

TEACHER FIRST: LEADERSHIP NETWORK'S 2009 LARGE-CHURCH SENIOR PASTOR SURVEY

July 2009

by Warren Bird

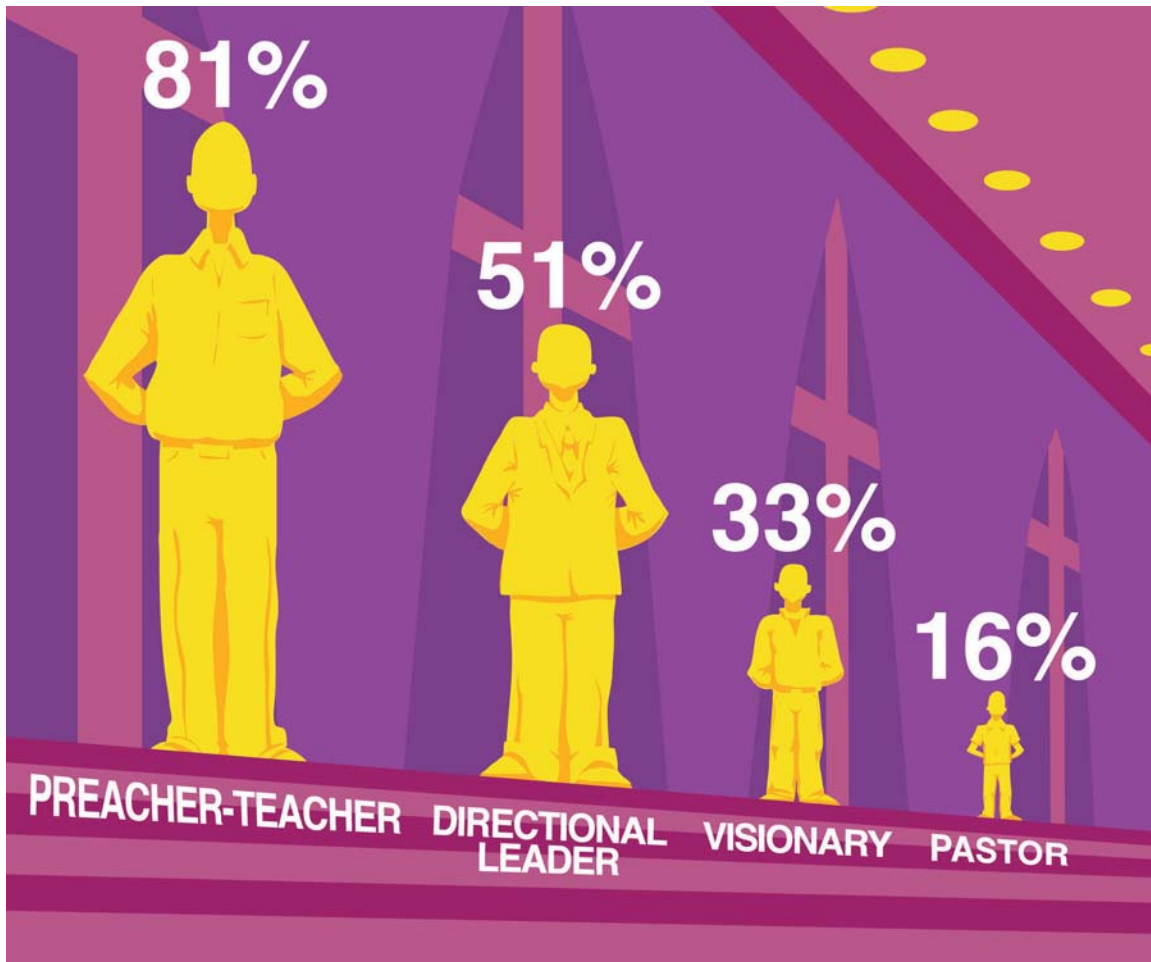
Article Summary

Megachurch pastors are a rare breed. They represent 0.3% of North America's churches but they draw almost 10% of weekly Protestant worshippers. Most of these churches are growing, many by a respectable level of conversion growth. They are high-visibility congregations with widespread influence. In May, 2009 Leadership Network conducted a survey of 232 megachurch pastors. The following report reveals some interesting insights on their unique role.

Want to know how churches of your size replied?
See the appendix for size-grouped frequencies for *each* question.

TEACHER TAKES THE STAGE

How do today's senior leaders in larger churches view their role? When presented with nine options, more than 80% select "preacher/teacher." Half choose the term "directional leader," and slightly more than a third select the word "visionary."



"Pastor" ranks 4th on the list of descriptive terms megachurch leaders used to describe themselves.

Sure, their business cards may say "pastor" and their congregants may still address them as Pastor Smith—but when these leaders are asked which phrase best describes how they see themselves and their role, the phrase "pastor, shepherd or spiritual guide" ranks a distant fourth.

This is just one of many interesting findings in a May 2009 survey that drew responses from 232 senior pastors serving in megachurch congregations—that is, churches where more than 2,000 people attend on any given weekend. Survey respondents represented congregations from 38 different states and a handful of countries—including four from Canada. They also represented a wide range of pastoral ages and denominational traditions. An additional 208 responses came from pastors of churches where attendance ranges from 500 to 1,999, and their responses are tallied in separate columns in the appendix of this report.¹

“The results of the survey were surprising in a number of areas,” says Warren Bird, Leadership Network’s research director and designer of the survey. “This project represents the most comprehensive cross-denominational survey that has ever been conducted of large-church senior pastors. It revealed surprising insights on a number of different points, from very high satisfaction levels with their church boards to somewhat low personal participation in non-church activities.”

Pastors First vs. Teachers First

The survey asked participants how they see themselves in their role as senior or lead pastor of a megachurch. Eight choices were offered plus “other.” We then compared those who saw their top identity as *pastor* with those who see it as *teacher*.

Those who see themselves more as pastor...

- Say they do “preaching/teaching” better than “promoting a vision and goals for the congregation’s future.” (By contrast, those who see themselves as teacher say they promote vision best.)
- Are less satisfied with the evangelistic emphasis of their church.
- Indicate that a lower percent of their newest members came to faith in Christ through the ministry of their church.
- Are less likely to lead a multi-site church (33% vs. 45%).
- Lead slightly smaller churches (by about 10%).
- Preach slightly more weekends a year (42 vs. 40).

INSIDE THE WORLD OF A SENIOR PASTOR TEACHER

According to the survey, a senior pastor at a large church spends a full 19 hours each week in preaching, teaching and worship, followed by 9 hours of administration and meetings. Neither of these numbers change by church size. (See the appendix for a summary of *all* survey questions, each grouped by church size.)

He—the entire response group was male despite strong efforts to solicit female responses—preaches an average of 39 weekends out of the year, and is the live, focal preacher for 3 services on any given weekend. By comparison, the church’s second-most used teacher/preacher speaks 10 weeks a year.

Five hours of what is typically a 53-hour week are spent providing pastoral care, 5 hours are spent intentionally in prayer and meditation, and 2 hours are devoted to personal evangelism.



The majority of the senior pastor's work week is spent preparing messages, preaching, teaching and in worship, followed by time spent on administrative tasks, including meetings.

