

PRESBYTERIAN PANEL REPORT

— Listening to Presbyterians —



EVANGELISM The August 1996 Presbyterian Panel

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THE PRESBYTERIAN PANEL: AN OVERVIEW

The Presbyterian Panel (1994-1996) consists of several thousand Presbyterians in the United States and Puerto Rico who agreed to respond to a quarterly mail survey beginning February 1994. The Panel contains independent, representative samples of four groups affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): members, elders, pastors, and clergy in specialized ministries. (The exact number of cases in each sample may be found at the beginning of the appendix.)

Participants in each of these samples were selected according to scientific sampling procedures, a detailed description of which can be found in Appendix B of the *Background Report for the 1994-1996 Panel* (Louisville: Research Services, Division of Congregational Ministries, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1994). The member sample was drawn in two stages. First, 425 congregations were sampled, with the probability of selection proportional to membership size. Each of the 425 congregations was, in turn, requested to supply the names of eight members, based on applying a set of random numbers to its current list of active members. The elder sample was drawn from a denominationally-maintained list of all elders currently serving on sessions of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations. To ensure geographical representation, elders were sampled proportionately according to their overall distribution across the church's 16 synods. The pastor sample is a random sample of all ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament who, at the time of sampling, occupied a staff position in a congregation or other parish. The specialized clergy sample is a random sample of all ordained ministers in the denomination who, at the time of sampling, worked outside a parish (e.g., chaplains, counselors, teachers, church officials). Retired clergy were excluded from the Panel. Pastors and specialized clergy were both slightly oversampled to permit individuals who had served in the 1991-1993 cycle of the Panel to be excluded from the new samples.

The office of Research Services, lodged in the Congregational Ministries Division of the national offices of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), maintains the Panel as a service to the General Assembly, its agencies, councils, committees, and other entities. The primary purpose of the Panel is to aid these national bodies within the church by gathering information on Presbyterian opinions and behavior for use in planning and evaluation. Secondly, the Panel exists to provide the church as a whole and the larger society with information of general interest on Presbyterians.

All Panel data are publicly available, with the exception that no data will be released that might compromise the confidentiality of respondents. Requests for Panel data in computer-readable format for research purposes will be considered on an individual basis. Responsibility for the maintenance and disposition of Panel files ultimately rests with the office of Research Services.

SAMPLING ERROR

Time and costs preclude inclusive surveys of all but the smallest populations. With larger populations, representative samples are drawn and the responses of smaller subsets are used to extrapolate to the total population—much as medicine draws a sample of blood to profile the entire blood supply within the human body. The values obtained from a scientifically-selected sample will not necessarily be the same ones that would have been obtained if the entire population had been surveyed, but we can know, within a certain degree of probability, the range above and below the sample value within which the actual population value is likely to fall. By convention, surveys usually report 95% “confidence intervals,” that is, the range above and below a sample value that, in 19 out of 20 samples (in other words, 95% of the time), will contain the true population value. This range is also known as sampling error.

Sampling error is dependent largely on the number of cases in the sample and, with percentages, how large or how small the particular values are. In general, the larger the sample, the smaller the sampling error, and the closer a percentage is to 50% (as opposed to 0% or 100%), the larger the sampling error. Approximate sampling errors for Panel samples are:

REPORTED PERCENTAGE	MEMBERS	ELDERS	PASTORS	SPECIALIZED CLERGY
	95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL			
50%	±4%	±4%	±4%	±5%
30% or 70%	±4%	±4%	±4%	±5%
20% or 80%	±4%	±4%	±4%	±4%
10% or 90%	±3%	±3%	±3%	±3%
5% or 95%	±2%	±2%	±2%	±2%

HIGHLIGHTS

- When asked to select the best single definition of evangelism from four choices, majorities of pastors (57%) and specialized clergy (55%) chose this option: *evangelism is the joyful sharing of the sovereign love of God, calling people to repentance, to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to active membership in the church, and obedient service to the world.* [pp. 2-3]
- Three (of nine) listed factors were selected by a majority of panelists in every sample as being “to a great extent” part of their own understanding of what is meant by the term *evangelism*: *introducing people to the Realm of God; providing opportunities for people to increase their understanding of what it means to accept Christ as their savior; and providing opportunities to support people in their efforts to grow in faith.* [p. 2]
- Around three in ten members and four in ten elders reported that, during the prior year, they had invited as many as four people to attend worship services at their congregation. The person most-recently invited to church is described as a *friend* by 48% of members, as a *family member* by 27%, and as a *neighbor* by 20%. [pp. 3-4]
- According to pastors, six in ten members in their congregations are active either to a *great extent* or to *some extent* in *contacting people they already know [and] urging them to come to church.* [p. 4]
- Over eight in ten pastors report spending less than eight hours per month in reaching out to the unchurched. About one-half of pastors report spending two hours or less per month on such outreach. [p. 4]
- Few members (5%) and elders (8%) responded *very likely* when asked if they were *willing and able to allocate more time and effort* to reach out to the unchurched in their community. Another 28% of members and 36% of elders responded *likely*. Viewed differently, a majority of members (57%) and a large plurality of elders (46%) indicate they are either *not very likely* or *not at all likely* to find more time for evangelistic outreach. [p. 5]
- In every sample, a majority of panelists report that responsibility for membership growth or decline in congregations is shared among clergy, members, and session. However, more members than pastors see pastors as having *great* responsibility, and more pastors than members see members as having *great* responsibility. [p. 6]
- Majorities of 75% or more in every sample view *the demography of the surrounding neighborhood* as responsible either to a *great extent* or to *some extent* for a congregation’s growth or decline. [p. 6]
- Few members and elders are familiar to any degree with most evangelism resources. On the other hand, a majority of pastors indicate familiarity with these resources: Good News newsletter; “Invite-A-Friend” program; “Commitment to Evangelism” program; the PCUSA’s “Evangelism Resource Catalog and Bibliography”; worship resources for PCUSA “Evangelism Sunday”; regional “Celebrations of Evangelism” sponsored by the PCUSA; and *Net Results* (an ecumenical periodical that focuses on evangelism). [pp. 7-8]
- At least seven in ten pastors would like to have resources on the topics of *faith sharing, new member assimilation, and visitation skills.* [p. 8]
- A majority of pastors (54%) and a quarter of specialized clergy (27%) report that at least once in the prior five years they had received *continuing education* or *other training* in evangelism. [p. 9]
- When asked to indicate the importance of each of 15 factors in their *decision to continue to attend their congregation*, majorities of members and elders rate two as *very important*: *it satisfies my spiritual needs* (60% of members and 67% of elders so respond), and *I believe God is at work in this place* (58% and 65%, respectively). [p. 10]

EVANGELISM August 1996

The section of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)¹ titled "Proclamation and Evangelism" includes these elements in its definition of "the scope of evangelism":

- a. to announce the good news that in Christ Jesus the world is reconciled to God,
- b. to tell all nations and peoples of Christ's call to repentance, faith, and obedience,
- c. to proclaim in deed and word that Jesus gave himself to set people free,
- d. to offer in Christ's name fullness of life now and forever,
- e. to call people everywhere to believe in and follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior,
- f. to invite them into the community of faith to worship and serve the triune God.

This is the denominational ideal. But what is the actuality among individual Presbyterians? A major purpose of the August 1996 Panel survey of members, elders, and ministers was to answer just that question.

The current survey is the third on this topic under Panel auspices, conducted at ten-year intervals (the previous ones were in May 1976 and June 1986). The current survey was planned and timed, in part, to provide both up-to-date information and a picture of trends over the last decade.² Staff persons in the office of Evangelism and Church Development, part of the National Ministries Division of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), first approached staff of the Presbyterian Panel in July 1995, at that year's General Assembly. The August 1996 Panel survey was subsequently set aside for this topic, and questions were developed in the early summer of 1996.³ The survey was mailed to panelists on August 6, 1996, and those who had not responded by August 30 were sent a reminder postcard. Completed questionnaires were received through October 21. Total response rates by sample are: members, 62%; elders, 65%; pastors, 70%; specialized clergy, 71%.

Because clergy and laity have different roles in Presbyterian congregations, some questions were asked only of members and elders, others only of pastors and specialized clergy.⁴ (Other provisions were made on the clergy questionnaire for pastors of two or more congregations and for specialized clergy who do not serve or otherwise regularly participate in the life of a specific congregation; see p. A-1 for details.)

The percentage distributions of responses to all survey questions, for every sample, are presented as an appendix (pp. A-1 to A-16). The narrative which follows summarizes many of these results. In addition, one section examines how responses to questions on this survey vary by age categories, using data on age gathered on an earlier Panel survey.⁵ Finally, some of the questions on this survey were asked on the June 1986

¹*Directory for Worship*, W-7.2000.

²The May 1976 Panel survey was more narrowly focused on "reaching people who are without the Gospel," hindering direct comparisons with the 1986 or 1996 results.

³The Reverend Douglas Wilson, Associate for Presbyterian Evangelism, coordinated input from staff members in Evangelism and Church Development. John P. Marcum, Ph.D., Associate for Survey Research and Administrator of the Presbyterian Panel, developed the questionnaire for the Panel.

⁴Questions asked of members and elders or of all four samples are referenced in the text as "Q9." Those that were asked only of clergy are referenced as [Q9].

⁵The survey took place in the fall of 1993. See *The Background Report for the 1994-1996 Panel*. Louisville: Research Services, PCUSA, 1994.

Presbyterian Panel survey, and we compare the patterns of results from the 1996 survey with those from the earlier one to examine trends.

To facilitate comparisons, and because the data are derived from samples, this *Report* consists almost entirely of percentages rather than absolute numbers. The reader should keep in mind, however, the very different sizes of the populations from which the samples were drawn: members (excluding active elders), approximately 2.5 million; elders, 115,000; pastors, 10,000; and specialized clergy, 5,000.

