	9%	10%	17%
Disagree	7%	5%	6%	14%
Strongly disagree	1%	1%	3%	5%
c. Salvation rests not in any merit of our own but in the sovereign love of God that has been made known to us in Jesus Christ				
Strongly agree	67%	76%	90%	75%
Agree	25%	18%	9%	22%
Neutral or not sure	5%	4%	1%	2%
Disagree	2%	2%	*	—
Strongly disagree	*	*	*	1%
The love of God extends to all people regardless of their:				
d. religious perspective				
Strongly agree	72%	74%	86%	84%
Agree	20%	18%	8%	12%
Neutral or not sure	4%	4%	2%	2%
Disagree	2%	2%	2%	1%
Strongly disagree	1%	2%	2%	1%

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

*	=	less than 0.5%; rounds to zero
—	=	zero (0.0); no cases in this category
+	=	nonresponses of 10% or more on this question (reported percentages for all questions omit nonresponses)
n	=	number of respondents eligible to answer this question
♦	=	percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could make more than one response

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy

Q1. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on matters of faith.
(Cont.)

The love of God extends to all people regardless of their: (Cont.)
e. social/economic class

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	83%	88%	95%	95%
Agree	16%	12%	4%	5%
Neutral or not sure	*	—	—	—
Disagree	*	—	—	—
Strongly disagree	*	—	*	—

f. race or ethnicity

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	83%	88%	96%	95%
Agree	16%	12%	4%	5%
Neutral or not sure	*	—	—	—
Disagree	*	—	—	—
Strongly disagree	*	—	*	—

g. sex/gender

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	82%	87%	95%	95%
Agree	17%	12%	4%	5%
Neutral or not sure	*	*	*	—
Disagree	*	*	—	—
Strongly disagree	*	*	*	—

h. sexual orientation

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	69%	72%	91%	91%
Agree	18%	12%	5%	8%
Neutral or not sure	8%	9%	2%	—
Disagree	3%	4%	1%	1%
Strongly disagree	2%	3%	1%	*

Q2. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning the Bible.

The Bible is:
a. the true Word of God

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	49%	54%	64%	44%
Agree	34%	32%	27%	37%
Neutral or not sure	12%	11%	4%	11%
Disagree	5%	2%	4%	7%
Strongly disagree	1%	*	1%	1%

b. a reliable guide in matters pertaining to salvation

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	52%	57%	68%	50%
Agree	39%	39%	28%	41%
Neutral or not sure	7%	4%	2%	6%
Disagree	2%	1%	1%	2%
Strongly disagree	*	—	1%	*

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding
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n = number of respondents eligible to answer this question
♦ = percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could make more than one response
A-2

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy

Q2. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning the Bible.
(Cont.)

The Bible is: (Cont.)

c. a light in a world of moral obscurity

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	52%	55%	63%	45%
Agree	38%	37%	30%	41%
Neutral or not sure	10%	6%	5%	11%
Disagree	1%	1%	2%	3%
Strongly disagree	*	—	1%	—

d. a measure of what is theologically truthful and spiritually life-giving

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	50%	54%	66%	52%
Agree	40%	38%	26%	42%
Neutral or not sure	10%	7%	4%	5%
Disagree	1%	1%	2%	1%
Strongly disagree	*	*	1%	—

e. Individual freedom of conscience in the interpretation of the Bible is an absolute right for church officers (deacons, elders, and ministers)

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	14%	22%	27%	38%
Agree	29%	30%	28%	31%
Neutral or not sure	26%	21%	11%	11%
Disagree	21%	17%	23%	14%
Strongly disagree	10%	10%	11%	6%

f. Freedom of conscience in the interpretation of the Bible by church officers should be subject to church standards

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	16%	14%	28%	23%
Agree	36%	38%	44%	36%
Neutral or not sure	31%	30%	14%	18%
Disagree	12%	13%	8%	16%
Strongly disagree	5%	5%	5%	7%