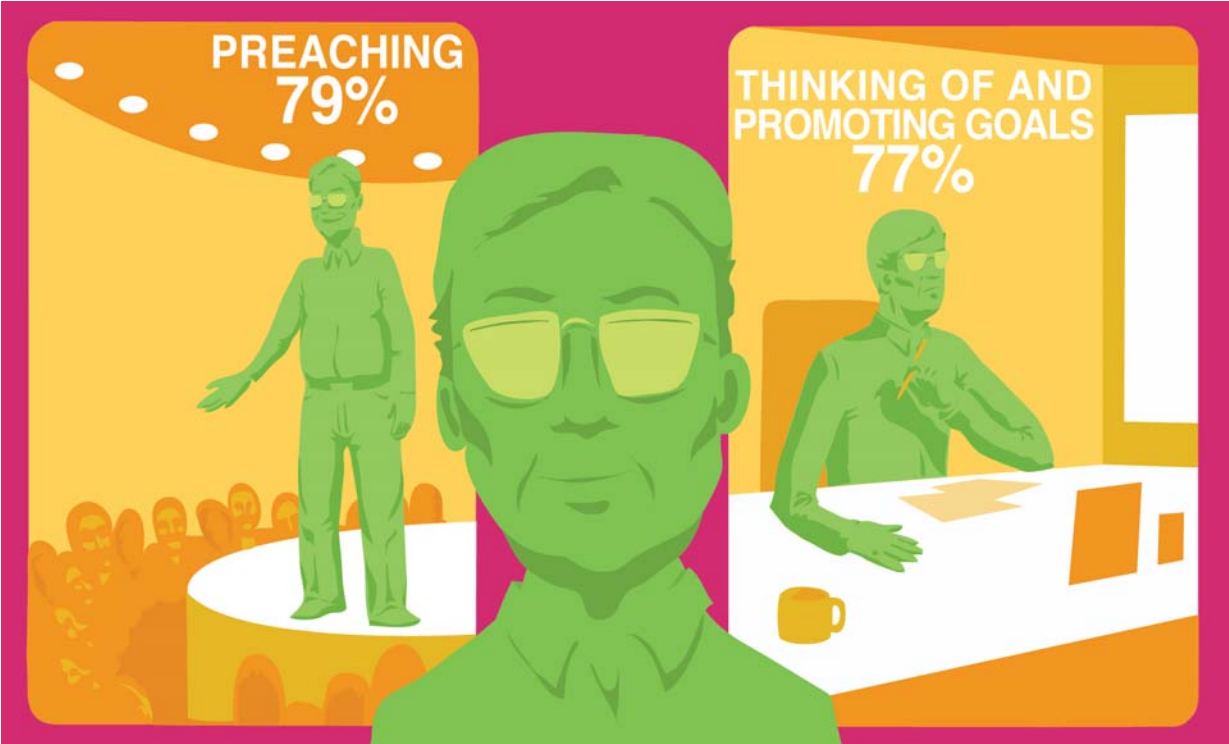
When asked to identify their spiritual gifts, leadership and teaching are the most commonly selected answers, followed by exhortation. Interestingly, only 13% of senior pastors say faith is one of their top three gifts.



77% of senior pastors chose leadership as one of their top three spiritual gifts. Teaching followed at 67%.

Upon having the opportunity to identify three pastoral tasks where they are strongest (a different question than the *role* question mentioned earlier in this report), the vast majority of respondents select “preaching,” followed by “thinking about and promoting a vision and goals for the congregation’s future” and “teaching people about the faith.” Only a small percentage of respondents say they excel in pastoral counseling and spiritual direction, or “one-on-one time working to convert others to the faith.”

Interestingly, only 1% consider “visiting members, the sick and shut in” to be an area of strength for them—something old-time “preachers” were commonly known for. Of course that’s not to say that senior pastors don’t make house calls, only that it’s not a task that comes naturally as the pastoral task they do best.



Senior pastors believe the activities they’re best at are their ability to preach and to cast vision for their congregation’s future.

When senior pastors are asked which work-related issues they lie in bed thinking about, the results trend toward what we might term “institutional and organizational matters”—with finance and staff issues topping the list (each at 19%). These findings parallel an identical question in Leadership Network’s survey of executive pastors in large churches (<http://www.leadnet.org/executivepastor>), despite the differences in the role and responsibilities.

Here's a sampling of the senior pastors' responses to the question, "What is the top work-related issue you lie awake in bed thinking about?":

“Transitioning the worship style.”

“People leaving.”

“Our region is in crisis. Job loss [means] a change of life as we know it. [I’m] wondering what the future will look like.”

“Attacks from outside critics.”

“Communicating leadership decisions.”

Only 5% say evangelism, outreach, or impacting the community are the topics they lose sleep thinking about.

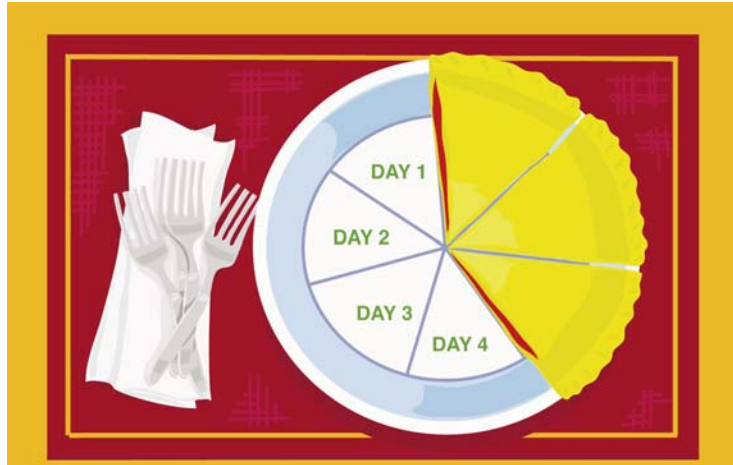
TIME FOR LEISURE?

Do the large church senior leaders find time to get away from work? Ask senior pastors about their relationships and most say their closest friends are found inside the church (81%). This is not necessarily surprising, given the fact that the typical large-church senior pastor has been on staff at his current church for 16 years. However, only half say they take more than one day off from work each week.

When asked “in which of these areas outside your church community would you describe yourself as ‘currently active’” the most common answer was not a school-related activity, a social service or hobby group; it was a parachurch group, followed by sports and then denominational activities.



Just over half of the survey respondents say sports or exercise is the main thing they do that helps them maintain “sanity.”



On average, senior pastors have dinner with their families 4 nights a week.

As was found to be the case in the executive pastor survey, the top non-church involvement for senior pastors in large churches is sports leagues. In fact “sports” is also the most frequently mentioned way megachurch pastors say they maintain their sanity during crazy or stressful moments of ministry.

Spending time with friends and family (whether spouse, kids or grandkids) is the second-most cited stress reliever. Megachurch pastors also find time to have 4 out of 7 dinners with their families each week.



Most Senior Pastors (74%) hold a Master's or Doctoral Degree in theology.

LONGER-TERM PASTORS SERVE MORE IN THE COMMUNITY AND TRAVEL MORE FOR MISSIONS

On average pastors in our study group became senior pastor at their present church in 1996. We then looked at how pastors who have been there longer (pre-1996) compared with those who have been there 1996 to the present. Beyond such predictable findings as being older and having fewer children at home, we learned:

Longer-term megachurch pastors...

- *Are more likely to be involved in a social service group outside the church community.*
- *Spend an hour more a week (6 vs. 5) reading, excluding sermon preparation.*
- *Take more international trips related to missions or church-based projects.*
- *Are less satisfied with their relationship with their executive pastor.*
- *Have smaller church boards (8 people vs. 10 people for others).*
- *Report less conflict in the church over the last two years.*
- *Have a larger church attendance (by 9%) but also a larger budget (by 23%).*
- *Are more likely to be part of a mainline denomination.*
- *Are less likely to receive an annual performance review (73% vs. 83%).*

THE YOUNGER THE PASTOR, THE MORE THEY VALUE TEACHING AND TEAM MINISTRY

The average pastor's age in this study is 51, which is one year older than the national norm for large-church pastors according to other studies. What does a comparison show when you contrast those who are *older* than 51 against those who are *younger*? We avoided obvious facts such as young pastors being more likely to be married a shorter time, to have children at home, or to be at their churches a shorter time, but we still found several important differences.