DEFINING EVANGELISM

We asked panelists to tell us the extent to which each of nine factors is part of their own understanding of the term “evangelism” (Q12). If we rely on the proportion who responded “to a great extent,” then three factors emerge as central to the definitions of a majority of panelists in every sample:

- “introducing people to the Realm of God” (members, 55%; pastors, 59%);
- “providing opportunities for people to increase their understanding of what it means to accept Christ as their savior” (members, 55%; pastors, 64%); and
- “providing opportunities to support people in their efforts to grow in faith” (members, 52%; pastors, 73%).

Two other listed factors were also rated by majorities in three of the four samples as part of their personal definition of evangelism (members being the exception):

- “sharing one’s personal faith commitment” (members, 47%; pastors, 69%), and
- “making congregational life more meaningful and inspirational for members” (members, 44%; pastors, 55%).

At the other extreme, almost no one labeled “pointing out the errors in the beliefs of non-Presbyterians” as a part of their evangelism definition, either to a “great extent” or even to “some extent.” In fact, majorities of two-thirds or more (the range is from 66% among elders to 74% among specialized clergy) responded that such a concept was “not at all” a part of their definition of evangelism, and almost everyone else—around 20% in every sample—responded with “only a limited extent.”

The one factor that most evenly divided panelists was whether or not “evangelism” includes “sensitizing people to issues related to injustices in the world.” Responses were clustered in the two intermediate categories: “some extent” and “only a limited extent.” If we combine the “great extent” and “some extent” responses, on the one hand, to tell us roughly how many panelists would place social justice sensitization within evangelism, and combine the “only a limited extent” and “not at all” responses, on the other, to tell us those who would not, we find that, by small majorities in every sample, more panelists opted to include social justice as part of evangelism than opposed such labeling (e.g., 51% of members favor including social justice and 42% oppose it; among pastors, the split is 56% to 43%).

To a lesser degree, ambivalence was also apparent for another factor, “increasing the membership of the church.” While majorities of around two-thirds in every sample reported that this concept fits their definition of evangelism either to a “great extent” or “some extent,” around one-fourth in the two lay samples—and one-third in the two clerical samples—responded “only a limited extent” or “not at all.”

Choosing a Summary Definition

Besides gathering information on which of several specific elements are encompassed by the term “evangelism,” we also asked panelists to approach the term more broadly by choosing (from a list of four

options) which overall statement “*best* describes your definition of evangelism” (Q13). Pastors and specialized clergy display very similar patterns of responses, with majorities (57% and 55%, respectively) selecting the longest and most detailed definition:

- “Evangelism is the joyful sharing of the sovereign love of God, calling people to repentance, to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to active membership in the church, and obedient service to the world.”

Another one in five panelists in both clergy samples chose a more cryptic option:

- “Evangelism is everything the church does.”

These two statements were also the ones most often selected by members and elders, but in different proportions. Elders were evenly split, with just over one-third choosing each of the two statements. Members were different still, with 35% selecting “Evangelism is everything the church does,” and only one-fourth choosing the more specific statement favored by a majority of clergy. Instead, around one in five members (and one in seven elders) chose each of the two remaining options:

- “Evangelism is the joyful sharing of the sovereign love of God,” and
- “Evangelism is the joyful sharing of the sovereign love of God, calling people to repentance and to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.”

Given the partial overlap in content of three of the options, we can also conclude that around two-thirds of members and elders, and eight in ten pastors and other clergy, define evangelism (as least in part) as “the joyful sharing of the sovereign love of God.” In addition, majorities of elders (51%), pastors (68%), and specialized clergy (64%) agree that evangelism is the “joyful sharing of the sovereign love of God” *plus* “calling people to repentance, and to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.”

DOING EVANGELISM NOW

Of Time and Numbers: Members and Elders

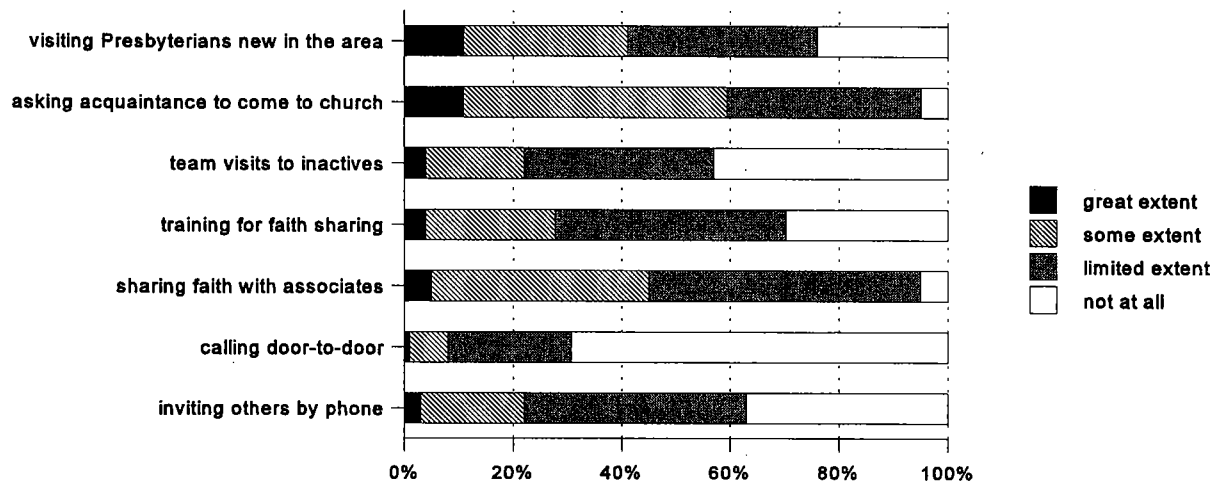
Few members and elders report widespread efforts to enlist others to visit their congregations. Less than one-third of members (29%) and just under one in four elders (39%) indicated that they had invited as many as four people “to attend worship at your congregation during the *last year*” (Q3). In fact, more than one-third of members (35%) and just over a fourth of elders (28%) indicated that they had *not* invited *anyone* to worship in the prior year.

When we expand the time line backward, we find that most of these “non-inviter” had asked someone to visit their congregation in the more distant past (Q4). Still, 15% of members and 8% of elders reported that they either had *never* invited anyone, or could not remember when (or if) they had done so. At the other (more positive) extreme, almost four in ten members (39%) and one-half (49%) of elders reported issuing at least one invitation for a congregational visit in the last six months.

Pastors' Perceptions of Members' Outreach Activities

On a different question ([Q4]), pastors were asked to assess the extent to which members in their congregations were participating in various outreach activities. Almost none of them chose “great extent” to indicate their perceptions of members’ involvement in any of the activities: that option was chosen by no more than 11% of pastors in response to each of the eight items (see Figure 1). In fact, the *modal* response to two of the eight items was “not at all,” and to five of them, “only a limited extent.” (Only to [Q4f], “contacting people they already know, urging them to come to church,” was “some extent” the modal response.)

Figure 1
Pastors' Perceptions of Member Involvement in Specific Evangelistic Activities



Pastoral Outreach Activities

Few pastors report that reaching out to the unchurched takes up a numerically significant proportion of their work time ([Q11]). When asked the number of hours spent in a “typical” month “directly reaching out to individuals who are not currently members of any church to invite them to participate in or join your (or another) congregation,” almost all gave responses of eight or fewer hours. And while only a limited number responded “none” to this question (15%), similar proportions report spending only one (15%) or spending only two hours (18%), so that overall almost one-half of Panel pastors (48%) reported devoting two or fewer hours per month to this activity. Put differently, over eight in ten pastors reported spending less than two hours *per week* on this type of outreach, and almost one-half reported spending less than one-half hour *per week* on this activity.

Who Gets Invited?

When Presbyterian members and elders ask someone else to visit their congregations, it is typically someone they know, often someone they know well (Q5). When we asked panelists in these two samples to describe their relationship to the particular person they had most recently invited, almost one-half characterized the individual as a “friend” (48% of members, 46% of elders), and another one quarter chose the term “family member” (27% and 24%, respectively). “Neighbor” was also a term chosen by a fifth of members and a quarter of elders.

Training for Evangelism in Congregations

Most pastors indicated that there had been some sort of training for “faith sharing or evangelism” in their congregations over the prior two years ([Q6]). However, in most instances, such training was available only to part—often a small part—of the congregation, such as the session, a committee of the session, or “selected members.” Only 26% of pastors reported any training in faith sharing or evangelism among “the congregation at large” over the previous two years.

INVOLVEMENT IN EVANGELISM IN THE FUTURE

Likelihood of Increased Time for Outreach

In the context of their current commitments, how likely is it that Presbyterians will find more time to reach out to the unchurched? When we asked members and elders to reflect on their current obligations and realistically assess the likelihood that they would “be willing and able to allocate more time” to such outreach (Q9), only a relative few responded “very likely” (5% of members and 8% of elders did so), although considerably more (but still a minority) chose “likely” (28%, members; 36%, elders). Viewed differently, more than one-half of members (57%) indicated that they were either “not very likely” or “not likely at all” to find more time for outreach to the unchurched, almost double the proportion who indicated they were “likely” or “very likely” to do so (33%). Elders are more evenly divided (46% and 44%, respectively).

Estimates of Additional Time

We asked members and elders who had responded “very likely” or “likely” to Q9 to estimate how many additional hours per month they might be able to give to outreach to the unchurched (Q10). Most responses were in the single digits. In fact, the majority estimated four hours or less: of this subset, 57% of members and 55% of elders so responded. In other words, only about one in seven members and one in five elders overall indicated that they were *both* likely to devote more time to evangelism *and* would be able to devote five or more hours per month to this purpose.

