

# Pastors' Views on Denominations

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

Lifeway research

# Methodology

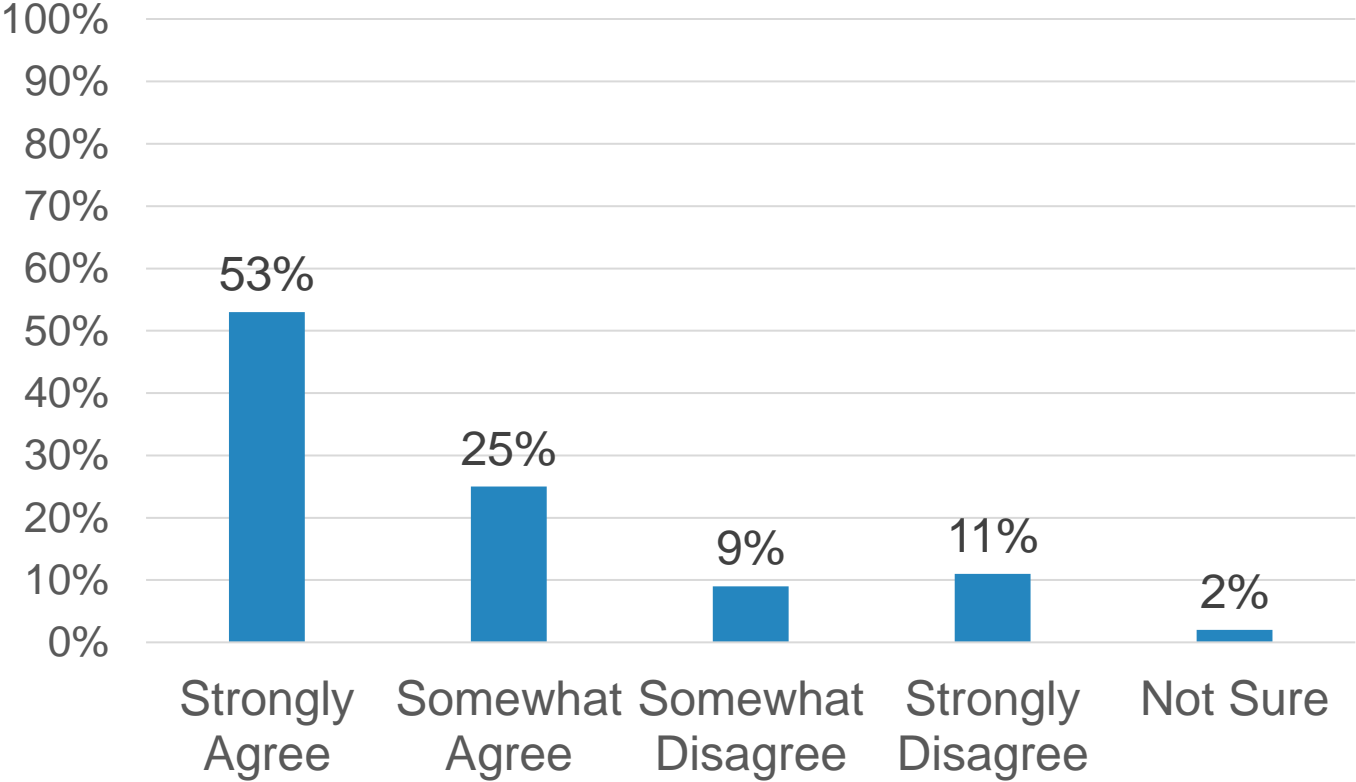
- The mixed mode survey of 1,007 Protestant pastors was conducted September 2–October 1, 2020 using both phone and online interviews
- Phone: The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- Online: Invitations were emailed 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
- Comparisons are made to a Lifeway Research phone survey of 932 pastors conducted March 1-9, 2010 using random sampling