Younger megachurch pastors...

- *View themselves strongly as preacher/teacher (85%), followed distantly by directional leader (46%), visionary (34%) and then pastor (18%).*
- *Are more likely to share the senior pastor role through a "lead pastor team" approach (52% vs. 42%).*
- *Serve churches that are growing faster.*
- *Have the same worship attendance but fewer paid staff.*
- *Are more educated (44% having a doctorate vs. only 21% of their older counterparts).*
- *Are more likely to receive an annual performance review (84% vs. 73%).*

- Are less likely to do continuing education through books and magazines and more likely to do it through in-person relationships.
- Are a bit more extroverted.
- Take off slightly more time each week—a total of about one and a half days compared to almost two days for their older counterparts.
- Are slightly less satisfied with their housing and living arrangements.
- Rate the small group they're in higher in terms of how it helps their personal spiritual growth.

WHO THEY PRAY FOR

The importance of family is apparent when senior pastors are asked who they often pray for. They put themselves second to family, which tops the list at 94%, followed by church staff (76%) and other individuals at church (64%). Almost two-thirds (59%) say they seldom pray for political leaders and 19% acknowledge they never do. Of 11 options offered, each with “often,” “seldom” or “never,” major church donors are the most-named group (38%) as ones pastors say they never pray for.



The number one item on pastors’ prayer requests is wisdom.

These findings are a significant departure from a 2005 Ellison Research survey of Protestant pastors where 82% of respondents said they had prayed for the country as a whole in the previous week, and upwards of two-thirds reported praying for global events, local outreach or evangelism efforts, and individual government leaders (http://ellisonresearch.com/ERPS%20II/release_16_prayer.htm).

Part of this discrepancy could be due to the fact that only a quarter of the Leadership Network survey respondents say they follow a written list or guide—with the rest opting for what could be termed an “as the Spirit leads” approach. Since we know that senior pastors are overwhelmingly involved with people from within their churches, it’s not surprising that these individuals get prayed for more often.

Still, the importance of the Great Commission does not appear to be overlooked by these senior leaders. When asked what they'd like their congregations to pray about *for their church*—the number one answer is, in fact, “a heart for the lost,” followed by “unity” and “passion.”

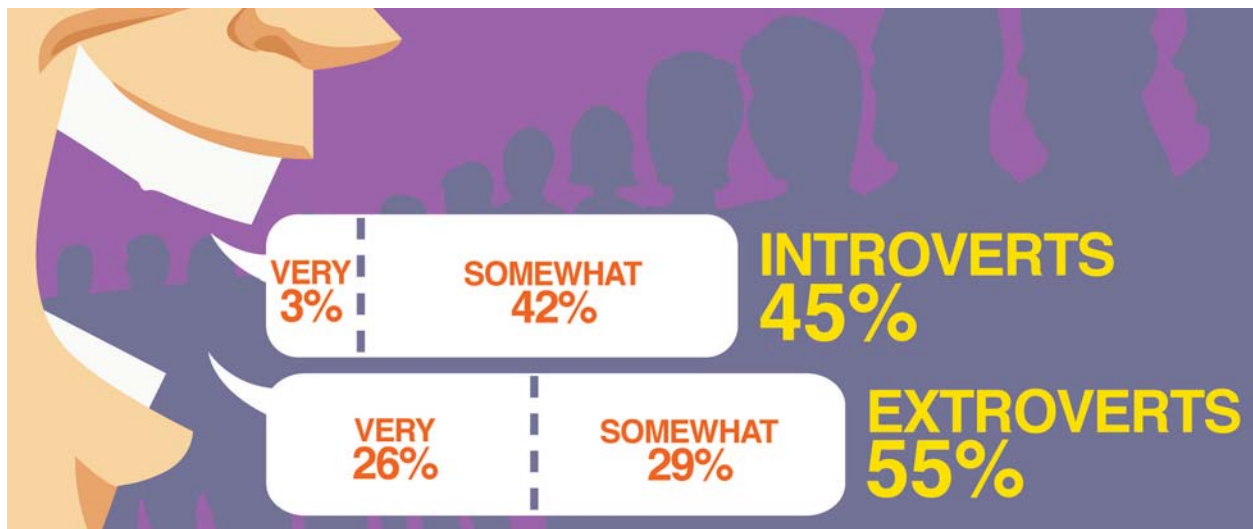
And what would pastors like their churches to pray for *them* personally? “Wisdom”—by an overwhelming margin. “Wisdom” also topped the list in the Ellison Research study—yet curiously, it’s the fourth most commonly possessed spiritual gifts among senior pastors surveyed. Perhaps one can never have enough wisdom in a church with thousands of attendees and many staff, each with unique needs and varying levels of brokenness?

WHO BECOMES A SENIOR PASTOR?

In terms of background, the vast majority of senior pastors are church kids. Seventy-two percent say they attended church weekly at the age of 16, and more than half say it was an evangelical or non-denominational church. (For an important exception, see the sidebar titled “High-Conversion Megachurches.”)

Forty-one percent of senior pastors said they had spent at least five years in business or another field before going into ministry. By comparison, 70% of executive pastors report spending significant time in another vocation before transitioning into their pastoral role.

As for personality, one might expect such gifted public speakers to be extroverts who are energized by being in front of a crowd. Yet the survey results reveal the senior pastor role attracts a surprisingly almost equal number of introverts (45%) as extroverts (55%), although most reporting to be introverts are only “somewhat” so.



Extroverts slightly outnumber introverts, however the largest single group of pastors (42%) said they were “somewhat introverted.”

When it comes to formal education, large church senior pastors are well educated—with most holding a master’s degree or doctorate degree. This represents a higher educational level than Protestant pastors in general, according to a national survey of pastors from churches of all sizes reported in the book, *God’s Potters* (2006).



The typical survey responder is white, 51, married 27 years, has two children living at home —and votes Republican.

More than two-thirds of those surveyed have worked in at least three different churches, and say they have been on staff with their present church for an average of 16 years. Roughly half serve in multi-site churches—one church in two or more different locations. (See further analysis of multi-site pastors later in this report.)

Demographically speaking, senior pastors tend to be white, middle-aged (51 years old), married to their first spouse (96%), and raising school-aged children (i.e. aged 5-18). By comparison only 73% of Protestant pastors in general are married to their first spouse, according to the national survey reported in *God's Potters*.

Follow these dads to the voting booth on election day and 58% will vote for Republican candidates, followed by Independents (17%). Nine percent identify their personal political party affiliation as Democrat.

Comparing Large Church Pastors to Other Pastors

How do senior pastors at megachurches compare with all other pastors? Several of the questions in the Leadership Network survey were identical to those asked on a national survey of all Protestant church pastors reported in *God's Potters*. Here's how the results compare:

Megachurch pastors...