OPINIONS ON PRESBYTERIAN PRIORITIES

We presented panelists in all samples with a series of eight statements and asked them to indicate “the urgency with which Presbyterians need to take action” (Q6) on each item. An examination of responses to the entire set of statements across the four samples reveals at least three broad patterns.

First, most issues are viewed by a majority—or a large minority of 40% to 49%—in each of the four samples as deserving action with either “great” or “some” urgency. Table 1 shows the combined “great urgency” and “some urgency” responses for each statement, ranked from highest to lowest based on members’ responses.

Second, there is much in common in the pattern of responses across the four samples. The similarity is most apparent for Q6a, “to increase membership in the denomination,” and Q6d, “to encourage evangelistic programs by presbyteries and synods.” Even here, however, urgency ratings are a bit lower among the members than among the elders or either sample of clergy. Hence, a third insight: where there are differences in the pattern of response, it is the laity, and members in particular, who are less likely to view a matter with urgency. This differential is especially noticeable for Q6f, “to establish new congregations.” In brief, starting new churches is an urgent matter for many more pastors and other ministers than it is for members or elders.

Table 1
Opinions on the Need for Action in Several Specific Areas (Q6)

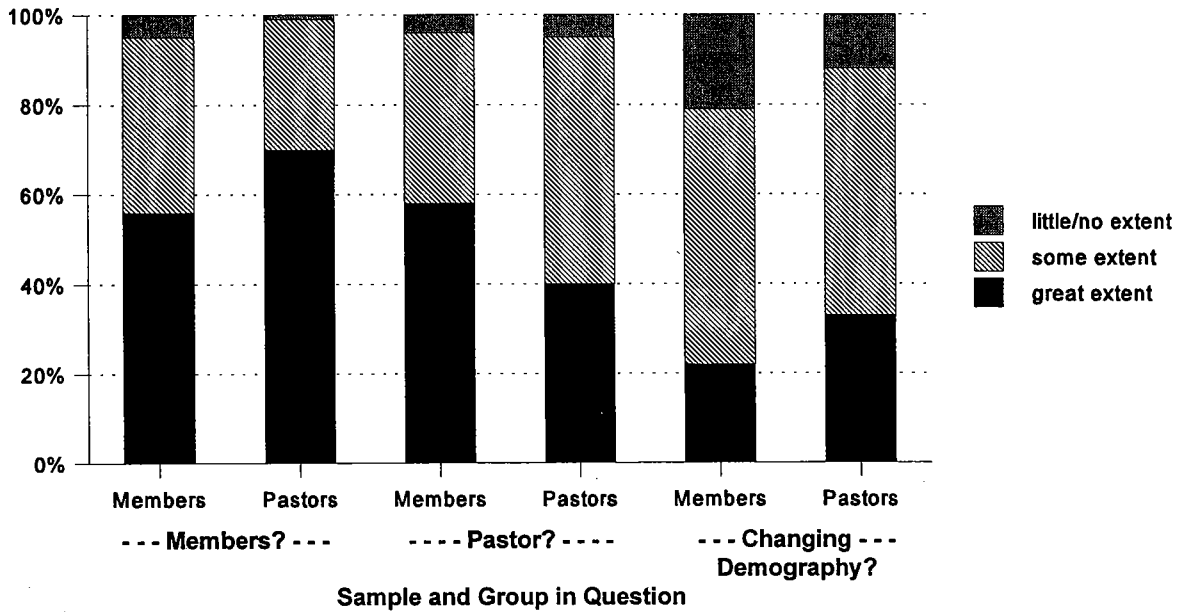
Item	Percent Responding “Great Urgency” or “Some Urgency”	
	Members	Pastors
to develop a warm and open fellowship within congregations (Q6b)	72%	90%
to establish programs to assist Presbyterians to obtain the knowledge and skills to share their faith (Q6e)	61%	87%
to assist struggling congregations in charting a new course (“redevelopment”; Q6g)	61%	87%
to encourage evangelism at the congregational level (Q6c)	60%	92%
to increase membership in the denomination (Q6a)	58%	77%
to encourage evangelistic programs by presbyteries and synods (Q6d)	47%	61%
to support the development of multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural congregations (Q6h)	45%	67%
to establish new congregations (Q6f)	32%	79%

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHURCH GROWTH?

Q7 provides some curious results. In every sample, there is a consensus of 95% or more that either to a “great extent” or to “some extent” “*the members* of a congregation are responsible for its growth or decline” (Q7a). That noted, there is still interesting variation across samples found in the proportions choosing “great extent” or “some extent. Fewer members (53%) than elders (64%) or pastors (70%) chose “great extent” to describe the growth-or-decline responsibility of members (see Figure 2).

A similar pattern *in reverse* is found for Q7c (“*the pastor(s)* is (are) responsible for the growth or decline of a congregation”). While there is a consensus (in this instance of 93% or more) in all samples that pastors shoulder significant responsibility, more members and elders (both 58%) use “great extent” than “some extent” to describe that responsibility, while among pastors themselves (and specialized clergy, too) “some extent” was chosen more frequently (in both samples, by 55%) than “great extent (40% for pastors, 38% for specialized clergy). Compare these patterns to those when the subject is something largely external to the congregation, for example, “*the demography* of the surrounding neighborhood and community” (Q7d). In this case, the distribution of “some extent” and “great extent” responses was more nearly similar across all four samples. It seems clear that perspectives on responsibility are related to some degree to how one is connected to the church.

Figure 2
Perceptions of Responsibility for Membership Change



RESOURCES FOR EVANGELISM

Familiarity with Current Resources

A variety of resources exist to help congregations with outreach (some produced by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), some not), and we asked panelists about their familiarity with several specific examples (Q14). In general, few members or elders were either “very familiar” or even “somewhat familiar” with *any* of the resources. By this criterion, reported familiarity was greatest for the *Good News* newsletter published by the PCUSA’s Evangelism and Church Development office (35% of members and 41% of elders reported some familiarity with this periodical),⁶ followed by the PCUSA’s “Invite-A-Friend” program (20% and 22%, respectively, expressed some familiarity) and the denomination’s “Commitment to Evangelism” program (13% and 28%, respectively).

Consistent with findings from previous Panel surveys, larger proportions of pastors and specialized clergy reported familiarity with each resource listed on the questionnaire than did members and elders. While in neither clergy sample did a majority report themselves to be “very familiar” with any one particular resource, sizeable minority proportions typically did, and often even greater (but still minority) proportions selected “somewhat familiar.” By combining these two response categories, we find that majorities of pastors (and, for some resources, specialized clergy) expressed some degree of familiarity with:

- the “Commitment to Evangelism” program (Q14a) and its Action Guide (Q14b),
- the *Good News* newsletter (Q14c),
- the “Invite-A-Friend” program (14d),
- the PCUSA’s “Evangelism Resource Catalog and Bibliography”(Q14g),

⁶These percentages seem too high for a periodical with limited circulation. Perhaps there is another, non-Presbyterian periodical with the same or a similar name—and a much wider circulation—that many respondents had in mind.

- worship resources for PCUSA “Evangelism Sunday” (Q14j), and
- regional “Celebrations of Evangelism” sponsored by the PCUSA (Q14m).

The only non-PCUSA resource to reach the majority-familiarity threshold among pastors is the widely circulated—but non-sectarian—periodical, *Net Results* (Q14h).

Viewed from the other direction, majorities of pastors indicated *no* familiarity with the following resources:

- “Lifestory Conversations” study booklet (Q14e);
- “Covenant for Caring,” a faith-sharing training program using videos (Q14f);
- PCUSA’s “Institutes for Congregational Evangelism” (Q14k);
- Faithful Witness study book (Q14l); and
- *Turn to the Living God: A Call to Evangelism is Jesus Christ’s Way* (PCUSA General Assembly resolution and study book) (Q14n).⁷

Desired Resources

What kinds of resources do pastors want to assist them and their congregations with the ministry of evangelism? We sought a very general answer by providing pastors (and specialized clergy, as well) with a list of 11 content areas that might fit under the umbrella of “evangelism” and asked them to indicate which “kinds of help” (if any) they would like to have ([Q9]). Ranked in order based on the frequency with which each was selected by pastors, we find that pastors want resources on:

- “faith sharing” (78%),
- “new member assimilation” (74%),
- “visitation skills” (70%),
- “making our church more welcoming” (64%),
- “sharing ideas from other churches” (55%),
- “retaining members” (52%),
- “relationship between evangelism and other church activities . . .” (48%),
- “listening skills” (45%),
- “media use” (43%),
- “church growth” (42%), and
- “redevelopment” (31%).

Clearly, there is widespread interest in resources on *all* of these topics. However, compared to others, the ones selected with the greatest frequency tend to be a bit more focused on leading persons *inside* the church to reach out to those on the outside (or, at least, those on the periphery) to learn about the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to become a part of (or more involved in) the church.

Given these findings, it is useful to examine the results of a related question that asked panelists in all four samples about their degree of interest in having the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) put “resources and effort” into each of eight kinds of evangelism emphases (Q8). Again, those resources or programs directed most specifically at individual training in faith sharing and outreach received the highest interest ratings.

As with many other matters raised on this survey, reported levels of interest are greater among ministers than among either members or elders for each of the proposed emphases. In a relative sense, however, the types of

⁷Exactly one-half of pastors reported no familiarity with “Herb Miller workshops” (Q14i), even though Herb Miller produces *Net Results*—a periodical with which 62% were familiar.

resources or programs that receive the most interest and those that receive the least support in each sample are very similar. In all samples, item Q8b, “to prepare Presbyterians to be better able to communicate their faith to others,” received the largest percentage of “extremely interested,” and of combined “extremely interested” and “moderately interested” responses (see Table 2). Similarly, the least enthusiasm in every sample was expressed for “evangelism rallies,” “evangelistic campaigns,” and hiring “evangelists to assist congregations.” The greatest relative difference is found for Q8a, “to prepare Presbyterians to witness to colleagues in their workplaces.” In both samples of ministers, that kind of help ranks second in interest appeal, while it is in the middle of the pack for both members (ranked fifth) and elders (ranked fourth).