Q3. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on matters within the PC(USA).

a. Presbyterians should step back from controversies that threaten the peace, unity, and purity of the church and take time to seek the truth together

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	20%	24%	24%	30%
Agree	42%	43%	38%	40%
Neutral or not sure	15%	12%	10%	9%
Disagree	17%	15%	19%	16%
Strongly disagree	6%	6%	8%	5%

b. Despite our differences, people from the whole spectrum of positions on contested issues are called to be part of the PC(USA)

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	26%	31%	41%	52%
Agree	46%	45%	34%	32%
Neutral or not sure	19%	14%	9%	6%
Disagree	6%	6%	13%	8%
Strongly disagree	3%	3%	3%	2%

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

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A-3

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy

Q3. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on matters within the PC(USA).
(Cont.)

c. What the Bible says about same-sex relationships does not settle the question about whether practicing gays and lesbians may be ordained

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	15%	16%	27%	40%
Agree	21%	24%	22%	25%
Neutral or not sure	21%	17%	7%	7%
Disagree	18%	17%	15%	9%
Strongly disagree	25%	26%	29%	18%

d. In general, Presbyterians on all sides of the debate on sexuality, ordination, and same-sex relationships are sincere and trying to be guided by Scripture

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	10%	10%	15%	23%
Agree	37%	34%	40%	36%
Neutral or not sure	30%	27%	18%	18%
Disagree	14%	20%	20%	18%
Strongly disagree	9%	9%	7%	5%

e. Every member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) should try to live in harmony with other members of the denomination and avoid actions that might divide the PC(USA)

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	22%	20%	20%	27%
Agree	46%	42%	43%	40%
Neutral or not sure	16%	15%	14%	11%
Disagree	12%	20%	20%	17%
Strongly disagree	4%	4%	3%	4%

f. In response to ongoing conflicts in the church, governing bodies should form groups representing diverse views to engage in intensive discernment about those conflicts

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	16%	15%	18%	25%
Agree	51%	51%	44%	43%
Neutral or not sure	23%	21%	20%	19%
Disagree	8%	11%	15%	12%
Strongly disagree	2%	3%	3%	1%

g. The church's governing bodies should explore the use of alternative forms of decision making besides parliamentary procedure, especially in dealing with potentially divisive issues

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	10%	10%	22%	24%
Agree	34%	31%	33%	39%
Neutral or not sure	33%	28%	16%	17%
Disagree	17%	18%	19%	12%
Strongly disagree	6%	12%	10%	8%

Q3. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on matters within the PC(USA).
(Cont.)

h. The standards for ordination of church officers (ministers, elders, and deacons) set forth in the church's constitution—*The Book of Confessions* and *The Book of Order*—apply to the whole of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	34%	40%	53%	42%
Agree	47%	47%	34%	38%
Neutral or not sure	18%	11%	7%	10%
Disagree	2%	2%	3%	7%
Strongly disagree	*	*	2%	3%

i. Ordaining and installing bodies—presbyteries in the case of ministers, sessions in the cases of elders and deacons—have the responsibility to apply constitutional standards when examining candidates for ordination

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	33%	36%	52%	39%
Agree	51%	50%	42%	49%
Neutral or not sure	13%	12%	3%	9%
Disagree	3%	2%	2%	3%
Strongly disagree	*	*	1%	1%

j. When an ordination candidate disagrees with one of the church's constitutional standards, ordination should still be allowed to proceed if the disagreement is not over an essential tenet of Reformed faith or polity

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	6%	6%	17%	19%
Agree	33%	31%	32%	37%
Neutral or not sure	34%	30%	18%	17%
Disagree	20%	23%	22%	19%
Strongly disagree	7%	10%	11%	7%

k. Higher governing bodies have a right to review whether lower governing bodies were reasonable, responsible, prayerful, and deliberate in examining candidates for ordination and installation