# 78% say it is vital for them to be part of a denomination

Among Protestant Pastors whose church is in a denomination

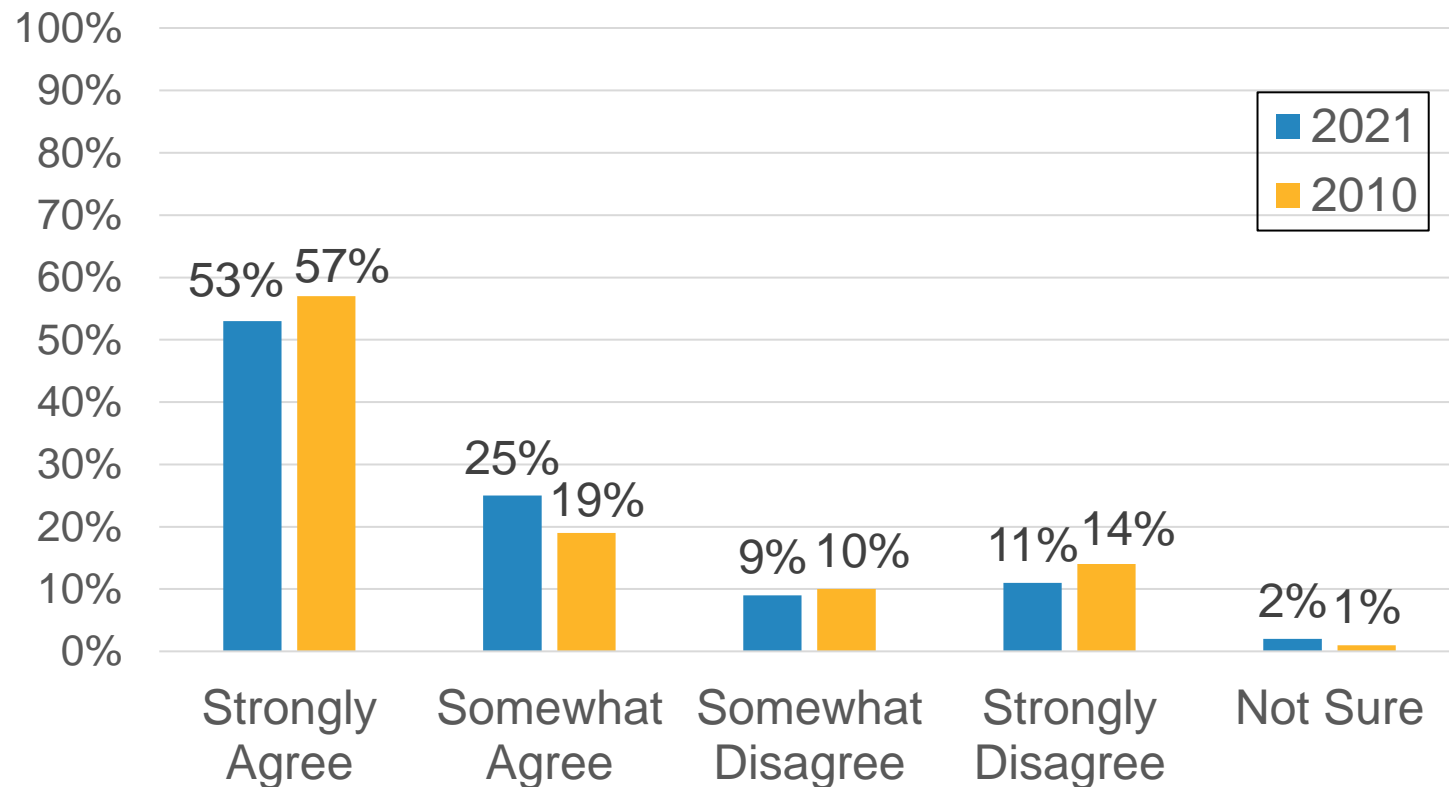


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Q: "Personally, I consider it vital for me to be part of a denomination." Asked of those whose church is in a denomination or denomination-like group. n=925