Table 2
Recommendations for PCUSA Resource Allocation

	Percent Responding					
	“Extremely Interested” or “Moderately Interested”					
	(“extremely interested” in parentheses)					
	Members	Elders	Pastors			
Prepare Presbyterians to be better able to communicate their faith to others (8b)	83%	(29%)	92%	(40%)	97%	(71%)
Broadcast a Sunday worship service from a PCUSA congregation on national radio/TV (8f)	53%	(14%)	55%	(14%)	62%	(21%)
Provide media materials (print/radio/TV) so congregations can promote the PCUSA through local outlets (8g)	52%	(11%)	59%	(12%)	78%	(32%)
Provide information through (and access to) computer services like the Internet (8h)	45%	(10%)	47%	(8%)	62%	(19%)
Prepare Presbyterians to witness to colleagues in their workplaces (8a)	44%	(10%)	55%	(13%)	81%	(36%)
Hold local/regional evangelism rallies (8d)	32%	(6%)	39%	(10%)	39%	(9%)
Encourage large-scale evangelistic campaigns (8c)	31%	(5%)	41%	(8%)	35%	(8%)
Have presbyteries hire evangelists to assist congregations in their evangelism programs (8e)	30%	(6%)	41%	(8%)	54%	(15%)

CONTINUING EDUCATION IN EVANGELISM FOR CLERGY

A slim majority of pastors—but just over a quarter of specialized ministers—reported that they had, in the previous five years, “taken [some] continuing education in evangelism or had other training in evangelism” ([Q12]). Most of these panelists, in turn, gave their recent educational experience in this area a lukewarm evaluation (e.g., 55% of pastors chose “adequate” to describe it; [Q12a]). Still, it is worth noting that, of the remainder, more chose “more than adequate” (28%) than “less than adequate” (17%). (The response pattern is broadly similar among specialized clergy, although compared to pastors, relatively fewer of them—24%—rated their recent training in evangelism as “more than adequate,” and relatively more—22%—rated it as “less than adequate.”)

WHY DO THEY STAY?

It seems reasonable that opinions on, and enthusiasm for, outreach and evangelism would be related to one's current standing in the congregation. That is, Americans have considerable choice, not only in where they worship, but whether they participate at all in the life of any church. The fact that respondents had returned the August 1996 survey, and had remained part of the Presbyterian Panel for three years, suggests that the individuals whose responses we here examine are, on average, fairly committed to the church. Knowing *why* they remain committed may tell us much about the kinds of congregations and people who comprise the stable core of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In short, evangelism is not just about "us" reaching out to "them"; it is also about *retention*: ministering to ourselves so that "we" do not form a counter stream and drift into becoming—or even willingly choose to become—"them."

In Q2, we asked members and elders to tell us "how important" each of 15 factors has been in "your decision to *continue to attend* your congregation." At the top of the list (those that the largest majorities rate as "very important") are two factors that mention religion explicitly: "it satisfies my spiritual needs" (Q-2a; labeled as "very important" by 60% of members and 67% of elders), and "I believe God is at work in this place" (Q2h; 58% and 65%, respectively). However gratifying these results may be for churches, they do not provide much in the way of specific programing help, since it seems likely that *all* PCUSA congregations view themselves as attempting, as best they can under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to carry out God's will in their own unique context. Other important factors (judged, again, by the proportion of members and elders responding "very important") are: "I enjoy the worship (music, preaching, liturgy)" (48% and 54%, respectively; Q2b); "I appreciate the work of the minister(s)" (47% and 50%; Q2i); and "the service is in my language" (46% and 49%; Q2n).

By the same criterion (the percentage rating each as "very important"), the lowest rated factors are shown in Table 3. On several of these items, many of the remaining panelists responded "important," so that relatively few responded "not at all important" to any of the 15 items. In short, panelists view a variety of factors as important for continued participation in their congregations, with differences more of degree than of kind.

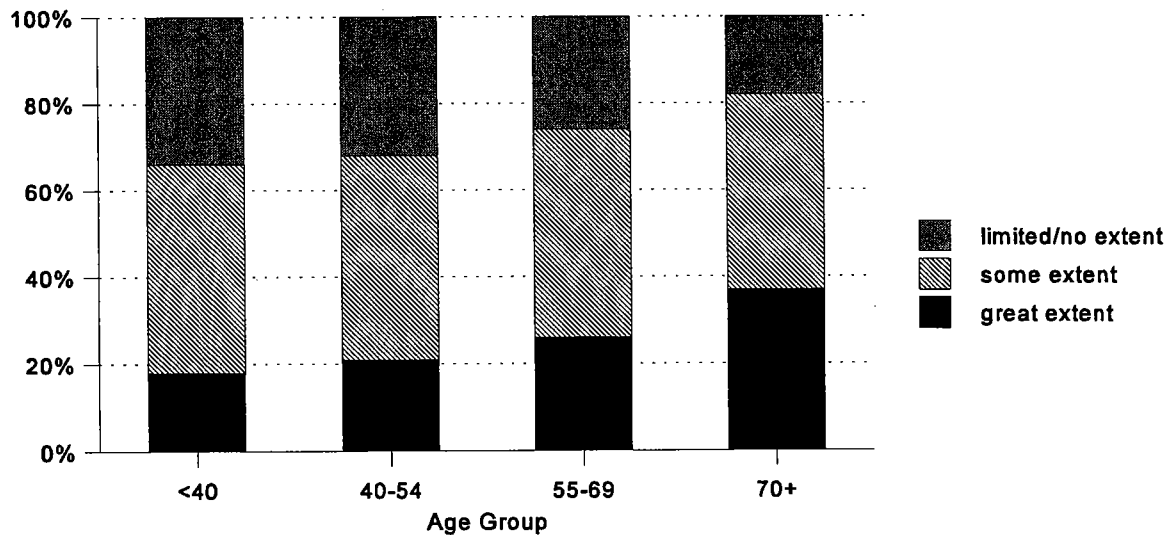
Table 3
Factors Few Members and Elders Rate as "Very Important"
in Their Decisions to Remain Church Members

Factor (Q2)	Percent Responding "Very Important"		Question Number
	Members	Elders	
"The parking is adequate"	12%	12%	Q2l
"I wish to support the congregation's social programs" . .	13%	17%	Q2f
"My closest friends are here"	14%	15%	Q2c
"The facilities are accessible"	15%	17%	Q2m
"It is a convenient location"	16%	18%	Q2k
"It is my family's congregation"	16%	20%	Q2d

AGE DIFFERENCES

Responses to most of these questions on evangelism do not differ significantly among members across categories of most demographic characteristics, such as sex (gender) and education. One exception is the extent to which members of different ages consider “increasing the membership of the church” to be a part of evangelism (Q12h) (see Figure 3). Older members are more likely to view growth in church membership as being involved to a “great extent” in the meaning of the term *evangelism*.

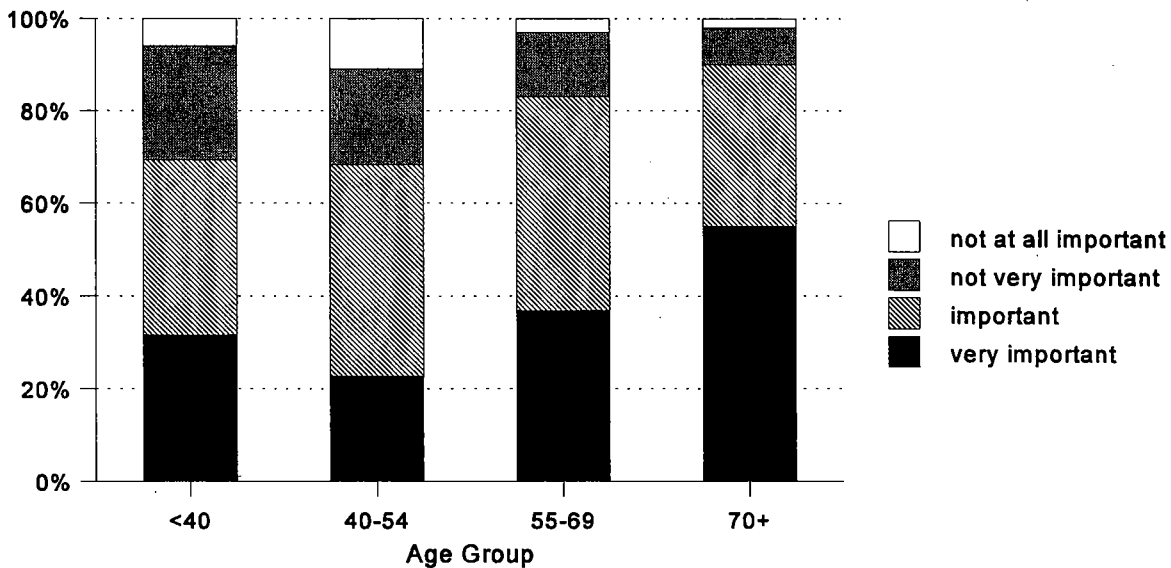
Figure 3
Extent to Which Members of Different Ages View “Increasing Church Membership”
as a Part of Evangelism: Age Differences



A similar direct relationship was found between age and perceived urgency in increasing the membership of the denomination (Q6a). For example, 31% of members aged 70 and over report that “to increase membership in the denomination” deserves “great urgency,” while only 17% of members below age 40 report that such an end deserves “great urgency.”

