

Pastors' Views on Conspiracy Theories

A SURVEY OF AMERICANS PROTESTANT PASTORS

Lifeway research

Methodology

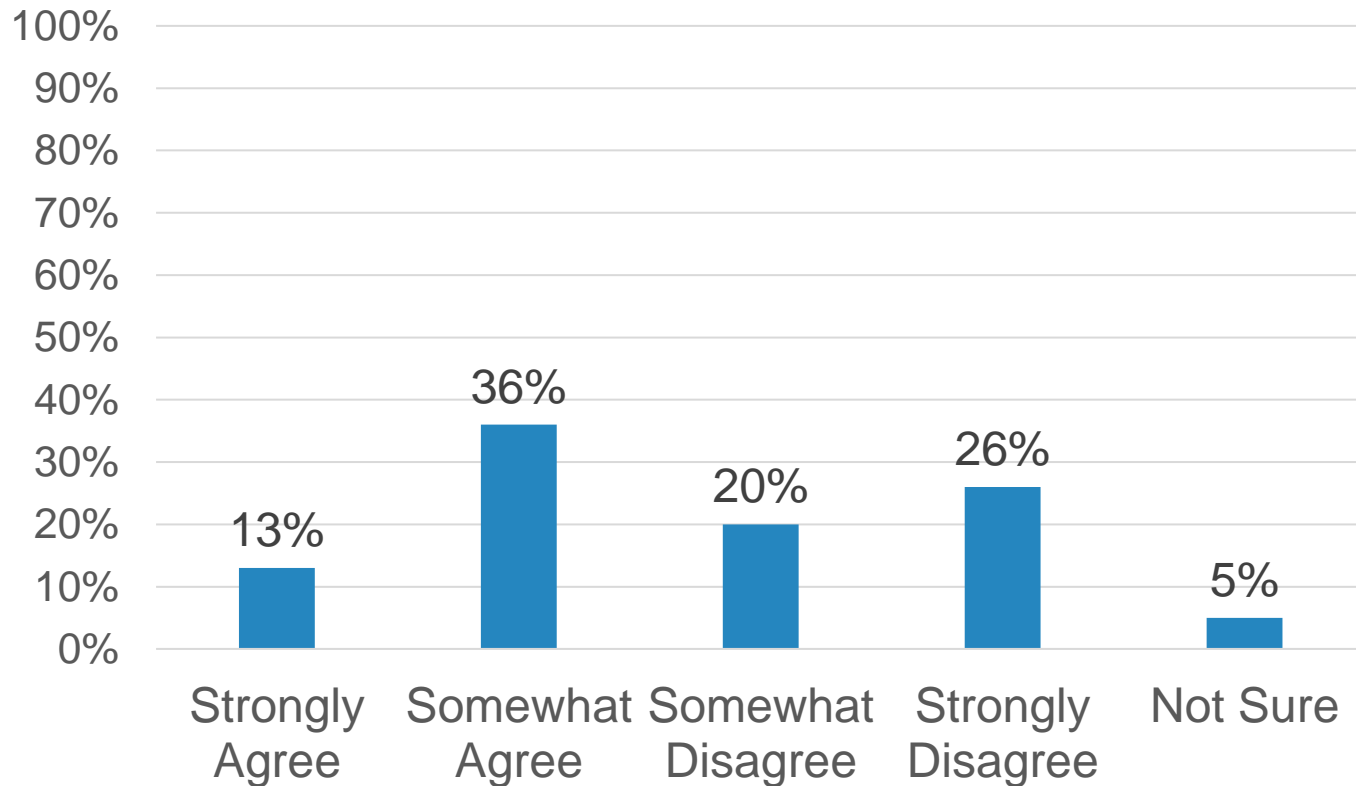
- The mixed mode survey of 1,007 Protestant pastors was conducted September 2–October 1, 2020 using both phone and online interviews
- Phone: The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- Online: Invitations were emailed to the LifeWay Research Pastor Panel followed by three reminders. This probability sample of Protestant churches was created by phone recruiting by LifeWay Research using random samples selected from all Protestant churches. Pastors who agree to be contacted by email for future surveys make up this LifeWay Research Pastor Panel.
- Each survey was completed by the senior or sole pastor or a minister at the church
- Responses were weighted by region and church size to more accurately reflect the population

Methodology

- The completed sample is 1,007 surveys (502 by phone, 505 online)
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed $\pm 3.4\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

49% of pastors frequently hear members of their congregation repeating conspiracy theories they have heard

Among Protestant Pastors



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Significant Differences

Pastor

Ethnicity

Age

Gender

Education Level

Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Church

Religion

Denomination

Average Attendance

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Significant Differences

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

AGE	GENDER	ETHNICITY	EDUCATION	Self-Identified
18-34	Male	White	No College Degree	Evangelical
35-49	Female	African American	Bachelor's Degree	Mainline
50-64		Hispanic	Graduate Degree	
65+		Other Ethnicities	Doctoral Degree	

Significant Statistical Differences

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

REGION	DENOMINATION GROUP	ATTENDANCE
Northeast	Baptist	0-49
South	Lutheran	50-99
Midwest	Methodist	100-249
West	Pentecostal	250+
	Presbyterian/Reformed	
	Christian/Church of Christ	

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

“I frequently hear members of my congregation repeating conspiracy theories they have heard about why something is happening in our country.”

- White pastors (50%) are more likely to Agree than African American pastors (36%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the most likely to Disagree (59%) and least likely to Agree (34%)
- Male pastors are more likely to Agree than females (50% v. 35%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ are the most likely to Agree (61%)

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