# Pastors' personal views are largely unchanged from 2010 (a few more somewhat agreeing)

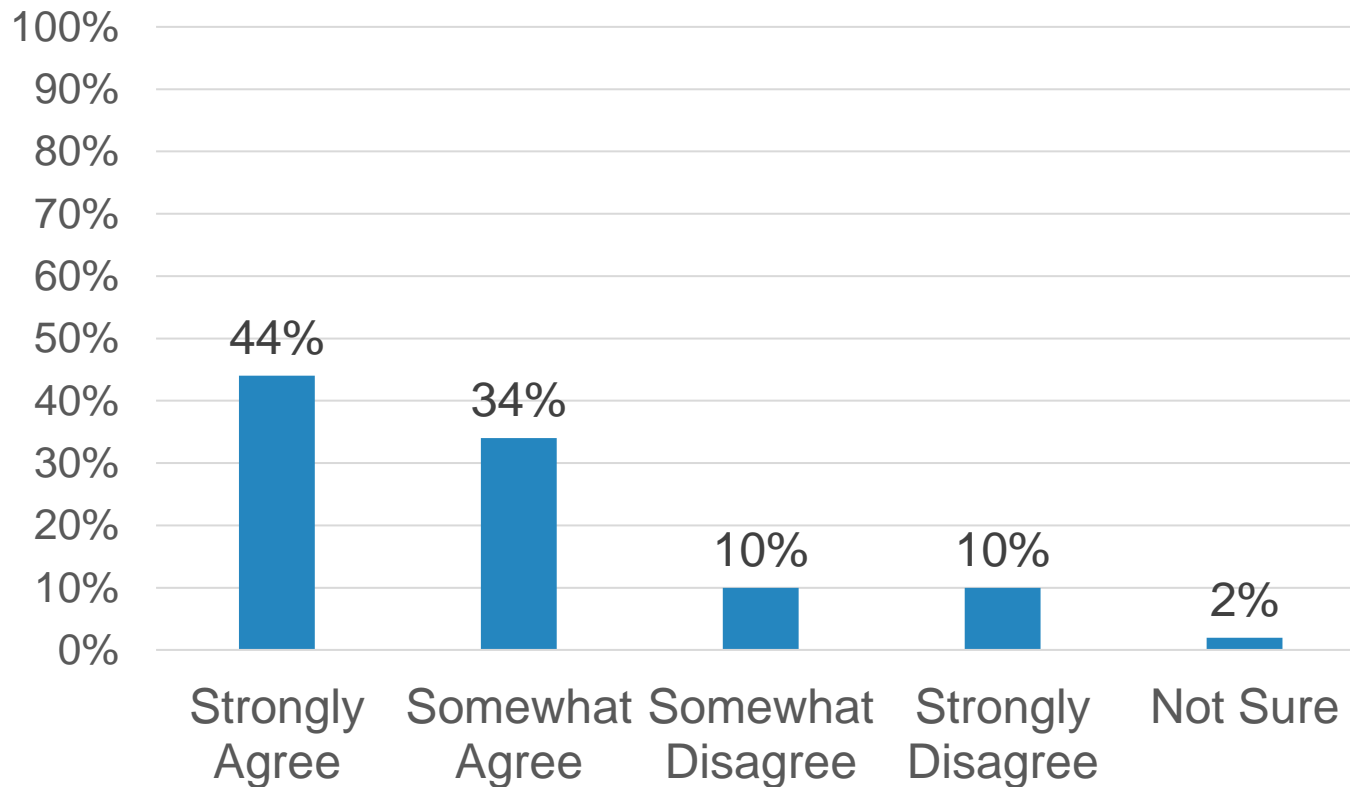
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# 77% say that their congregation considers it vital to be part of a denomination