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	12%	17%	33%	28%
Agree	60%	52%	54%	53%
Neutral or not sure	20%	21%	8%	11%
Disagree	7%	9%	5%	7%
Strongly disagree	1%	1%	1%	1%

l. The General Assembly and its Permanent Judicial Commission should have the power to review the decisions of the lower governing bodies in cases of ordination and installation of church officers

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	12%	16%	30%	26%
Agree	50%	43%	47%	41%
Neutral or not sure	27%	28%	13%	20%
Disagree	9%	11%	8%	12%
Strongly disagree	1%	2%	2%	2%

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding
* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero
— = zero (0.0); no cases in this category
+ = nonresponses of 10% or more on this question (reported percentages for all questions omit nonresponses)
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♦ = percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could make more than one response

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy

Q3. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on matters within the PC(USA).

(Cont.)

m. All parties involved in ordaining church officers should endeavor
to outdo one another in honoring one another's decisions

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	5%	4%	16%	18%
Agree	22%	19%	31%	32%
Neutral or not sure	38%	43%	29%	30%
Disagree	27%	26%	18%	14%
Strongly disagree	8%	9%	6%	5%

n. The 2006 General Assembly should not change current
denominational policy on any of the major issues being contested
in the church today, including Christology, biblical interpretation,
essential tenets, and sexuality and ordination

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	24%	30%	36%	24%
Agree	24%	24%	20%	14%
Neutral or not sure	29%	26%	13%	18%
Disagree	18%	15%	19%	28%
Strongly disagree	6%	6%	11%	17%

o. All church members should conciliate, mediate, and adjust
differences without strife, prayerfully and deliberately, and institute
administrative or judicial proceedings only when other efforts fail
to preserve the purposes and purity of the church

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	20%	27%	30%	37%
Agree	59%	52%	51%	48%
Neutral or not sure	15%	15%	10%	9%
Disagree	5%	5%	7%	4%
Strongly disagree	2%	2%	1%	2%

Q4. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has a Theological Task Force on the Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church. How familiar are you with it?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Very familiar	3%	7%	48%	24%
Generally familiar	9%	18%	38%	37%
Somewhat familiar	17%	23%	12%	24%
Not too familiar	29%	26%	1%	11%
Not at all familiar	43%	25%	*	4%

Q5. The Task Force recently issued a report and its members have been talking to the church about it. Have you:

a. Read most or all of the report?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	+	+		
Yes [if "yes here, responses to Q5b not tabulated]	6%	15%	72%	41%
No	94%	85%	28%	59%

b. Read some of the report?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	n=445	n=504	n=174	n=167
Yes	9%	26%	84%	56%
No	91%	74%	16%	44%

c. Read press accounts of the report?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	+	+	+	+
Yes	22%	28%	83%	64%
No	78%	72%	17%	36%

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero

— = zero (0.0); no cases in this category

+ = nonresponses of 10% or more on this question (reported percentages for all questions omit nonresponses)

n = number of respondents eligible to answer this question

♦ = percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could make more than one response   A-6

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy

Q5. The Task Force recently issued a report and its members have been talking to the church about it. Have you:
(Cont.)

d. Met with or listened to a member of the Task Force talk about the report?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	+	+	+	+
Yes	7%	11%	68%	40%
No	93%	89%	32%	60%

e. Read or heard accounts of the Task Force before they issued the report?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	+	+	+	+
Yes	11%	18%	77%	50%
No	89%	82%	23%	50%

f. Heard about the report in some other way? (Specify): _____

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	+	+	+	+
Yes	13%	21%	42%	34%
No	87%	79%	58%	66%

Q6. The Task Force was assigned by the General Assembly to deal with four particular issues (as well as church conflict in general). How much, if at all, are you concerned about each of these four issues?