- Are considerably less likely to be single, divorced or re-married.
- Tend to have more formal theological education. Although roughly half of all pastors hold master's degrees, pastors at megachurches are much more likely to possess a doctorate.
- Spend more time in preaching, including preparation, and more time in administration, but less time personally visiting members, the sick and shut-ins.
- Are just as likely to report being satisfied with their salary/benefits, as well as their housing/living arrangements, as pastors generally.
- Tend to be less satisfied with their spiritual life and their leadership effectiveness.
- Take more time off. Almost half report taking off "one and a half or two days per week"—while the median reply of pastors generally (66%) is a half day off per week.
- Experience less conflict in their churches, although not appreciably so.
- Are more likely to receive an annual performance evaluation.
- Are slightly more likely to think about leaving the ministry for another occupation—while 53% of megachurch leaders report they've "never" thought about leaving the ministry and 42% say "once in a while in the last five years," pastors in general say "never" more emphatically (71%), and "once in a while" less so (24%).
- Report higher levels of congregational morale and agree more often that their churches are ready to try new things, and change programs and structures to meet new needs.

REMARKABLY HIGH SATISFACTION LEVELS

Some of the most intriguing survey results pertain to the level of overall job satisfaction experienced by senior pastors in large churches. Overall, they report being remarkably satisfied on the job.

More than a third of senior pastors reported experiencing no conflict within their congregations, while only slightly more than half said they'd experienced only minor conflict in the past two years. Despite the statistics one hears about leaders or people leaving churches, only 10% of senior pastors said they'd experienced this type of conflict and exodus pattern in their congregations. What's more, over two-thirds reported being very satisfied in their relationships with the executive pastor, worship director and church board.

Overall, senior pastors report being overwhelmingly content at work—strongly agreeing with statements like, "My church's leaders are willing to change programs and structures to meet new challenges," "My church has a sense of excitement about the congregation's future," and "The current moral of this congregation is high." Although some senior pastors allude to some

resistance to innovation in their open-ended comments, by and large, megachurches appear to support innovation and innovative thinkers. When senior pastors were asked how much opportunity they had to use their creativity, 95% said they were satisfied in the level of freedom they were given.

What about succession? When asked what age they anticipate retiring from active pastoral ministry, the average age is 70—although the highest answer was an unbelievable 100! Nearly 20% say they have yet to even begin thinking about succession from their current position.

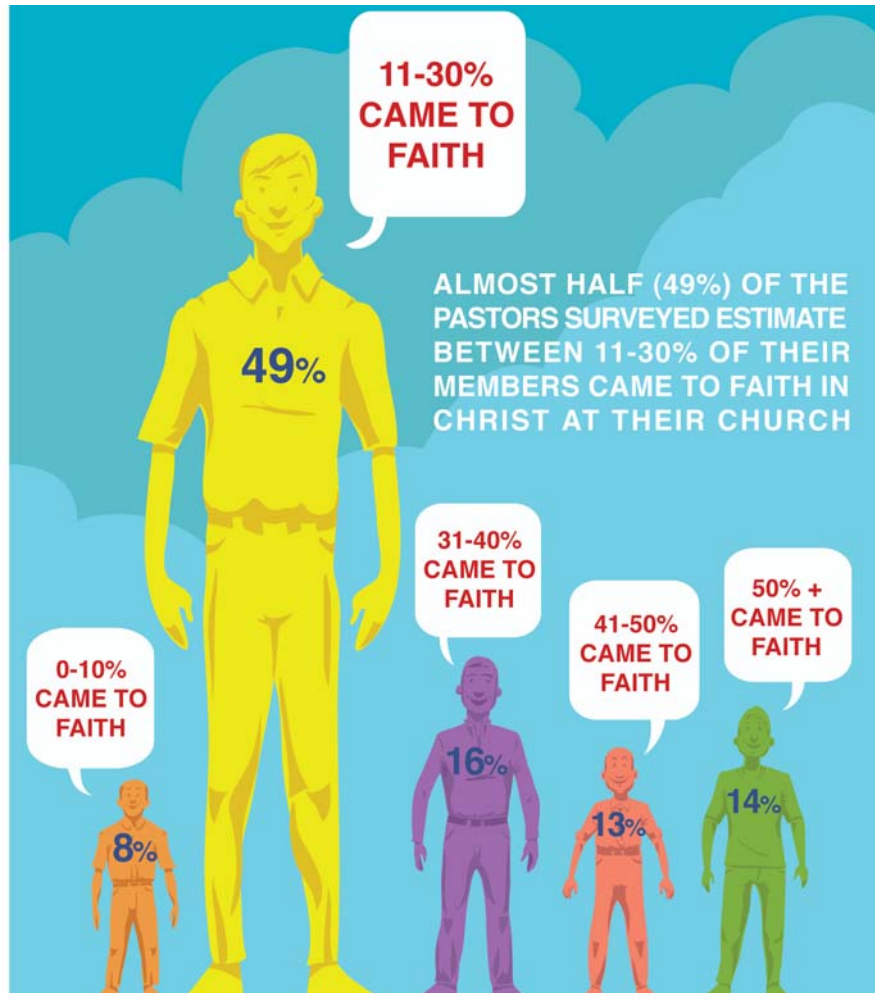
BY AND LARGE,
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The Larger the Church, the More Likely to Be Multi-Site

The rise of multi-site churches, especially among larger churches, is nothing short of explosive. As a joint report from Leadership Network and Hartford Institute for Religion shows ([*Changes in American Megachurches*](#)) the number of mega-size congregations that are “one church in two or more locations” has mushroomed from 22% in 2000 to 27% in 2005 to 37% in 2008. For this survey, an amazing 48% said they’re multi-site. The replies clearly tracked with size: multi-site characterized 35% that had attendances of 2,000-2,999; 48% for 3,000-4,999; 69% for 5,000-7,999; and an amazing 86% for 8,000 and larger.

Multi-site megachurch pastors...

- Are more likely to follow a “lead pastor team” approach.
- Are more satisfied with the evangelistic emphasis of their church.
- Prioritize differently the pastoral tasks they do best. Multi-site pastors selected “promote vision” ahead of preaching and teaching. Non-multi-site pastors put preaching first.
- Have 6 direct reports, which is one person higher than their counterparts.
- Are more likely to credit influences not connected with the church (books, blogs, conferences, etc.) as helping their personal spiritual growth.
- Are less likely to be in mainline denominations.
- Are more satisfied with those church staff and volunteers they supervise as direct reports.
- Are more likely to be involved in a business venture outside the church.



Megachurch pastors report a high level of conversion growth.

GROWTH AND EVANGELISM

In terms of growth, survey respondents report rising attendance levels in their churches—drawing an average of 829 more people in 2008 than they did in 2006. This translates to an average growth rate of 16% between 2006 and 2008 for survey respondents.

In terms of theological leanings, half of the survey respondents said “non-denominational or inter-denominational” best described their church’s tradition, followed by “Baptist” and “charismatic or Pentecostal, Assemblies of God.”

High-Conversion Megachurches Emphasize Evangelism More

How do pastors whose churches are high in both **conversion growth and attendance growth** differ from everyone else? For the following comparison we isolated the top-end churches: those who said more than 40% of their newest members came to faith in Christ through the ministry of their church and who also had an attendance increase average of at least 10% between 2006 and 2008. This translated into roughly 1 in 5 of the survey respondents, which we called high-conversion churches.

Pastors in high-conversion megachurches...

