

# The Greatest Needs of Pastors

## Ministry Difficulties

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

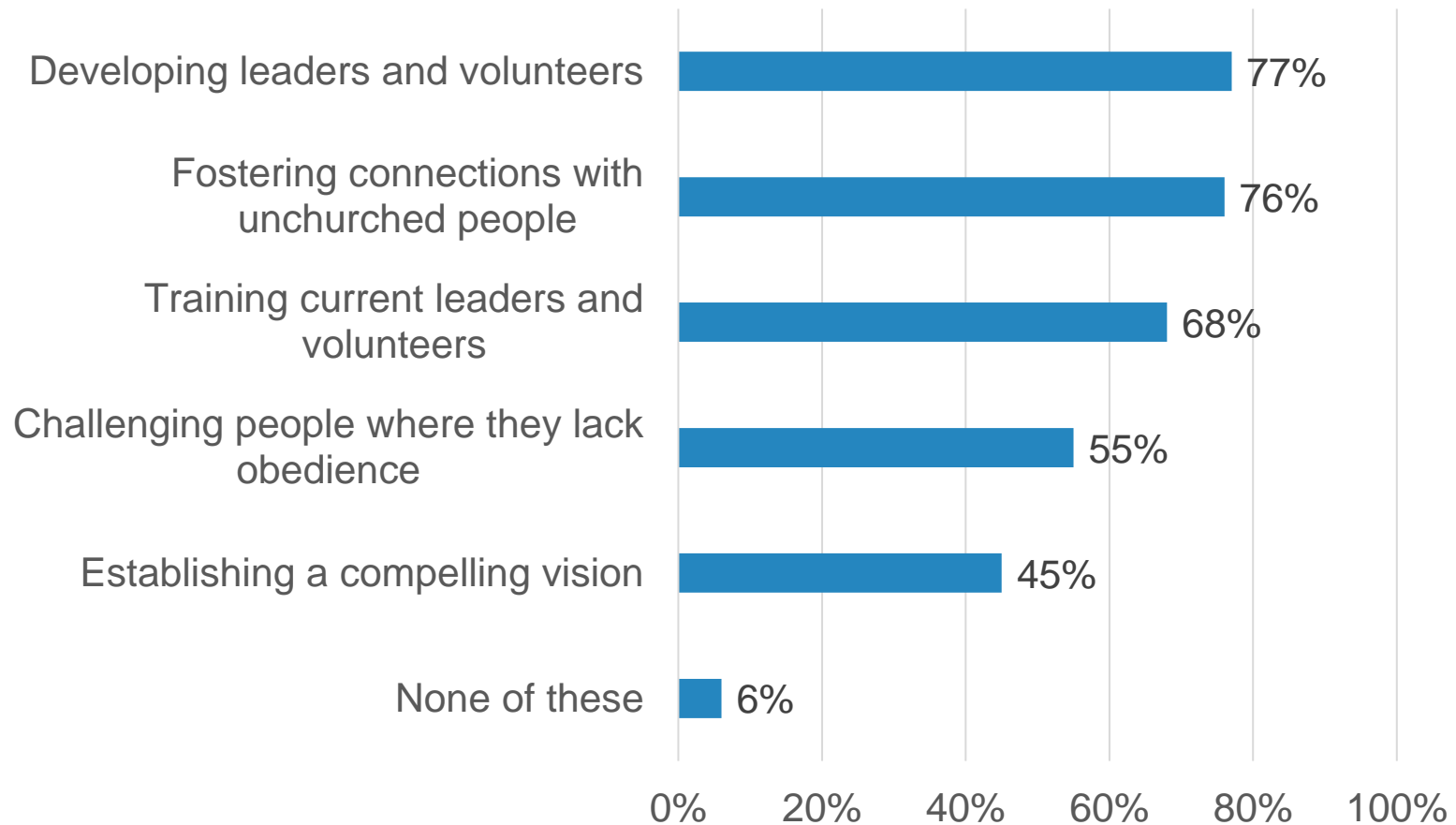
Lifeway **research**

# Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors was conducted March 30 – April 22, 2021
- The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- 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
- The completed sample is 1,000 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed  $\pm 3.1\%$  This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

# “Which of the following ministry difficulties in your congregation are you as pastor needing to give specific attention to or invest in at this time?”