a. The role of Jesus Christ in salvation

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Very concerned	48%	56%	56%	40%
Generally concerned	25%	23%	24%	23%
Somewhat concerned	10%	7%	6%	14%
Not too concerned	13%	10%	11%	18%
Not at all concerned	4%	4%	2%	6%

b. How to interpret the Bible

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Very concerned	42%	47%	56%	46%
Generally concerned	31%	31%	29%	32%
Somewhat concerned	17%	12%	9%	10%
Not too concerned	8%	8%	5%	9%
Not at all concerned	2%	2%	1%	3%

c. What standards the church should have on sexuality and ordination

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Very concerned	51%	58%	58%	50%
Generally concerned	28%	26%	28%	27%
Somewhat concerned	14%	12%	10%	13%
Not too concerned	6%	4%	4%	7%
Not at all concerned	2%	1%	1%	2%

d. How power is exercised in the church

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Very concerned	41%	43%	54%	58%
Generally concerned	34%	37%	34%	27%
Somewhat concerned	18%	16%	8%	11%
Not too concerned	6%	4%	3%	4%
Not at all concerned	1%	*	*	1%

Q7. How do you feel about the relative importance of peace, unity, and purity for the church?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
They differ in importance	52%	50%	49%	46%
They are the same in importance	30%	32%	42%	38%
Not sure	18%	18%	10%	15%

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy

Q7a. [If "They differ in importance,"] In what order would you rank them?
(1 = most important; 2 = second most important; 3 = third most important)

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	n=257	n=317	n=315	n=141
Peace				
Ranked most important	32%	32%	29%	47%
Ranked second most important	38%	34%	38%	35%
Ranked third most important	30%	34%	33%	18%
Unity				
Ranked most important	20%	17%	31%	28%
Ranked second most important	49%	55%	52%	55%
Ranked third most important	30%	28%	18%	17%
Purity				
Ranked most important	48%	51%	41%	26%
Ranked second most important	14%	12%	11%	9%
Ranked third most important	38%	37%	48%	64%

Q8. Several PC(USA) affinity and advocacy groups have taken positions on the report of the Task Force. For each group listed below, indicate whether you are aware of the group's stand on the report (in Column 1) *and* what you know its position is or, if you haven't heard, what you think its position is likely to be (in Column 2).

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
a. Presbyterian Coalition	+	+	+	+
Aware of stand	9%	12%	63%	36%
Not aware of stand	91%	88%	37%	64%
Group's stand on report is:	+	+	+	+
In favor	7%	7%	16%	8%
Opposed	5%	7%	49%	39%
Mixed	3%	5%	16%	16%
I don't know and have no guess	85%	81%	19%	38%
b. Covenant Network of Presbyterians	+	+		+
Aware of stand	9%	10%	72%	59%
Not aware of stand	91%	90%	28%	41%
Group's stand on report is:	+	+	+	+
In favor	7%	8%	46%	44%
Opposed	4%	5%	18%	12%
Mixed	4%	5%	25%	23%
I Don't know and have no guess	86%	82%	12%	20%
c. Presbyterian Lay Committee/*Presbyterian Layman*	+	+		+
Aware of stand	15%	24%	76%	51%
Not aware of stand	85%	76%	24%	49%
Group's stand on report is:	+	+	+	+
In favor	6%	10%	9%	5%
Opposed	12%	19%	75%	66%
Mixed	4%	6%	9%	10%
I don't know and have no guess	78%	66%	8%	19%

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

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— = zero (0.0); no cases in this category

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n = number of respondents eligible to answer this question

♦ = percentages add to more than 100 because respondents could make more than one response

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy

Q8. Several PC(USA) affinity and advocacy groups have taken positions on the report of the Task Force. For each
(Cont.) group listed below, indicate whether you are aware of the group's stand on the report (in Column 1) **and** what you know its position is or, if you haven't heard, what you think its position is likely to be (in Column 2).