When asked about the importance of various factors in their decision to *continue to attend* their congregations, members’ responses reveal another interesting age pattern. While almost one-third of members in the under-40 and 40-54 age groups indicate that their congregation’s Presbyterian ties (“I prefer the Presbyterian Church”) are either “not very important” or “not at all important” in why they remain a part of their current congregation, only about one in six members aged 55-69, and one in ten aged 70 and over, view Presbyterian links as *unimportant*. Rather, over one-half of the oldest group of members specifically responded “very important” when asked about the significance of their congregation being a part of the Presbyterian Church (see Figure 4).

Figure 4
Importance of the Presbyterian Linkage in Why Members Continue to Attend their Current Congregations: Age Differences



COMPARISONS WITH EARLIER SURVEYS

Several questions from the current Panel survey that were asked in very similar or identical form ten years earlier (including [Q6] (Q6 in 1986), Q6 (Q3), Q7 (Q7), Q8 (Q8), Q9 (Q11), Q11 (Q11), and Q12 (Q14)).⁸ In addition, while many specifics differed, both Panel surveys included questions on denominational resources and on frequency of personal outreach activities. Space limitations preclude a detailed comparison of the results of these two surveys, but, briefly put, some of the findings are described below.

Defining Evangelism

Panelists in both 1986 and 1996 were asked to define the content of evangelism by responding to a set of statements (six in 1986, Q14; nine in 1996, Q12). Despite formatting differences, rank orders revealed nearly identical patterns of response. In both years, large majorities concurred that evangelism involves “providing opportunities for people to increase their understanding of what it means to accept Christ as their savior,” “introducing people to the Realm [Kingdom] of God,” “sharing one’s personal faith commitment,” and “making congregational life more meaningful and inspirational for members.”

Evangelism Training

When asked which groups in their congregation had had training for evangelism in recent years, the responses of pastors show a similar pattern in 1986 and 1996 (Q16 in 1986, [Q6] in 1996). In both surveys, training was

⁸In both the 1986 and 1996 surveys, Q8 (as it was numbered in 1996) contains identical wording for several of the specific subject items (i.e., item 8a, 8b, etc.), but the *stems* of the two questions differ. In 1986, the Panel survey asked for general opinions on how effective it might be for Presbyterians to pursue evangelism in each of several specific ways. In 1996, the focus was shifted to the respondent’s own, *personal* interest in having the PCUSA “put resources and effort into” each specific way.

reported with the greatest frequency among “selected members” (57% in 1986, 56% in 1996), followed by a “committee of the session” (43% in 1986, 50% in 1996).

Responsibility for Change

In 1986 as in 1996, most panelists agreed that responsibility for the growth or decline of congregations must be shared (to some extent) by three parties: the members, the session, and the pastor(s) (Q7 in both surveys). Furthermore, the pattern already noted in the 1996 results (more pastors than members assigning great responsibility for change to members, and more members than pastors assigning great responsibility for change to pastors), was also clearly present in the 1986 findings.

Action Areas

A comparison of opinions on the urgency of Presbyterians taking action in certain areas reveals surprisingly little change (Q3 in 1986, Q6a to Q6f, 1996).⁹ While differences in the exact wording of response categories preclude precise percentage comparisons, a rank-order approach highlights this relative stability (Table 4). If there is a shift “hinted at” by these results, it is toward *less* relative concern, especially among members, for increasing the membership of the denomination.

Table 4
Areas of Action: Comparing 1986 and 1996 Responses

Item (1996 Question Number)	Rank Order Based on Percentage Responding “Great Urgency” or “Some Urgency”			
	Members		Pastors	
	1986	1996	1986	1996
to develop a warm and open fellowship within congregations (Q6b)	1	1	1	2
to establish programs to assist Presbyterians to obtain the knowledge and skill to share their faith (Q6e)	2	2	3	3
to assist struggling congregation to chart a new course (“redevelopment”) (Q6g)	—	2	—	3
to encourage evangelism at the congregational level (Q6c)	4	4	1	1
to increase membership in the denomination (Q6a)	3	5	4	6
to encourage evangelistic programs by presbyteries and synods (Q6d) . . .	5	6	6	8
to support the development of multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural congregations (Q6h)	—	7	—	7
to establish new congregations (Q6f)	6	8	5	5

— = question not asked in 1986

⁹Two new items, Q6g and Q6h, were added to the six items (Q6a to Q6e) repeated from 1986.

While many aspects of the questions differ (from time referents to response choices to the specific focus of the question), a comparison of responses to the 1986 question (Q7), “To what extent do you talk to others about your faith?” and the 1996 version (Q3), “How many people have you invited to attend worship at your congregation during the *last year*?” reveals broadly similar patterns. In both surveys, few members and elders reported frequent or extensive personal outreach activities.

Personal Outreach: The Likely Future

Both surveys asked members and elders about their willingness to commit “more time and effort to reach out” to unchurched individuals in their communities (Q11, 1986; Q9, 1996). While the 1986 version contained little more than that terse inquiry, the 1996 version prefaced the question with a request that the respondent “take a moment to reflect on your current time commitments to the church and to work, family, civic organizations, school, etc.,” and take those commitments into account in answering the question. Furthermore, the 1996 version asked about the *likelihood* of a greater time commitment, while 1986 asked about *willingness* to commit more time. In short, compared to 1986, the 1996 survey sought responses that would be more concrete and realistic, and hence provide a better basis for planning.

Even with these discrepancies, however, the patterns of results are remarkably similar (see Table 5). The major difference is found in the distribution between the “not sure” and “no response” categories—although, added together, the two total 22% in both 1986 and 1996. So, while we cannot assume that the overall results would have been so similar had the wording not changed, it seems fairly safe to conclude that there is nothing in these results to indicate that there has been any significant shift in the last decade in the *relative proportions* of Presbyterians dedicated to greater outreach.

Table 5
**A Comparison of 1986 and 1996 Findings on the Potential for Increasing
the Time and Effort Given to Evangelism**

1986			1996
Willingness to allocate more time, effort	Members' Responses		Likelihood of allocating more time, effort
yes, a major commitment	8%	4%	very likely
yes, a moderate commitment	25%	25%	likely
yes, but a very limited commitment	30%	38%	not very likely
no	15%	12%	not at all likely
not sure	21%	8%	not sure
no response	1%	13%	no response

Personal Outreach: Specific Activities

Based on responses to these parallel questions, both the 1986 and 1996 surveys went on to ask the subsets of members and elders who expressed the most interest in outreach (i.e., they chose one of the three “yes” responses in 1986, or chose either “very likely” or “likely” in 1996) about their willingness to participate in several specific activities (part of Q11, 1986; Q11, 1996). Because of format differences, comparisons are inexact, but it is useful nonetheless to see how closely the proportions who checked each option in 1986

several specific activities (part of Q11, 1986; Q11, 1996). Because of format differences, comparisons are inexact, but it is useful nonetheless to see how closely the proportions who checked each option in 1986 correspond to the proportions who responded “definitely willing” to the same items in 1996 (see Table 6). As in the previous discussion, any conclusions must be very tentative. Nonetheless, there is little here to suggest that, among the subset of Presbyterians with some likelihood of increasing their commitment to outreach, significant shifts have occurred over the last decade in the proportions willing to take on specific activities.

Table 6
Specific Activities that Panelists Devoted to Giving More Time to
Evangelism Would be Likely to Take On

Item (1996 Question Number)	Percent Of Members Who Checked This Item 1986	Percent of Members Who Responded “Definitely Willing” 1996
make telephone calls inviting people in the neighborhood		
to come to church (Q11a)	33%	33%
door-to-door evangelism (Q11b)	7%	6%
talk to associates and acquaintances about the meaning		
of Christian faith (Q11c)	28%	28%
study and train to witness to others about your faith (Q11d)	23%	31%
make team visits to inactive members (Q11e)	43%	39%
contact people whom you already know, urging them		
to come to church (Q11f)	36%	33%
visit Presbyterians newly-arrived in your community (Q11g)	51%	51%
help increase your congregation’s efforts to include		
new people and their concerns (Q11h)	45%	47%
help establish new congregations (Q11i)	7%	11%

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As the oft-cited phrase “decently and in order” suggests, Presbyterians in the United States are more typically characterized by their probity than by any evangelistic fervor. There is little in these results to contradict that image. In any event, most of us probably would have been a bit skeptical had the results shown Presbyterians ready and willing to dramatically increase their outreach activity. Instead, we can have more confidence that the survey provides a reasonable picture of where Presbyterians are, and where they may be willing to change, as regards evangelism. Here are some broad conclusions that the results suggest. In general:

- Presbyterians are uncomfortable with “street corner” or “stranger evangelism.” We invite friends, neighbors, and relatives to church—when we invite anyone at all (around one-third of members and elders indicated that, in the last year, they had *not* invited anyone to join them at a congregational worship service). There is relatively little interest, even among pastors, in such as activities as evangelism rallies or campaigns or hiring evangelists for work in congregations. Those Presbyterians who indicate some likelihood of finding more time for outreach—themselves a minority—show the most interest in activities focused on retention of currently-inactive members, inclusion of new

- members, and recruitment of individuals and families with Presbyterian ties who are new to the community.
- Presbyterian churches do not spend a great deal of time or effort on training or encouraging members for outreach to the unchurched. Pastors themselves devote little time to outreach activities (on average, around four hours per *month*, or less than one hour per week).
 - Pastors and laity tend to have different perspectives on which group has major responsibility for membership growth and decline. Pastors are more likely to see laity in that role, while laity are more likely to see pastors in the role.
 - Among the laity, there is only limited consensus on what is involved in the activity or ministry known as “evangelism.” The greatest degree of agreement—reached by about three-fourths of members and elders—is that evangelism involves faith-sharing with particular emphasis on what it means to accept Christ as savior. While pastors and other clergy show an even greater degree of clustering on these items, they, too, disagree on what other elements should be included in a definition.
 - While many factors help to explain why particular individuals remain as members in their current congregation, the factors that stand out all center on the church’s core mission: spiritual nourishment, opportunities for worship, and provision of a place to encounter God.
 - Evangelistic resources, especially those produced by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), are not well known among many clergy, and few members and elders have even heard of any of these items. Interestingly, the best known resource, the periodical *Net Results*, is produced by an independent organization and has an ecumenical audience.