- Are almost unanimous in strong agreement that their church “has a sense of excitement about the congregation’s future” (mean of 3.9 out of 4.0), with similar values close behind: “My church is willing to take risks of faith” and “The current morale of this congregation is high” (3.9 out of 4.0 for both).
- Serve a church that’s much younger (a median church age of 21 years old vs. 38 years old), larger (median attendance of 3,850 vs. 2,850) and faster-growing (28% vs. 18% for 2006 to 2008).
- Spend considerably more time in continuing education whether in person, online, or at their church.
- Spend more time in a typical week in prayer/meditation, evangelism, and administration/meetings.
- While their #1 choice of role is still “preacher/teacher,” for the #2 and #3 slots, they are more likely to see themselves as “visionary” (38% vs. 32%) and less likely to see themselves as “directional leader” (strong contrast of 36% vs. 55%). Way down the list, they’re more likely to see themselves as “apostle who launches new churches or ministries” (13% vs. 3%).
- Are more likely to say they are solely responsible for the role of lead pastor, rather than to share the senior pastor role through a “lead pastor team” approach (60% vs. 44%).
- Are more likely to be African-American.
- Are more likely to be involved personally in a small group.
- Are noticeably more satisfied with their own spiritual life, with the evangelistic emphasis of the church, with their overall effectiveness as a leader in this particular congregation, with the level of opportunity for them to use their creativity, and with their relationship to various other staff roles.
- Are 4 years younger and likewise are married 4 fewer years.
- Receive a considerably higher amount of household income from sources other than church work such as spousal salary or investments.
- If their spouses work outside the home, they are more likely to work “in the church” (74%) rather than “outside the church” (26%).
- Value in-person relationships as the most helpful form of continuing education
- Identify their personal religious upbringing was markedly more un-churched or non-evangelical, though by age 16 their church-going habits are the same as other pastors.
- Are politically more likely to be an Independent (26% vs. 14%), not a Republican (49% vs. 61%), and almost equally likely to be a Democrat (9% vs. 8%).

A previous Leadership Network study of megachurch attenders ([*Not Who You Think They Are: The Real Story of People Who Attend America's Megachurches*](#)) found roughly a quarter of their attenders identified themselves as previously unchurched. They came from two groups: 6% said they had *never* attended any church before and another 18% hadn't attended any church in years. (By comparison, the national data on *all* sizes of churches indicated lower rates, reporting 5% of attenders as formerly unchurched and 16% as not having attended any church *in years*).

Mainline Pastors Face More Challenges than Their Counterparts

Media perceptions imply that most megachurches are nondenominational, but according to [*Beyond Megachurch Myths*](#) by Scott Thumma and Dave Travis (p. 26) nearly two-thirds of megachurches belong to a formal national denomination, the largest of which is Southern Baptist. If you limit the count to megachurches that belong to a *mainline* denomination (thus excluding Southern Baptists, Assemblies of God, Calvary Chapel, etc.), the percentage drops to about 10%.

Responses from historic mainline churches represented 13% of the senior pastor survey. Here is how they differ from the rest of the respondents:

Mainline megachurch pastors...

- Participate in *more* continuing education.
- Rate the small group they're in higher in terms of how it helps their personal spiritual growth; same for influences not connected with the church (books, blogs, conferences, etc.).
- Serve churches that are smaller by 750 attenders.
- Have larger church boards (12 people vs. 8 people for others).
- Report a comparatively lower overall morale, level of excitement about the future, willingness to change programs and structures to meet new challenges, willingness to take risks of faith.
- Have served more previous churches.
- Report less opportunity for using personal creativity.
- Anticipate retiring at a higher age (by 2 years).
- Are three years younger.
- Receive a considerably higher amount of household income from sources other than church work (such as spousal salary or investments) \$56,000 vs. \$32,000.

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

In terms of structure, more than half of respondents say they share the role of lead pastor at their church, and the most commonly listed number of direct reports is five. Interestingly, the number of staff reporting to the senior pastor does not appear to change significantly despite an increase in overall staffing numbers, or church size. In churches with 500-1,000 attendees weekly, the number of staff reporting to the senior pastor is the same at five.

Overall, senior pastors report being very or somewhat satisfied in all areas of life. A full 96% say they are happy in their marriages, and 82% say they are very satisfied with their housing or living arrangements. Their greatest areas of dissatisfaction seem to be their health and the overall spiritual health of their church. But overall, their mood is decidedly optimistic and upbeat.

Among megachurch pastors, 78% receive an annual review of performance. By contrast according to the national reported in *God's Potters*, only 58% of Protestant pastors in general do.

Compared to the Second Chair

What are the biggest differences between senior pastors and executive pastors? We compared the numbers from both of our recent surveys ([*Inside the World of the Executive Pastor*](#)) and here's what we found.

Megachurch senior pastors...

- Have been on staff at the church twice as long as an average executive pastor (16 years compared to 8 years).
- Are less likely to have worked five or more years in another occupation before moving into a full-time church role.
- Are less likely to have been divorced, or divorced and re-married.
- Are much more likely to have completed formal theological training, and at a higher level. Just over a quarter of executive pastors have no formal *theological* training.
- Work more hours each week. Senior pastors report working an average of 53 hours a week compared with 50 hours for executive pastors.
- Don't take as much time off. Only 50% of senior pastors say they take more than one day off per week compared with 62% of executive pastors
- Are more satisfied with their salary and benefits.
- Spend most of their time each week in preaching/teaching and worship-while executive pastors spend the biggest portion of their workweek in meetings. The rest of their time is spent largely the same way.
- Report greater levels of satisfaction in their relationships with church staff, church board and volunteers.
- Get more out of worship services at their church than executive pastors do, with 41% of senior pastors saying services are "extremely helpful" to their personal spiritual growth compared with only 27% for executive pastors
- Are more likely to say evangelism is one of their top three spiritual gifts. While it's not a popular answer with either group, it wasn't selected by even one executive pastor.

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF A MEGACHURCH SENIOR PASTOR

When it comes to spiritual growth, most senior pastors (79%) say spending time alone with God through Bible reading, prayer, and solitude is extremely helpful. As previously mentioned, most devote five hours each week to it about an hour per work day.

And what about participation in a small group—a key thrust at so many larger churches? Surprisingly, just over a quarter of senior pastors report finding small groups extremely helpful to their spiritual growth, and on the other extreme 11% went on record to say they're not very helpful at all. The rest of the responses were in the middle—indicating somewhat or mildly helpful. This finding about small groups and spiritual growth parallels the responses of executive pastors in Leadership Network's survey of that group.

Although a significant number of senior pastors said worship services at their church were helpful to their personal spiritual growth, we know this opinion is not shared by Christians everywhere. When asked specifically about the private Christian movement (people who follow Jesus but don't value institutional Christianity) more than 75% of senior pastors said they are concerned about it—however nearly a quarter strongly disagree or disagree that the private Christian movement is, in fact, growing. As well, most do not emphasize house churches as an “endorsed” way to do church. Yet, strikingly, when it comes to their own spiritual growth, influences not connected with church—though not specifically house-churches—are reported to be extremely helpful to fully one-third of senior pastors.

As for their preferred format for continuing education, senior pastors gave high marks to conferences (51%) and in-person relationships (43%), followed by magazines and books (31%).

Finally, what are senior pastors are reading? Consider the following lists.

Top 5 Books Recommended by Megachurch Senior Pastors

- *Simple Church* by Thom Rainer
- *Axiom* by Bill Hybels
- *The Reason for God* by Tim Keller
- *It* by Craig Groeschel
- *Leading on Empty* by Wayne Cordeiro

Top 5 Magazines Recommended by Megachurch Senior Pastors

- *Leadership Journal*
- *Rev!*
- *Outreach*
- *Christianity Today*
- *Fast Company*

A POSITIVE MIND-SET

"Overall the survey responses indicate that large-church senior pastors have a very positive outlook," says Leadership Network's Warren Bird. "They show high levels of satisfaction from home to church, they get to spend many work hours doing what they think they're best at, and most of them have the privilege of leading congregations that are growing in both number and conversions."