d. Witherspoon Society

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	+	+	+	+
Aware of stand	4%	5%	35%	27%
Not aware of stand	96%	95%	65%	73%
Group's stand on report is:	+	+	+	+
In favor	3%	5%	31%	26%
Opposed	2%	3%	16%	10%
Mixed	4%	3%	17%	18%
I don't know and have no guess	92%	89%	36%	46%

e. Presbyterians for Renewal

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	+	+	+	+
Aware of stand	8%	15%	68%	37%
Not aware of stand	92%	85%	32%	63%
Group's stand on report is:	+	+	+	+
In favor	7%	9%	16%	10%
Opposed	5%	9%	51%	38%
Mixed	4%	6%	19%	19%
I don't know and have no guess	85%	77%	14%	33%

f. More Light Presbyterians

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	+	+	+	+
Aware of stand	9%	11%	52%	46%
Not aware of stand	91%	89%	48%	54%
Group's stand on report is:	+	+	+	+
In favor	7%	12%	36%	34%
Opposed	5%	6%	28%	17%
Mixed	5%	4%	17%	21%
I don't know and have no guess	83%	78%	18%	28%

g. Institute for Religion and Democracy

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	+	+	+	+
Aware of stand	4%	3%	20%	15%
Not aware of stand	96%	97%	80%	85%
Group's stand on report is:	+	+	+	+
In favor	4%	3%	8%	6%
Opposed	2%	4%	25%	21%
Mixed	4%	3%	4%	8%
I don't know and have no guess	90%	90%	63%	64%

h. That All May Freely Serve

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	+	+	+	+
Aware of stand	7%	8%	36%	30%
Not aware of stand	93%	92%	64%	70%
Group's stand on report is:	+	+	+	+
In favor	8%	12%	28%	27%
Opposed	4%	7%	22%	14%
Mixed	4%	3%	16%	15%
I don't know and have no guess	85%	79%	35%	44%

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	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy

Q9. The *Book of Order* has this section (G-6.0106b), known as the "chastity and fidelity" section or "Amendment B":

> Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

In overtures to this year's General Assembly meeting, some presbyteries have called for eliminating this section altogether. What is your opinion? Do you favor, or oppose, eliminating this section?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly favor eliminating this section	15%	17%	26%	44%
Favor eliminating this section	13%	13%	15%	18%
Neutral or not sure	13%	12%	5%	6%
Oppose eliminating this section	22%	18%	12%	11%
Strongly oppose eliminating this section	37%	40%	41%	21%

Q10. Indicate your opinion on each of these items.

a. Some Presbyterians think it would reduce conflict in the church if ministers and congregations could choose their presbyteries without geographic limits. A congregation could switch presbyteries if two-thirds of those attending a congregational meeting wanted to switch, and if a majority of the new presbytery voted to accept the congregation. What is your opinion on this idea?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly favor	3%	4%	6%	1%
Favor	13%	10%	10%	6%
Neutral or not sure	37%	30%	18%	14%
Oppose	31%	36%	34%	33%
Strongly oppose	17%	21%	32%	45%

b. Some Presbyterians think that the church's constitution should specify the essential tenets of the Reformed faith, rather than leaving it up to ordaining bodies to discern them on a case-by-case basis. What is your opinion on this idea?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly favor	11%	14%	18%	12%
Favor	26%	24%	26%	19%
Neutral or not sure	44%	41%	18%	21%
Oppose	14%	16%	20%	29%
Strongly oppose	5%	5%	16%	19%

Q11. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

a. Conflict in the church tears the body of Christ and should be ended

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	15%	16%	8%	11%
Agree	36%	36%	26%	26%
Neutral or not sure	14%	15%	17%	10%
Disagree	32%	29%	45%	47%
Strongly disagree	4%	3%	4%	6%

	Members	**Elders**	**Pastors**	**Specialized Clergy**

Q11. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
(Cont.)