Presbyterians tend to shun aggressive outreach among the unchurched, preferring instead to focus on making their congregations welcoming and nurturing to those already part of the fellowship or to those who seek it out on their own. When they do invite someone to participate in the life of their congregation, it is usually someone they already know, perhaps already know well: a relative, a friend, or a neighbor. While this sort of low-key evangelism lacks the drama of mass revivals and camp meetings, it has an important advantage: social science research on religious conversion indicates that, almost always, adoption of a new or different faith proceeds from personal relationships with individuals who are already a part of the group. In short, Presbyterians generally support an effective approach to evangelism. The challenge is thus less about transforming the way Presbyterians reach out than in encouraging, empowering, and equipping them to build upon an existing foundation.

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**AUGUST 1996 PRESBYTERIAN PANEL
EVANGELISM
APPENDIX**

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Number mailed	1086	1081	1136	609
Returned	671	707	791	432
Response rate	62%	65%	70%	71%

NOTE: QUESTIONS ASKED ON MEMBERS' AND ELDERS' QUESTIONNAIRES NOTED AS "Q-#" THROUGHOUT APPENDIX. QUESTIONS ASKED ON PASTORS' AND CLERGY'S QUESTIONNAIRES NOTED AS "[Q-#]" THROUGHOUT APPENDIX.

Note to Ministers of Word and Sacrament: Several questions ask about events in or trends at the congregation you serve or attend.

- **Ministers who are not currently serving congregations** or do not otherwise regularly attend a particular congregation (because of a job or any other reason) may wish to skip these questions (designated with a ★). (If this situation describes you, please check here _____.)

	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
checked	6%	30%

- **Ministers who serve more than one congregation** (e.g., a larger parish) are asked to answer as much as possible with regard to the parish as a whole. Where such an approach is not applicable, please respond in terms of the congregation whose name would be first in an alphabetical listing. (If this situation describes you, please check here _____.)

	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
checked	4%	2%

Q-1. In what year, approximately, did you *first attend a worship service* at your present congregation?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
before 1960	23%	31%		
1960-1974	26%	26%		
1975-1984	23%	18%		
1985-1989	14%	17%		
1990-present	14%	7%		

Q-1b. In what year did you *join* that congregation?

	(n=660)	(n=702)
before 1960	21%	27%
1960-1974	24%	27%
1975-1984	23%	18%
1985-1989	13%	18%
1990-present	19%	10%

Q-1c. (If not a member, check here.)

checked	2%	1%
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* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero

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

+ = nonresponses of 10% or more for this sample 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

Q-2. Please tell us how important each of the following items is in your decision *to continue to attend* your congregation.

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
a. It satisfies my spiritual needs				
very important	60%	67%		
important	37%	31%		
not very important	2%	1%		
not at all important	*	*		
not sure	1%	1%		
b. I enjoy the worship (music, preaching, liturgy)				
very important	48%	54%		
important	49%	43%		
not very important	2%	2%		
not at all important	1%	*		
not sure	1%	*		
c. My closest friends are here				
very important	14%	15%		
important	32%	37%		
not very important	37%	37%		
not at all important	16%	10%		
not sure	1%	1%		
d. It is my family's congregation				
very important	16%	20%		
important	27%	27%		
not very important	18%	21%		
not at all important	36%	32%		
not sure	2%	1%		
e. I like the programs offered for my children				
	(+)	(+)		
very important	28%	30%		
important	37%	37%		
not very important	10%	10%		
not at all important	22%	18%		
not sure	4%	5%		
f. I wish to support the congregation's social programs				
very important	13%	17%		
important	48%	53%		
not very important	27%	23%		
not at all important	10%	6%		
not sure	2%	1%		
g. I prefer the Presbyterian Church				
very important	35%	36%		
important	42%	44%		
not very important	16%	14%		
not at all important	5%	5%		
not sure	1%	1%		
h. I believe God is at work in this place				
very important	58%	65%		
important	39%	33%		
not very important	2%	1%		
not at all important	1%	*		
not sure	1%	1%		

* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero

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

+ = nonresponses of 10% or more for this sample 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

Q-2. (cont.) Please tell us how important each of the following items is in your decision *to continue to attend* your congregation.

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
i. I appreciate the work of the minister(s)				
very important	47%	50%		
important	46%	44%		
not very important	4%	4%		
not at all important	1%	1%		
not sure	1%	1%		
j. I can be involved				
very important	29%	38%		
important	54%	55%		
not very important	13%	6%		
not at all important	3%	*		
not sure	1%	1%		
k. It is in a convenient location				
very important	16%	18%		
important	43%	37%		
not very important	30%	33%		
not at all important	10%	12%		
not sure	1%	*		
l. The parking is adequate				
very important	12%	12%		
important	33%	32%		
not very important	35%	36%		
not at all important	19%	20%		
not sure	1%	1%		
m. The facilities are accessible				
very important	15%	17%		
important	48%	46%		
not very important	26%	26%		
not at all important	10%	11%		
not sure	1%	*		
n. The service is in my language				
very important	46%	49%		
important	45%	40%		
not very important	5%	6%		
not at all important	4%	5%		
not sure	1%	*		
o. I like the ministry/mission of this congregation				
very important	38%	40%		
important	54%	53%		
not very important	6%	4%		
not at all important	1%	1%		
not sure	1%	1%		
p. other (please specify)				
checked	5%	6%		

* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero

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

+ = nonresponses of 10% or more for this sample 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

Q-3. How many people have you invited to attend worship at your congregation during the *last year*? (If "none," write 0—zero—on the line.)

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
none	35%	28%		
one	10%	7%		
2-3	26%	26%		
4-5	14%	18%		
6 or more	15%	21%		

Q-4. About how long ago, if ever, was the last time you invited someone to attend worship at your congregation?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
within the last 6 months	39%	49%		
between 6 months and 1 year	26%	21%		
over a year ago	20%	22%		
have never invited anyone (Skip to Q-6)	6%	2%		
don't remember (Skip to Q-6)	9%	6%		

Q-5. Think back to the person you most recently invited to church. What relation was the person to you? (Circle *all* that apply.)

	Members ◆ (n=553)	Elders ◆ (n=636)	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
family member	27%	24%		
friend	48%	46%		
neighbor	20%	25%		
acquaintance	16%	21%		
co-worker	11%	11%		
other (please specify):	5%	3%		

[Q-4] ★To what extent, if any, is the membership of your congregation involved in each of the following activities?

	Members	Elders	Pastors (n=743)	Specialized Clergy (n=304)
a. making telephone calls inviting people in the neighborhood to come to church				
great extent			3%	8%
some extent			19%	28%
only a limited extent			40%	31%
not at all			37%	28%
not sure/no opinion			1%	4%
b. door-to-door evangelism				
great extent			1%	3%
some extent			7%	11%
only a limited extent			23%	19%
not at all			69%	63%
not sure/no opinion			1%	3%
c. talking to associates and acquaintances about the meaning of the Christian faith				
great extent			5%	9%
some extent			39%	37%
only a limited extent			49%	45%
not at all			5%	3%
not sure/no opinion			2%	6%

* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero

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

+ = nonresponses of 10% or more for this sample 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

[Q-4] (cont.) ★To what extent, if any, is the membership of your congregation involved in each of the following activities?

	Members	Elders	Pastors (n=743)	Specialized Clergy (n=304)
d. studying and training to witness to others about their faith				
great extent			4%	7%
some extent			24%	23%
only a limited extent			42%	39%
not at all			30%	26%
not sure/no opinion			1%	4%
e. making team visits to inactive members				
great extent			4%	7%
some extent			18%	20%
only a limited extent			35%	34%
not at all			42%	33%
not sure/no opinion			1%	6%
f. contacting people they already know, urging them to come to church				
great extent			11%	13%
some extent			48%	45%
only a limited extent			36%	32%
not at all			5%	6%
not sure/no opinion			1%	4%
g. visiting Presbyterians newly-arrived in your community				
great extent			11%	12%
some extent			30%	31%
only a limited extent			34%	24%
not at all			24%	24%
not sure/no opinion			2%	9%

[Q-6.] ★Has there been any training in evangelism or faith sharing over the past two years in your congregation among:

	Members	Elders	Pastors (n=743)	Specialized Clergy (n=304)
a. a committee of the session?				
yes			50%	34%
no			44%	45%
don't know			6%	21%
b. the entire session?				
yes			34%	22%
no			61%	55%
don't know			5%	23%
c. selected members?				
yes			56%	40%
no			39%	40%
don't know			5%	20%
d. the congregation at large?				
yes			26%	24%
no			69%	61%
don't know			5%	16%

* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero

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

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Q-6. Please indicate your opinion of the urgency with which Presbyterians need to take action in each of the following areas:
[Q-1.]