Among Protestant Pastors

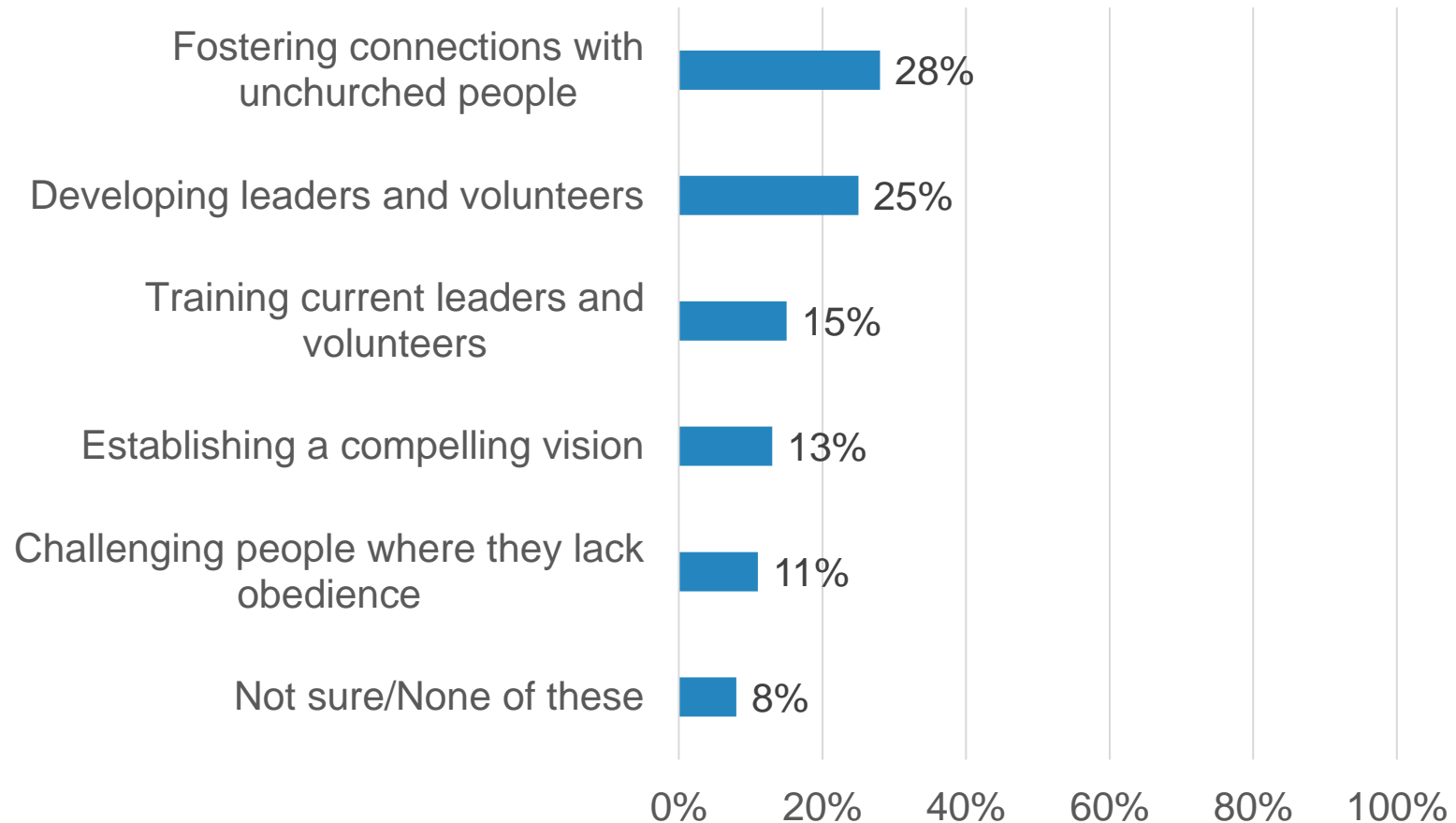


Lifeway research

Q: “Which of the following **ministry difficulties** in your congregation are you as pastor needing to give specific attention to or invest in at this time? (Select all that apply)”

# 28% say they need to give attention to fostering connections with unchurched people; 25% need to give attention to developing leaders and volunteers

Among Protestant Pastors



**Lifeway**research

Q: "Among the ministry difficulties you just selected, which one are you as pastor most needing to give specific attention to or invest in at this time?"