Leadership Network's large-church senior pastor survey joins a handful of other recent large-church reports, all of which are available for free download:

- [*Changes in American Megachurches: Tracing Eight Years of Growth and Innovation in the Nation's Largest-attendance Congregations*](#) by Scott Thumma and Warren Bird
- [*Inside the World of Executive Pastors: Leadership Network's 2009 Survey*](#) by Colleen Pepper and Warren Bird
- [*Not Who You Think They Are: The Real Story of People Who Attend America's Megachurches*](#) by Scott Thumma and Warren Bird

A book on megachurches has also been released with Leadership Network's managing director Dave Travis as co-author: [*Beyond Megachurch Myths: What We Can Learn from America's Largest Churches*](#) by Scott Thumma and Dave Travis, foreword by Rick Warren (Jossey-Bass, 2008). It draws from research conducted through the Hartford Institute for Religion Research (<http://www.hartfordinstitute.org>) where Scott Thumma is based and also from Leadership Network studies.

Megachurch pastors are a rare breed. They represent 0.3% of North America's churches but they draw almost 10% of weekly Protestant worshippers. Most of these churches are growing, many by a respectable level of conversion growth. They are high-visibility congregations with widespread influence.

"Together," says Warren Bird, "these recent studies broaden the picture of a very influential group of churches. The information is helpful for these pastors in understanding their peer group and also in dispelling myths that the media and others have popularized."

Note: Want to know how churches of your size replied? See the appendix for size-grouped frequencies for each question.

Appendix – Survey Frequencies by Church Size

The following tables represent the average* responses from 440 pastors, where church size ranges from 500 – 30,000 based on average weekend worship attendance. For the main body of our report, we focused on the megachurch averages, where the church size is 2,000 and larger. These figures are in the second column of each table in **bold-faced type**. The next four columns represent sub-sets of the churches included in these averages (8,000 and up; 5,000-7,999; 3,000-4,999; 2,000-2999). The final two columns were *not* figured into the megachurch averages, yet are included for comparison purposes.

* **average** refers to the mathematical mean, unless otherwise noted

440 Pastors Responded to the Survey							
CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Number of pastors responding	232	23	33	66	110	129	79

Demographic Profile of Survey Responders							
CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Age	51	50	51	52	51	50	50
Gender (Male)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	95%
ETHNICITY							
White or Caucasian	92%	95%	90%	87%	95%	96%	94%
Black or African American	4%	0%	10%	8%	1%	2%	1%
Asian or Pacific Islander	2%	5%	0%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	3%
In first marriage	97%	100%	97%	98%	95%	96%	90%
Years married	27	27	27	28	27	27	26
Number of children living at home	2	2	2	2	1	1	2

Which two phrases best describe how you see yourself in your role as senior or lead pastor?

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Preacher/teacher	81%	83%	73%	83%	83%	80%	87%
Directional leader	50%	52%	45%	55%	49%	43%	43%
Administrator	3%	9%	3%	5%	0%	2%	6%
Pastor, shepherd or spiritual guide	16%	9%	21%	14%	17%	19%	16%
Evangelist	1%	9%	0%	2%	0%	1%	0%
Apostle who launches new churches	5%	13%	6%	0%	5%	5%	4%
Prophet	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	0%
Visionary	33%	26%	39%	35%	32%	33%	29%
Other	4%	4%	6%	5%	3%	3%	3%

Are you personally more of an introvert or an extrovert?

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Very introverted	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Somewhat introverted	42%	48%	31%	44%	42%	31%	33%
Somewhat extroverted	29%	30%	28%	26%	31%	45%	41%
Very extroverted	26%	17%	38%	27%	24%	21%	23%

How often do you emphasize church membership?

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Never	16%	30%	23%	18%	10%	4%	10%
A few times a year	45%	25%	47%	43%	49%	48%	58%
Once or twice a month	25%	35%	20%	23%	25%	34%	25%
On a weekly basis	14%	10%	10%	15%	16%	14%	6%

Senior Pastor's Work History

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Number of years on staff, any role, current church	16	18	19	17	15	14	12
Number of years in senior pastor role	15	16	16	16	13	12	10
Number of churches at which you have been on staff	3	3	2	3	3	3	3
% that have worked 5 or more years in a non-church field	42%	52%	48%	44%	36%	48%	54%
% that participate in an annual performance evaluation	78%	73%	81%	76%	79%	71%	68%

Senior Pastor's Theological Training

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
None	6%	9%	6%	6%	5%	4%	4%
Certificate from denominational training program, Bible college or seminary	3%	4%	3%	6%	2%	3%	8%
Bible college degree	13%	17%	19%	5%	16%	18%	5%
Master's degree	40%	35%	34%	47%	39%	46%	49%
Doctor's degree	34%	26%	34%	32%	38%	27%	30%
Other	3%	9%	3%	5%	2%	2%	4%

A Senior Pastor's Typical Work-Week

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Days Off							
½ day	7%	5%	13%	8%	6%	6%	11%
1 day	42%	55%	47%	42%	39%	42%	43%
1 ½ to 2 days	48%	36%	34%	49%	53%	47%	41%
2 or more days	2%	5%	3%	2%	1%	1%	3%
Number of dinners with family per week	4.4	4.2	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3
Average hours per week spent:							
Preaching, teaching and in worship	19	19	19	19	19	18	17
In administration and meetings	9	11	9	9	9	9	9
In prayer & meditation	5	6	6	6	5	5	5
Reading	5	5	5	6	5	5	5
Training people	4	5	5	4	4	4	5
Providing pastoral care	4	4	3	4	4	5	5
Evangelism	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Civic/community affairs	2	3	2	2	2	2	2
Denominational- or other-church-collaboration	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
TOTAL HOURS WORKED	53	55	54	53	52	53	54

Which of these terms best describes your personal church upbringing?

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Mainline Protestant Church	29%	28%	31%	28%	28%	40%	42%
Evangelical or non-denominational Protestant church	54%	50%	45%	58%	56%	44%	40%
Roman Catholic, or Eastern Orthodox	2%	6%	3%	0%	2%	5%	4%
Other	6%	6%	10%	3%	7%	7%	4%
None	9%	11%	10%	10%	7%	4%	10%

How would you best describe your personal church attendance patterns when you were 16 years old?

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Weekly	72%	59%	63%	79%	73%	79%	73%
2-3 times a month	7%	5%	6%	3%	9%	5%	6%
About once a month	5%	9%	13%	0%	5%	3%	3%
Occasional (2-3 times/year)	3%	9%	6%	3%	1%	2%	3%
Did not attend	13%	18%	13%	14%	12%	12%	16%

What is your current personal political party affiliation?

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Democrat	8%	10%	10%	7%	9%	8%	18%
Republican	58%	65%	33%	62%	62%	66%	60%
Independent	17%	10%	23%	18%	15%	13%	13%
No Affiliation	16%	15%	33%	13%	12%	10%	8%
Other	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%	3%	1%

In general, how satisfied are you in the following areas?

(respondents were asked to rate each area on a scale where 1=very dissatisfied, and 4=very satisfied)

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Your health	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.1	2.9	3.1
Your marriage	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.5
Your relationships with your children	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.6
Your spiritual life	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.1
Your salary and benefits	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.3
Your housing or living arrangements	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.5
Your effectiveness as a leader	3.4	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.3
The opportunity for you to use creativity	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.4

How satisfied are you in your relationships with the following people?

(respondents were asked to rate each area on a scale where 1=very dissatisfied, and 4=very satisfied)

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
The executive pastor	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.4
The worship director	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.3
The church board	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.4
Staff and volunteers you supervise	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.5	3.4
Other church staff	3.3	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.2
Lay leaders in the congregation	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.3

Responding to the idea of "private Christians" -- people who follow Jesus but don't value institutional Christianity.