b. Conflict in the church is inevitable

	Members	**Elders**	**Pastors**	**Specialized Clergy**
Strongly agree	15%	14%	28%	27%
Agree	68%	70%	64%	67%
Neutral or not sure	9%	8%	3%	3%
Disagree	7%	8%	4%	4%
Strongly disagree	1%	1%	1%	1%

c. The church should be united on a few essentials, and not worry about other differences

Strongly agree	8%	8%	12%	16%
Agree	36%	34%	41%	49%
Neutral or not sure	17%	21%	16%	15%
Disagree	34%	30%	28%	16%
Strongly disagree	5%	6%	4%	4%

d. If the church is not pure, it will be corrupt

Strongly agree	10%	10%	7%	5%
Agree	25%	26%	21%	14%
Neutral or not sure	22%	23%	17%	16%
Disagree	37%	35%	40%	42%
Strongly disagree	6%	7%	15%	23%

e. A church of millions can never be pure

Strongly agree	7%	7%	13%	18%
Agree	36%	41%	47%	51%
Neutral or not sure	27%	23%	16%	15%
Disagree	26%	26%	22%	13%
Strongly disagree	4%	3%	2%	4%

f. If local ordaining bodies are allowed to decide what is essential and inessential, there will be chaos

Strongly agree	12%	16%	25%	17%
Agree	35%	33%	24%	18%
Neutral or not sure	25%	22%	13%	15%
Disagree	26%	26%	28%	39%
Strongly disagree	2%	3%	10%	11%

g. Letting local ordaining bodies decide whether their members are in essential agreement with the Presbyterian and Reformed faith is a good custom

Strongly agree	5%	5%	11%	14%
Agree	35%	39%	39%	47%
Neutral or not sure	31%	26%	14%	14%
Disagree	22%	22%	22%	16%
Strongly disagree	6%	8%	15%	8%

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	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy

Q11. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
(Cont.)

h. It is worth giving up some purity to get peace in the church

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	2%	2%	5%	7%
Agree	20%	17%	18%	24%
Neutral or not sure	25%	28%	23%	30%
Disagree	38%	36%	33%	26%
Strongly disagree	15%	17%	21%	14%

i. The church would be better off if there were a gracious separation of the opposing parties

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	4%	3%	13%	6%
Agree	15%	16%	18%	16%
Neutral or not sure	42%	39%	24%	25%
Disagree	34%	35%	31%	36%
Strongly disagree	6%	7%	14%	16%

j. Schism is about the worst thing that can happen to a denomination

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	8%	6%	8%	14%
Agree	25%	25%	20%	19%
Neutral or not sure	35%	37%	18%	17%
Disagree	30%	27%	44%	40%
Strongly disagree	3%	4%	10%	10%

k. A split in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is inevitable

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	1%	2%	7%	3%
Agree	10%	9%	23%	13%
Neutral or not sure	43%	42%	31%	34%
Disagree	39%	39%	33%	40%
Strongly disagree	7%	7%	6%	10%

l. If controversy in the PC(USA) continues, we will lose a few members, but there will not be a large split

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	3%	1%	2%	3%
Agree	34%	29%	22%	25%
Neutral or not sure	45%	46%	37%	46%
Disagree	16%	17%	30%	22%
Strongly disagree	3%	6%	9%	4%

m. Competition between opposing wings of the church for the center is good for the PC(USA)

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	1%	1%	1%	1%
Agree	17%	14%	13%	17%
Neutral or not sure	40%	42%	24%	30%
Disagree	36%	36%	47%	41%
Strongly disagree	6%	7%	15%	11%

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	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy

Q11. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
(Cont.)

n. A church that is not clear about what it believes
is not worth belonging to

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Strongly agree	21%	25%	17%	16%
Agree	46%	40%	45%	31%
Neutral or not sure	14%	14%	12%	14%
Disagree	16%	18%	20%	32%
Strongly disagree	3%	3%	5%	6%

Q12. Please use the space below for additional comments.

[Not tabulated]

Response form:

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Web	13%	16%	24%	22%
Paper	87%	84%	76%	78%

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