# Significant Differences

Pastor

Age

Gender

Ethnicity

Education Level

Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Church

Region

Denomination

Average Attendance

**Lifeway** research

# 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
18-44	Male	White	No College Degree	Evangelical
45-54	Female	African American	Bachelor's Degree	Mainline
55-64		Other Ethnicities	Graduate Degree	
65+			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	
	Non-denominational	

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

## **“Which of the following ministry difficulties in your congregation are you as pastor needing to give specific attention to or invest in at this time?”**

### **Fostering connections with unchurched people**

- White pastors (77%) are more likely to select than African American pastors (63%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (82%) are more likely to select than pastors age 45-54 (73%) and 65+ (71%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select than females (77% v. 69%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree (78%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (69%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (79%) and 250+ (81%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (70%)



**“Which of the following ministry difficulties in your congregation are you as pastor needing to give specific attention to or invest in at this time?”** *(continued)*

### **Developing leaders and volunteers**

- African American pastors are the least likely to select (68%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (82%) and 45-54 (79%) are more likely to select than pastors age 65+ (70%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (84%) are more likely to select than those in the South (76%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (81%) and 250+ (81%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (72%)

**“Which of the following ministry difficulties in your congregation are you as pastor needing to give specific attention to or invest in at this time?”** *(continued)*

### **Challenging people where they lack obedience**

- Male pastors are more likely to select than females (59% v. 34%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (63%) are more likely to select than those with a Master’s degree (52%) or a Doctoral degree (51%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (63% v. 43%)
- Baptists (67%), Pentecostals (60%), Presbyterian/Reformed (52%), Christian/Church of Christ (63%), and Non-denominational (58%) are more likely to select than Lutherans (29%) and Methodists (36%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 100-249 (60%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 50-99 (51%)

**“Which of the following ministry difficulties in your congregation are you as pastor needing to give specific attention to or invest in at this time?”** *(continued)*

**Training current leaders and volunteers**

- Pastors age 18-44 (74%) are more likely to select than pastors age 65+ (62%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 250+ (77%) are more likely to select than those with attendance of 0-49 (63%) and 50-99 (63%)

**Establishing a compelling vision**

- Pastors of Other Ethnicities (50%) are more likely to select than African American pastors (35%)
- Pastors age 65+ (49%) are more likely to select than pastors age 45-54 (38%)

**“Among the ministry difficulties you just selected, which one are you as pastor most needing to give specific attention to or invest in at this time?”**

- Pastors age 18-44 (31%) are more likely to select “Developing leaders and volunteers” than pastors age 55-64 (23%) and 65+ (21%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s degree (19%) are more likely to select “Training current volunteers and leaders” than those with a Master’s degree (13%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select “Challenging people where they lack obedience” than Mainline pastors (13% v. 8%)
- Pastors in the Northeast (34%) are more likely to select “Developing leaders and volunteers” than those in the South (23%) and West (23%)
- Pastors in the Northeast are the least likely to select “Fostering connections with unchurched people (16%)

**“Among the ministry difficulties you just selected, which one are you as pastor most needing to give specific attention to or invest in at this time?”** *(continued)*

- Baptist (17%) and Pentecostal (14%) pastors are more likely to select “Challenging people where they lack obedience” than Lutheran (4%) and Methodists (6%)
- Lutherans (35%) are more likely to select “Developing leaders” than Baptists (21%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (15%) and 50-99 (16%) are more likely to select “Establishing a compelling vision” than those with attendance of 250+ (8%)