(respondents were asked to rate each area on a scale where 1=strongly disagree, and 4=strongly agree)

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
I am concerned about the "private Christian" movement.	3.3	2.9	3.0	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2
I think the "private Christian" movement is increasing.	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0
I emphasize house churches as an "endorsed" way to do church.	2.0	1.9	2.4	2.1	1.9	2.0	2.0

Involvement Outside Church

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Number of mission trips personally taken in the past 3 years	4	6	4	4	4	3	2
% CURRENTLY ACTIVE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS							
Parachurch group	37%	48%	36%	38%	35%	32%	28%
Sports league	34%	26%	33%	36%	35%	29%	25%
Denomination	32%	22%	15%	32%	40%	40%	52%
Social service group	19%	26%	9%	14%	23%	19%	32%
School board/PTA or other local school activity	16%	13%	21%	21%	13%	24%	23%
Hobby group	16%	22%	6%	14%	20%	17%	10%
Business venture	14%	13%	24%	15%	11%	11%	13%
Civic clubs	11%	9%	6%	12%	12%	16%	20%
% of friends that are <u>not</u> associated with the church	19%	23%	25%	16%	17%	24%	29%

Prayer Habits							
CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
% who follow a written list or guide when praying	26%	35%	18%	21%	28%	29%	30%
% WHO PRAY "OFTEN" FOR THE FOLLOWING							
Yourself	84%	83%	88%	85%	83%	78%	80%
Your family	94%	87%	91%	94%	97%	95%	94%
Church Staff	76%	74%	70%	82%	74%	75%	84%
Other individuals in your church	64%	65%	64%	65%	63%	67%	76%
Your friends	62%	57%	67%	61%	63%	63%	67%
Church Board	43%	35%	36%	53%	41%	33%	44%
Missionaries	34%	26%	30%	36%	35%	26%	28%
Neighbors who live near you	19%	22%	21%	20%	17%	15%	18%
Political leaders	16%	22%	24%	9%	16%	12%	24%
Major church donors	8%	13%	6%	3%	11%	8%	6%

Over the past two years, has there been conflict in this congregation?							
CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
No conflict	34%	55%	29%	34%	31%	28%	27%
Minor conflict	53%	41%	55%	48%	58%	55%	55%
Major conflict	3%	0%	10%	2%	3%	6%	5%
Major conflict - leaders or people leaving	10%	5%	6%	16%	8%	11%	13%

The Churches They Pastor

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Year the church started (median)	1975	1986	1980	1974	1969	1974	1973
% that are multi-site	48%	86%	69%	48%	35%	28%	29%
Average annual attendance growth	8%	12%	11%	7%	7%	8%	7%
Number on the church board (median)*	9	8	10	8	9	9	9
Average number of staff (FTE)	55	117	72	56	38	20	12
Senior pastor direct reports	5	6	6	5	5	5	5
CHURCH TRADITION							
Non-denominational or interdenominational	50%	58%	60%	59%	41%	42%	35%
Baptist	19%	11%	20%	15%	23%	18%	9%
Charismatic or Pentecostal, Assemblies of God	9%	16%	10%	3%	10%	11%	8%
Methodist	5%	0%	0%	7%	7%	13%	25%
Lutheran	3%	0%	3%	2%	5%	3%	8%
Presbyterian/Reformed	3%	5%	0%	0%	6%	5%	9%
Other MAINLINE denomination	2%	5%	0%	0%	3%	3%	3%
Other NON-mainline denomination	9%	5%	7%	15%	6%	7%	4%
% NEW BELIEVERS							
0-10%	8%	0%	3%	11%	8%	13%	24%
11-20%	27%	10%	23%	27%	31%	25%	26%
21-30%	22%	14%	29%	18%	24%	22%	18%
31-40%	16%	33%	13%	18%	12%	11%	12%
41-50%	13%	24%	6%	11%	14%	13%	9%
Over 50%	14%	19%	26%	15%	10%	15%	11%

*Note: Options ranged from "1" to "25" plus "26 or higher." We calculated "26 or higher" as a "26" which means the actual medians (or midpoints) listed above may be higher than reported.

To what extent do you share your role of senior pastor with others?

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
I am the only senior pastor	47%	37%	47%	54%	46%	42%	51%
Up to 25% of the role is shared	21%	16%	7%	21%	26%	33%	22%
26-50% of the role is shared	19%	37%	23%	8%	21%	18%	18%
51-75% of the role is shared	9%	5%	10%	10%	8%	3%	4%
More than 75% of the role is shared	4%	5%	13%	7%	0%	3%	5%

Preaching Frequency

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
# of services each weekend you are the live, focal preacher	3	4	3	3	3	3	2
# weeks/year you preach	39	40	36	40	40	40	40
# weeks/year your secondary teacher preaches	10	12	12	9	10	10	13

To what extent have you started thinking about succession from your current position?

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
I'm not thinking about it yet	17%	11%	17%	11%	21%	18%	30%
I think about it occasionally	34%	37%	31%	31%	37%	39%	43%
I've begun discussing my succession with others	24%	26%	21%	26%	23%	22%	16%
I've had ongoing discussions about my succession	13%	16%	21%	18%	8%	14%	6%
A succession plan is already in place	12%	11%	10%	13%	12%	6%	5%

Continuing Education							
CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
# of half-day events attended in past 3 months	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
MOST HELPFUL FORMATS							
Conferences	51%	43%	42%	39%	62%	60%	61%
In-person relationships	43%	35%	48%	52%	39%	38%	27%
Magazines & books	31%	39%	27%	35%	28%	26%	32%
Digital (blogs, websites, podcasts)	18%	13%	18%	18%	18%	17%	30%
On-the-job experience	13%	26%	15%	11%	10%	9%	10%
Classes	10%	0%	9%	15%	9%	16%	16%
DVD/videos	9%	13%	6%	11%	8%	9%	14%

Rate how the following help your personal spiritual growth. (respondents were asked to rate each area on a scale where 1=not very helpful, and 4=extremely helpful)							
CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Individual time with God	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.8
Worship services at your church	3.2	3.6	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.2
Influences not connected with the church	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.4
A small group you're part of	2.8	3.1	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.9

Which three of these pastoral tasks do you feel you do best?

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Preaching	79%	74%	76%	74%	83%	86%	81%
Thinking about and promoting a vision and goals for the congregation's future	77%	74%	73%	74%	80%	68%	82%
Teaching people about the faith	36%	35%	33%	47%	30%	42%	29%
Training people for ministry and mission	30%	35%	48%	24%	28%	26%	30%
Administering the work of the congregation, including staff supervision	22%	30%	15%	23%	21%	22%	30%
Pastoral counseling and spiritual direction	10%	4%	3%	15%	10%	12%	10%
One-on-one time working to convert others to the faith	7%	4%	6%	8%	7%	6%	3%
Worship and sacramental leadership, including funerals and weddings	7%	4%	3%	8%	8%	15%	18%
Visiting prospective members	2%	0%	0%	0%	5%	4%	3%
Visiting members, sick, and shut-in	1%	0%	3%	0%	2%	4%	1%

Most Common Spiritual Gifts							
CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Leadership	77%	85%	77%	80%	74%	63%	72%
Teaching	67%	55%	73%	70%	64%	66%	67%
Exhortation	21%	30%	7%	21%	23%	23%	17%
Wisdom	18%	10%	23%	23%	16%	18%	14%
Pastoring	17%	5%	13%	18%	21%	21%	24%
Administration	17%	30%	17%	11%	19%	23%	18%
Evangelism	17%	20%	10%	15%	20%	17%	11%
Faith	13%	15%	23%	10%	12%	12%	12%