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
a. to increase membership in the denomination				
great urgency	21%	33%	35%	34%
some urgency	37%	38%	42%	39%
action needed, but no urgency	32%	26%	18%	22%
no action needed	6%	2%	3%	4%
not sure	4%	2%	2%	1%
b. to develop a warm and open fellowship within congregations				
great urgency	38%	49%	58%	53%
some urgency	36%	36%	32%	34%
action needed, but no urgency	18%	12%	8%	11%
no action needed	7%	3%	1%	1%
not sure	2%	1%	*	1%
c. to encourage evangelism at the congregational level				
great urgency	23%	34%	60%	52%
some urgency	37%	43%	32%	34%
action needed, but no urgency	28%	20%	7%	11%
no action needed	7%	2%	1%	2%
not sure	5%	2%	1%	1%
d. to encourage evangelistic programs by presbyteries and synods				
great urgency	13%	21%	24%	20%
some urgency	34%	43%	37%	40%
action needed, but no urgency	33%	27%	28%	29%
no action needed	11%	5%	9%	10%
not sure	9%	5%	2%	1%
e. to establish programs to assist Presbyterians to obtain the knowledge and skills to share their faith				
great urgency	23%	35%	52%	46%
some urgency	38%	39%	35%	36%
action needed, but no urgency	27%	22%	11%	15%
no action needed	7%	2%	2%	2%
not sure	5%	2%	1%	1%
f. to establish new congregations				
great urgency	8%	11%	42%	36%
some urgency	24%	30%	37%	37%
action needed, but no urgency	37%	41%	17%	24%
no action needed	16%	9%	2%	2%
not sure	14%	8%	1%	1%
g. to assist struggling congregations in charting a new course ("redevelopment")				
great urgency	21%	32%	48%	44%
some urgency	40%	45%	39%	41%
action needed, but no urgency	23%	16%	11%	12%
no action needed	6%	2%	2%	3%
not sure	11%	5%	*	1%
h. to support the development of multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural congregations				
great urgency	16%	21%	29%	39%
some urgency	29%	33%	38%	34%
action needed, but no urgency	34%	30%	25%	21%
no action needed	12%	10%	7%	5%
not sure	10%	6%	2%	2%

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Q-7. To what extent . . .

[Q-2.]

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
a. do you believe <i>the members</i> of a congregation are responsible for its growth or decline?				
great extent	56%	64%	70%	66%
some extent	39%	34%	29%	33%
only a little extent	4%	2%	1%	1%
no extent	*	*	*	-
not sure	1%	*	-	1%
b. do you believe <i>the session</i> is responsible for the growth or decline of a congregation?				
great extent	24%	30%	46%	41%
some extent	59%	57%	50%	54%
only a little extent	13%	11%	4%	4%
no extent	2%	2%	*	*
not sure	2%	*	-	1%
c. do you believe <i>the pastor(s)</i> is (are) responsible for the growth or decline of a congregation?				
great extent	58%	58%	40%	38%
some extent	38%	39%	55%	55%
only a little extent	4%	2%	5%	6%
no extent	*	*	*	*
not sure	1%	*	*	1%
d. do you believe <i>the demography</i> of the surrounding neighborhood and community is responsible for the growth or decline of a congregation?				
great extent	21%	27%	33%	33%
some extent	54%	52%	55%	53%
only a little extent	16%	16%	10%	12%
no extent	4%	3%	2%	1%
not sure	4%	2%	*	*

Q-8. There are many possible ways for churches to evangelize and to prepare people for evangelism. Please indicate how interested you, personally, would be in having the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) put resources and effort into each way listed below.

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
a. prepare Presbyterians to witness to colleagues in their workplaces				
extremely interested	10%	13%	36%	26%
moderately interested	34%	42%	45%	46%
not very interested	35%	32%	15%	22%
not at all interested	15%	9%	3%	5%
not sure	5%	3%	*	2%
b. prepare Presbyterians to be better able to communicate their faith to others				
extremely interested	29%	40%	71%	59%
moderately interested	54%	52%	26%	36%
not very interested	10%	6%	2%	3%
not at all interested	5%	1%	1%	1%
not sure	3%	1%	*	*

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Q-8.(cont.) There are many possible ways for churches to evangelize and to prepare people for evangelism. Please indicate how [Q-3.] interested you, personally, would be in having the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) put resources and effort into each way listed below.

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
c. encourage large-scale evangelistic campaigns				
extremely interested	5%	8%	8%	6%
moderately interested	26%	33%	27%	24%
not very interested	42%	43%	47%	46%
not at all interested	22%	12%	17%	23%
not sure	5%	3%	1%	1%
d. hold local/regional evangelism rallies				
extremely interested	6%	10%	9%	10%
moderately interested	26%	29%	30%	29%
not very interested	38%	42%	41%	36%
not at all interested	25%	16%	19%	24%
not sure	5%	4%	1%	1%
e. have presbyteries hire evangelists to assist congregations in their evangelism programs				
extremely interested	6%	8%	15%	13%
moderately interested	24%	33%	39%	36%
not very interested	34%	37%	28%	32%
not at all interested	29%	17%	16%	17%
not sure	7%	5%	1%	1%
f. broadcast a Sunday worship service from a PCUSA congregation on national radio/TV				
extremely interested	14%	14%	21%	17%
moderately interested	39%	41%	41%	46%
not very interested	24%	28%	27%	25%
not at all interested	18%	12%	9%	11%
not sure	5%	4%	1%	1%
g. provide media materials (print/radio/TV) so congregations can promote the PCUSA through local outlets				
extremely interested	11%	12%	32%	26%
moderately interested	41%	47%	46%	49%
not very interested	27%	28%	17%	20%
not at all interested	14%	8%	5%	5%
not sure	7%	5%	1%	1%
h. provide information through (and access to) computer services like the Internet				
extremely interested	10%	8%	19%	20%
moderately interested	35%	39%	43%	46%
not very interested	28%	31%	29%	28%
not at all interested	16%	13%	8%	5%
not sure	11%	9%	1%	2%

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Q-9. Please take a moment to reflect on your current time commitments to the church and to work, family, civic organizations, school, etc. Given those commitments, how likely is it that you would be willing and able to allocate more time and effort to reach out to individuals in your community who are currently *not members of any church* and invite them to participate in or join your congregation?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	(+)	(+)		
very likely (Go to Q-10)	5%	8%		
likely (Go to Q-10)	28%	36%		
not very likely (Skip to Q-12)	43%	38%		
not at all likely (Skip to Q-12)	14%	8%		
not sure	9%	9%		

Q-10. Approximately how many hours per month do you think you would be able to devote to such efforts?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	(n=193)	(n=280)		
		(+)		
1-2 hours	25%	19%		
3-4 hours	32%	36%		
5-9 hours	23%	31%		
10 or more hours	21%	14%		

Q-11. If you responded "1" or "2" to Q-9: As part of that time commitment to evangelism, how willing, if at all, would you be to do each of the following activities?

[Q-5.] ★ Given their current time commitments to work, family, civic organizations, school, etc., how willing do you think the membership of your congregation would be to *increase significantly* the amount of time they now spend in each of the following activities?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
	(n=193)	(n=280)	(n=743)	(n=304)
a. make telephone calls inviting people in the neighborhood to come to church				
definitely willing	33%	31%	4%	6%
probably willing	37%	42%	42%	50%
not very willing	23%	19%	46%	34%
not at all willing	5%	8%	6%	7%
not sure	2%	1%	1%	4%
b. door-to-door evangelism				
definitely willing	6%	6%	1%	2%
probably willing	22%	27%	9%	12%
not very willing	45%	43%	51%	49%
not at all willing	24%	22%	39%	33%
not sure	3%	2%	1%	3%
c. talk to associates and acquaintances about the meaning of the Christian faith				
definitely willing	28%	31%	8%	9%
probably willing	56%	55%	60%	57%
not very willing	10%	12%	30%	29%
not at all willing	2%	*	2%	2%
not sure	3%	2%	1%	3%

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Q-11. (cont.) If you responded "1" or "2" to Q-9: As part of that time commitment to evangelism, how willing, if at all, would you be to do each of the following activities?

[Q-5.] ★ Given their current time commitments to work, family, civic organizations, school, etc., how willing do you think the membership of your congregation would be *to increase significantly* the amount of time they now spend in each of the following activities?

	Members (n=193)	Elders (n=280)	Pastors (n=743)	Specialized Clergy (n=304)
d. study and train to witness to others about your faith				
definitely willing	31%	29%	8%	7%
probably willing	49%	51%	59%	58%
not very willing	15%	16%	29%	28%
not at all willing	5%	2%	4%	4%
not sure	1%	2%	1%	3%
e. make team visits to inactive members				
definitely willing	39%	45%	8%	8%
probably willing	46%	45%	49%	57%
not very willing	11%	8%	35%	26%
not at all willing	2%	2%	6%	5%
not sure	2%	*	1%	4%
f. contact people whom you already know, urging them to come to church				
definitely willing	33%	33%	20%	20%
probably willing	51%	55%	63%	60%
not very willing	11%	10%	15%	15%
not at all willing	2%	*	2%	2%
not sure	3%	2%	*	3%
g. visit Presbyterians newly-arrived in your community				
definitely willing	51%	51%	21%	21%
probably willing	41%	44%	59%	58%
not very willing	6%	4%	17%	15%
not at all willing	1%	1%	2%	2%
not sure	1%	1%	1%	3%
h. help increase your congregation's efforts to include new people and their concerns				
definitely willing	47%	54%	33%	33%
probably willing	49%	44%	56%	54%
not very willing	3%	1%	10%	9%
not at all willing	-	-	1%	1%
not sure	1%	*	1%	3%
i. help establish new congregations				
definitely willing	11%	9%	9%	10%
probably willing	29%	30%	36%	36%
not very willing	42%	44%	40%	36%
not at all willing	10%	12%	11%	11%
not sure	9%	5%	5%	7%

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[Q-11.]★In a "typical" month, how much time would you say you spend directly reaching out to individuals who are not currently members of any church to invite them to participate in or join your (or another) congregation?

	Members	Elders	Pastors (n=743)	Specialized Clergy (n=304) (+)
none			15%	27%
1 hour			15%	20%
2 hours			18%	15%
3-4 hours			17%	13%
5-8 hours			17%	14%
9-20 hours			16%	7%
21 or more hours			1%	4%

Q-12. What do you think is involved in evangelism? Answer by indicating the extent to which each statement would fit in your own definition of "evangelism."

[Q-7.]

