Pastors’ Views on Moral Failure

Survey of American Protestant Pastors
Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors was conducted August 30 -- September 24, 2019
- The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister or priest of the church called
- Responses were weighted by region to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,000 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed ±3.3%
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
Survey Responses
27% say that a pastor who commits adultery should withdraw from public ministry permanently

Among Protestant Pastors

- The pastor does not need to withdraw: 2%
- Withdraw for at least 3 months: 3%
- Withdraw for at least 6 months: 3%
- Withdraw for at least a year: 16%
- Withdraw for at least 2 years: 10%
- Withdraw for at least 5 years: 7%
- Withdraw for at least 10 years: 1%
- Withdraw permanently: 27%
- Not sure: 31%

Q27: “If a pastor commits adultery, how long, if at all, should the pastor withdraw from public ministry?”
Comparison: 2020 v. 2016 results
Among Protestant Pastors

The pastor does not need to withdraw
- 2% (2020), 3% (2016)
Withdraw for at least 3 months
- 3% (2020), 4% (2016)
Withdraw for at least 6 months
- 3% (2020), 6% (2016)
Withdraw for at least a year
- 16% (2020), 21% (2016)
Withdraw for at least 2 years
- 10% (2020), 11% (2016)
Withdraw for at least 5 years
- 7% (2020), 5% (2016)
Withdraw for at least 10 years
- 1% (2020), 1% (2016)
Withdraw permanently
- 27% (2020), 24% (2016)
Not sure
- 25% (2020), 31% (2016)

Q27: “If a pastor commits adultery, how long, if at all, should the pastor withdraw from public ministry?”
Significant Differences

- Pastor
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Gender
- Education Level
- Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline
- Church
- Region
- Denomination
- Average Attendance
Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the pastor’s ethnicity, age, gender, education, and self-identified Evangelical or Mainline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Self-Identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>18-44</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No College Degree</td>
<td>Evangelical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>Mainline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ethnicity</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65+</td>
<td></td>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the church’s region, denomination, and attendance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>0-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>50-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>100-249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>250+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presbyterian/Reformed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian/Church of Christ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Region is defined by US Census locations
“If a pastor commits adultery, how long, if at all, should the pastor withdraw from public ministry?”

- African American pastors are the least likely to select “Withdraw permanently” (8%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (34%) are more likely to select “Withdraw permanently” than those with a Master’s degree (27%) or a Doctoral degree (22%)
- Pentecostals are the most likely to select “Withdraw for at least a year” (35%) and least likely to select “Withdraw permanently” (6%)
- Methodists (7%) are more likely to select “The pastor does not need to withdraw from public ministry” than Baptists (1%), Lutherans (1%), Pentecostals (<1%), and Christian/Church of Christ (<1%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 50-99 (31%) are more likely to select “Withdraw permanently” than those with attendance of 100-249 (23%)
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