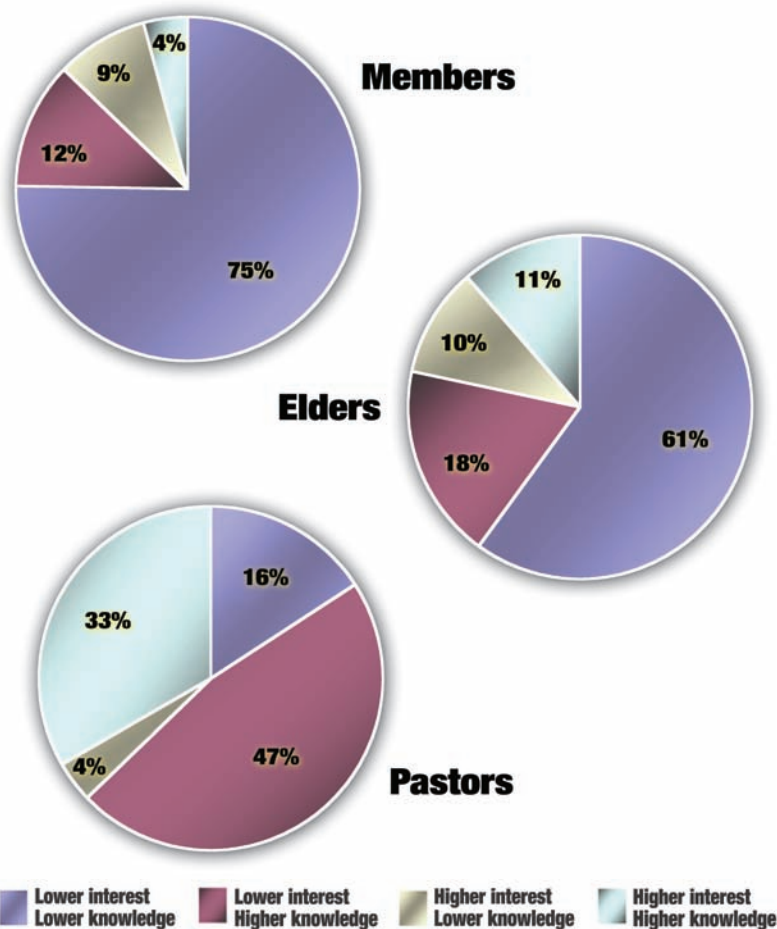


GO FIGURE

JACK MARCUM

GRAPHICS BY KATIE CANNON



Don't know much about mission

Our research has consistently found that relatively few lay Presbyterians are knowledgeable about or interested in the national workings of the church, findings confirmed in a 2005 survey:

- Only 17 percent of members and 29 percent of elders on session indicate they are “very informed” or “generally informed” about “the range and scope of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission.”
- Among pastors, 16 percent respond “very informed” and 64 percent, “generally informed,” to the same question.
- Similarly, only 13 percent of members and 22 percent of elders have “very often” or “often” wanted “to know more about PC(USA) mission” during the previous two years.
- Among pastors, the corresponding figure is 37 percent.
- Combined (see charts above), these results reveal that only 4 percent of members and 11 percent of elders have both higher knowledge and higher interest in learning more about PC(USA) mission.

Other findings at www.pcusa.org/research

Jack Marcum is coordinator of Research Services for the General Assembly Council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

What the research shows

The challenge facing the PC(USA) is getting its message to the entire church. Most members (75 percent) and elders (60 percent) know little or nothing about its mission and express little or no interest in learning more.

Lack of direct communication with most people in the pews makes changing the situation difficult. While you read *Presbyterians Today*, most members and elders don't. Without a denomination-wide mailing list of all members and elders, there's no way to send any church publication more broadly.

Communication channels that reach the most laypersons, according to the 2005 survey, are their pastor (20 percent of members and 29 percent of elders “very often” or “often” rely on pastors for information about the denomination's mission program) and their congregational newsletter (30 and 34 percent, respectively). *Presbyterians Today* is next—but only 6 percent of members and 16 percent of elders cite it—followed by the PC(USA) Web site (4 and 8 percent).

The denomination reaches more lay Presbyterians by indirect than direct means. Hence, we shouldn't be too surprised that few laypersons consider themselves well-informed about PC(USA) mission. The fact that so many of these same individuals have little interest in knowing more suggests that improved communication, while important, is only one part of the challenge. □