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
a. introducing people to the Realm of God				
great extent	55%	58%	59%	54%
some extent	32%	31%	33%	35%
only a limited extent	7%	8%	6%	7%
not at all	2%	-	1%	1%
not sure/no opinion	4%	3%	2%	3%
b. sharing one's personal faith commitment				
great extent	47%	51%	69%	67%
some extent	37%	38%	28%	28%
only a limited extent	11%	10%	3%	6%
not at all	1%	*	*	*
not sure/no opinion	3%	1%	-	-
c. providing opportunities for people to increase their understanding of what it means to accept Christ as their savior.				
great extent	55%	58%	64%	57%
some extent	34%	34%	28%	31%
only a limited extent	7%	7%	7%	10%
not at all	1%	1%	1%	2%
not sure/no opinion	4%	1%	-	1%
d. sensitizing people to issues related to injustices in the world				
great extent	15%	16%	19%	30%
some extent	36%	38%	37%	36%
only a limited extent	30%	31%	34%	28%
not at all	12%	12%	9%	6%
not sure/no opinion	6%	3%	*	1%
e. pointing out the errors in the beliefs of non-Presbyterians				
great extent	2%	2%	*	1%
some extent	5%	7%	4%	4%
only a limited extent	18%	21%	22%	20%
not at all	68%	66%	73%	74%
not sure/no opinion	7%	4%	1%	*
f. making congregational life more meaningful and inspirational for members				
great extent	44%	53%	55%	58%
some extent	39%	38%	34%	33%
only a limited extent	10%	7%	8%	8%
not at all	2%	1%	3%	1%
not sure/no opinion	4%	1%	-	*

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Q-12. (cont.) What do you think is involved in evangelism? Answer by indicating the extent to which each statement would fit in your own definition of "evangelism."

[Q-7.]

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
g. providing opportunities to support people in their efforts to grow in faith				
great extent	52%	61%	73%	74%
some extent	39%	33%	23%	24%
only a limited extent	5%	5%	3%	2%
not at all	1%	*	2%	-
not sure/no opinion	3%	1%	*	-
h. increasing the membership of the church				
great extent	25%	33%	22%	20%
some extent	45%	44%	43%	45%
only a limited extent	20%	19%	27%	26%
not at all	7%	4%	8%	8%
not sure/no opinion	3%	1%	*	-
i. inviting people to become members of the church				
great extent	32%	43%	42%	37%
some extent	48%	46%	43%	48%
only a limited extent	14%	8%	12%	14%
not at all	3%	1%	2%	1%
not sure/no opinion	3%	1%	-	-

[Q-12.] In the last five years, have you taken any continuing education in evangelism or had other training in evangelism?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
yes			54%	27%
no			46%	73%

[Q-12a.] [If "yes,"] How would you evaluate the adequacy of that education/training for your service and ministry to the church?

	Members	Elders	Pastors (n=419)	Specialized Clergy (n=114)
more than adequate			28%	24%
adequate			55%	53%
less than adequate			17%	22%

Q-13. Of the statements below, which *one best* describes your definition of evangelism? (Circle only *one*.)

[Q-10.]

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
Evangelism is the joyful sharing of the sovereign love of God.	18%	14%	12%	14%
Evangelism is the joyful sharing of the sovereign love of God, calling people to repentance and to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.	20%	16%	11%	9%
Evangelism is the joyful sharing of the sovereign love of God, calling people to repentance, to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to active membership in the church, and obedient service to the world.	26%	35%	57%	55%
Evangelism is everything the church does.	35%	34%	19%	22%

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Q-14. Below are listed some evangelism resources that are readily available to congregations. Please indicate the degree to which you are familiar with each.

[Q-8.]

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
a. the PC(USA) "Commitment to Evangelism" program				
very familiar	1%	4%	39%	20%
somewhat familiar	12%	24%	47%	45%
not familiar	83%	69%	13%	33%
not sure	3%	3%	1%	1%
b. "Commitment to Evangelism" Action Guide				
very familiar	*	2%	20%	12%
somewhat familiar	8%	14%	43%	32%
not familiar	88%	82%	37%	54%
not sure	3%	2%	1%	2%
c. <i>Good News</i> newsletter				
very familiar	7%	10%	22%	11%
somewhat familiar	28%	31%	32%	29%
not familiar	62%	57%	44%	58%
not sure	2%	2%	1%	1%
d. Invite-A-Friend program				
very familiar	5%	5%	25%	14%
somewhat familiar	15%	17%	42%	29%
not familiar	76%	77%	32%	57%
not sure	3%	1%	*	1%
e. Lifestory Conversations study booklet				
very familiar	*	1%	13%	9%
somewhat familiar	5%	4%	22%	20%
not familiar	91%	93%	64%	70%
not sure	4%	3%	1%	1%
f. Covenant for Caring (video-based faith-sharing training)				
very familiar	*	1%	4%	3%
somewhat familiar	6%	7%	15%	13%
not familiar	90%	89%	80%	81%
not sure	4%	3%	1%	2%
g. PC(USA) Evangelism Resource Catalog and Bibliography				
very familiar	1%	1%	10%	8%
somewhat familiar	6%	11%	42%	32%
not familiar	89%	86%	47%	60%
not sure	4%	3%	2%	1%
h. <i>Net Results</i> magazine				
very familiar	*	2%	40%	16%
somewhat familiar	3%	4%	22%	15%
not familiar	92%	91%	36%	67%
not sure	4%	3%	1%	2%
i. Herb Miller workshops				
very familiar	*	2%	24%	11%
somewhat familiar	5%	7%	25%	20%
not familiar	91%	90%	50%	67%
not sure	4%	2%	1%	2%
j. PC(USA) Evangelism Sunday worship resource packets				
very familiar	1%	2%	34%	20%
somewhat familiar	11%	16%	49%	36%
not familiar	84%	78%	16%	43%
not sure	3%	3%	*	1%

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Q-14. (cont.) Below are listed some evangelism resources that are readily available to congregations. Please indicate the degree to which you are familiar with each.

[Q-8.]

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
k. PC(USA) Institutes for Congregational Evangelism				
very familiar	-	*	4%	4%
somewhat familiar	5%	6%	25%	23%
not familiar	91%	90%	70%	71%
not sure	4%	3%	1%	2%
l. Faithful Witnesses study book				
very familiar	1%	1%	7%	6%
somewhat familiar	6%	5%	19%	15%
not familiar	89%	90%	73%	77%
not sure	4%	4%	1%	2%
m. regional PC(USA) "Celebrations of Evangelism"				
very familiar	*	1%	19%	11%
somewhat familiar	5%	6%	41%	33%
not familiar	91%	90%	39%	55%
not sure	4%	3%	1%	1%
n. Turn to the Living God: A Call to Evangelism in Jesus Christ's Way (PC(USA) General Assembly resolution and study book)				
very familiar	1%	1%	9%	7%
somewhat familiar	4%	7%	25%	17%
not familiar	91%	88%	65%	74%
not sure	4%	3%	1%	1%

[Q-9.] ★What other kinds of helps, if any, would you like for evangelism ministry in your congregation? (Circle the number for *all* that apply.) Helps for:

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
faith sharing			78%	71%
media use			43%	37%
making our church more welcoming			64%	66%
listening skills			45%	48%
visitation skills			70%	65%
sharing ideas from other churches			55%	48%
retaining members			52%	48%
new member assimilation			74%	66%
relationship between evangelism and other church activities (e.g., education, social action, worship, stewardship, etc.)			48%	51%
church growth			42%	44%
redevelopment			31%	36%
other (specify)			9%	10%

Q-15. Where did you live when you were 16 years of age?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
same home I live in now	3%	5%		
different home, but in the same county	29%	32%		
in a different county, but in the same state	24%	24%		
in a different state	42%	36%		
in a different <i>country</i>	2%	2%		

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Q-16. In what year, approximately, did you move into:

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
a. the community/area in which you now live?				
before 1960	27%	33%		
1960-1974	27%	31%		
1975-1984	21%	17%		
1985-1989	12%	12%		
1990-present	13%	6%		
b. the particular home (house, apartment, condo, etc.) in which you now live?				
before 1960	9%	15%		
1960-1974	24%	24%		
1975-1984	21%	23%		
1985-1989	17%	18%		
1990-present	28%	21%		

Q-17. Please indicate how well you feel you are in touch with the other people in the immediate neighborhood where you live.

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
know none of my neighbors	1%	*		
know few of my neighbors	32%	25%		
know fairly many of my neighbors	27%	31%		
know most of my neighbors	39%	43%		

Q-18. How often do you socialize with people from each of these categories?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
a. neighbors				
often	18%	20%		
occasionally	45%	51%		
rarely	29%	26%		
never	8%	3%		
b. other members of my congregation				
often	36%	45%		
occasionally	46%	49%		
rarely	16%	6%		
never	3%	*		
c. unchurched friends				
often	24%	23%		
occasionally	52%	56%		
rarely	21%	17%		
never	3%	4%		
d. family				
often	65%	68%		
occasionally	27%	28%		
rarely	7%	3%		
never	1%	*		
e. members of special clubs or groups				
often	30%	28%		
occasionally	41%	46%		
rarely	23%	20%		
never	7%	6%		

* = less than 0.5%; rounds to zero

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

+ = nonresponses of 10% or more for this sample 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

Q-18. (cont.) How often do you socialize with people from each of these categories?

	Members	Elders	Pastors	Specialized Clergy
f. colleagues at work				
often	14%	14%		
occasionally	38%	40%		
rarely	30%	31%		
never	19%	16%		
g. members of racial or ethnic groups other than my own				
often	6%	8%		
occasionally	32%	34%		
rarely	43%	44%		
never	18%	14%		

Q-19. Please use the space below to add any other comments about the issues raised by this questionnaire.
[Q-13.]

[not tabulated]

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