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (respondents were asked to rate each area on a scale where 1=strongly disagree, and 4=strongly agree)							
CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
My church is always ready to try something new	3.4	3.7	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.4
My church has a sense of excitement about the congregation's future	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.6
My church's leaders are willing to change programs and structures to meet new challenges	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.6
My church is willing to take risks of faith	3.7	3.9	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.5
The current morale of this congregation is high	3.7	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.5

Finances							
CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
CHURCH BUDGET							
Average	\$6.7 M	\$16 M	\$8.7 M	\$6.8 M	\$4.4 M	\$2.6 M	\$1.3 M
High	\$62 M	\$62 M	\$15 M	\$26 M	\$11.9 M	\$7.5 M	\$3.6 M
Median	\$5.5 M	\$12.8 M	\$8.4 M	\$6 M	\$3.8 M	\$2.3 M	\$1.2 M
Low	\$1.2 M	\$3 M	\$5.2 M	\$1.3 M	\$1.2 M	\$750,000	\$500,000
SALARY (IN 1,000s)							
Average	\$145	\$195	\$186	\$145	\$128	\$107	\$94
High	\$650	\$300	\$650	\$325	\$275	\$250	\$165
Median	\$131	\$198	\$160	\$140	\$115	\$100	\$95
Low	\$70	\$80	\$78	\$78	\$70	\$45	\$42
ADDITIONAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME (IN 1,000s)							
Average	\$35	\$33	\$63	\$30	\$32	\$35	\$37
High	\$300	\$100	\$300	\$200	\$200	\$250	\$250
Median	\$20	\$27	\$31	\$14	\$18	\$16	\$27
Low	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Does your spouse work full- or part-time outside the home?							
CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Yes, in the church	28%	17%	39%	27%	27%	28%	21%
Yes, outside the church	34%	22%	32%	32%	38%	41%	44%
No	37%	61%	29%	42%	33%	32%	30%

What's the most helpful thing you do to maintain "sanity"?
(open ended responses were later grouped into these categories)

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Sports and exercise	52%	38%	38%	45%	62%	51%	40%
Spend time with family and friends	27%	33%	38%	28%	22%	24%	14%
Prayer or devotional time	20%	29%	19%	18%	19%	20%	22%
Read	12%	19%	13%	11%	10%	16%	12%
Get away	10%	10%	9%	14%	7%	7%	13%
Other	16%	19%	19%	17%	13%	17%	25%

What is one very specific thing you do to keep the relationship between you and your direct reports working well?
(open ended responses were later grouped into these categories)

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Regular meetings	13%	5%	10%	15%	14%	10%	19%
Weekly meetings	25%	41%	16%	20%	27%	20%	23%
Monthly meetings	3%	14%	0%	3%	2%	0%	3%
Twice monthly meetings	3%	0%	3%	2%	4%	0%	4%
Daily meetings	2%	5%	0%	0%	3%	3%	0%
ALL Meetings:	45%	64%	29%	39%	49%	33%	48%
Communication	15%	23%	10%	23%	10%	18%	17%
Having personal relationships outside of church	6%	5%	13%	7%	5%	9%	0%

What's the main thing you'd like your church to pray for their church?
 (open ended responses were later grouped into these categories)

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Heart for the lost	7%	14%	3%	6%	7%	7%	6%
Unity	5%	0%	10%	8%	4%	4%	5%
Passion	4%	0%	0%	2%	6%	6%	5%
Obedience	4%	0%	6%	2%	5%	0%	0%
Impact the world/community	3%	0%	6%	3%	3%	2%	3%
Christ likeness	2%	5%	3%	2%	1%	1%	0%
Commitment	2%	5%	0%	2%	2%	2%	0%
Vision	1%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%	3%
Evangelism	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%	1%	1%
Courage	1%	0%	0%	3%	0%	2%	3%

What's the main thing you'd like your church to pray for you?
 (open ended responses were later grouped into these categories)

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Wisdom	37%	41%	39%	36%	36%	31%	38%
Vision	8%	5%	3%	6%	10%	14%	15%
Strength	6%	0%	10%	6%	6%	9%	1%
Spiritual health	5%	5%	3%	6%	5%	3%	1%
Protection	3%	0%	10%	0%	4%	5%	3%
Passion	1%	9%	0%	0%	1%	3%	1%
Courage	1%	0%	3%	2%	1%	2%	3%

What has your church done that works best to connect with adults 18-35?
(open ended responses were later grouped into these categories)

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Small groups	20%	20%	25%	26%	15%	27%	28%
Targeted worship service	17%	25%	11%	18%	16%	12%	10%
Younger staff/leaders	13%	25%	21%	8%	12%	10%	6%
Music & worship style	12%	0%	7%	10%	16%	10%	15%
Service events/projects	7%	5%	7%	7%	7%	9%	7%
Young adult ministry	6%	0%	7%	3%	8%	3%	3%
Children's ministry	4%	0%	0%	5%	5%	11%	8%
College ministry	3%	5%	0%	2%	4%	2%	1%
Singles ministry	1%	0%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Family oriented	1%	0%	0%	2%	2%	4%	0%
Marriage and couples ministry	1%	0%	4%	2%	0%	2%	6%

What is the top work-related issue you lie awake in bed thinking about?
(open ended responses were later grouped into these categories)

CHURCH SIZE	2,000 and up	8,000 and up	5,000 – 7,999	3,000 – 4,999	2,000 – 2,999	1,000 – 1,999	500 – 999
Finances	19%	12%	24%	11%	24%	16%	14%
Staff issues	19%	12%	20%	23%	18%	21%	16%
Communicating vision/preparing for the future	6%	12%	4%	9%	4%	9%	11%
Leadership development	6%	24%	16%	4%	2%	6%	3%
Sermons	6%	6%	0%	4%	10%	3%	5%
Evangelism	5%	12%	0%	12%	1%	7%	3%



WARREN BIRD

This report was written by **Warren Bird** with major editorial assistance from **Colleen Pepper** of Pepper Creative, based in greater Vancouver, BC. Survey design and oversight was by Warren Bird with significant support and project management from **Stephanie Plagens**, Publications Manager. Graphics were supplied by **Darcy Vorhees** of **DarcyVDesign, Inc.**

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Darcy Vorhees of DarcyVDesign, Inc. is an illustrator, graphic designer, and animation designer based in Lebanon, Ohio.

The Wordles on pp. 4, 6, and 9 were created with <http://wordle.net>.

We welcome comments and questions about this report. Send an email to stephanie.plagens@leadnet.org

About Leadership Network

Leadership Network fosters church innovation and growth through strategies, programs, tools and resources consistent with our far-reaching mission: to identify, connect and help high-capacity Christian leaders multiply their impact.

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Leadership Network’s mission is to identify, connect and help high-capacity Christian leaders multiply their impact.

** Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is taken from the NIV translation.*

ENDNOTES

¹ Leadership Network's survey of large-church senior pastors was fielded April 28 to May 26, 2009. It contained 68 questions, the majority offering multiple choice or scaled options for reply. Seven of the questions were open-ended.

We used every practical method to get a fully representative sample. We contacted every U.S. megachurch (U.S. Protestant churches with attendances of 2,000 and higher) by mail or email inviting the senior pastor to participate. We attempted to send two reminders to each pastor as well. We advertised in various pastor magazines and via personal friends, and also announced the survey at several gatherings of large-church pastors.

Valid responses came from 232 megachurch senior pastors (where weekend worship attendance is at least 2000 adults and children, representing 17% of the U.S. megachurch pastor universe) and also from 238 pastors in churches with attendances of 500-1,999.

Survey frequencies are presented in the Appendix, where each response is stratified by size.