Among Protestant Pastors

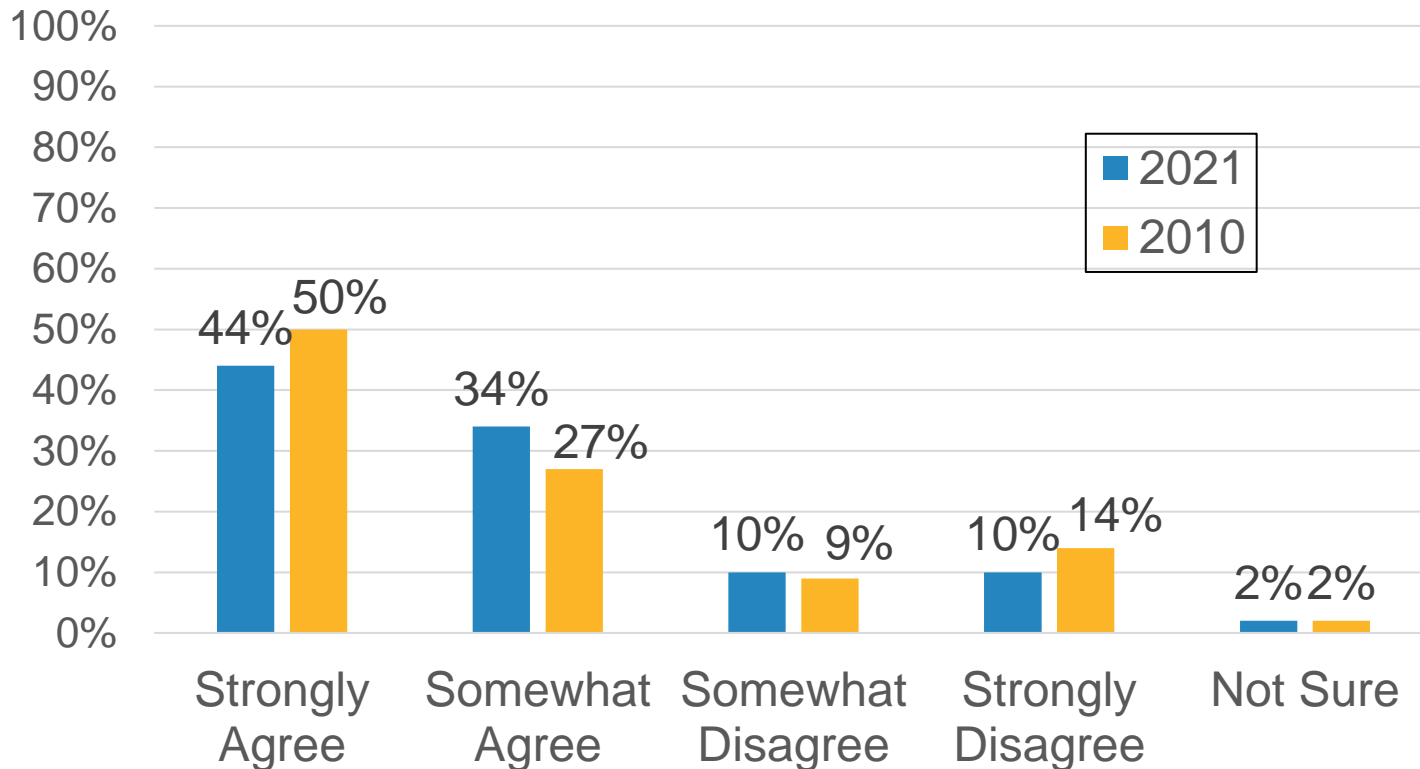


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Q: "Our congregation considers it vital for our congregation to be a part of a denomination." Asked of those whose church is in a denomination or denomination-like group. n=925

# Overall congregational agreement is similar to 2010, but strong agreement is lower

Among Protestant Pastors

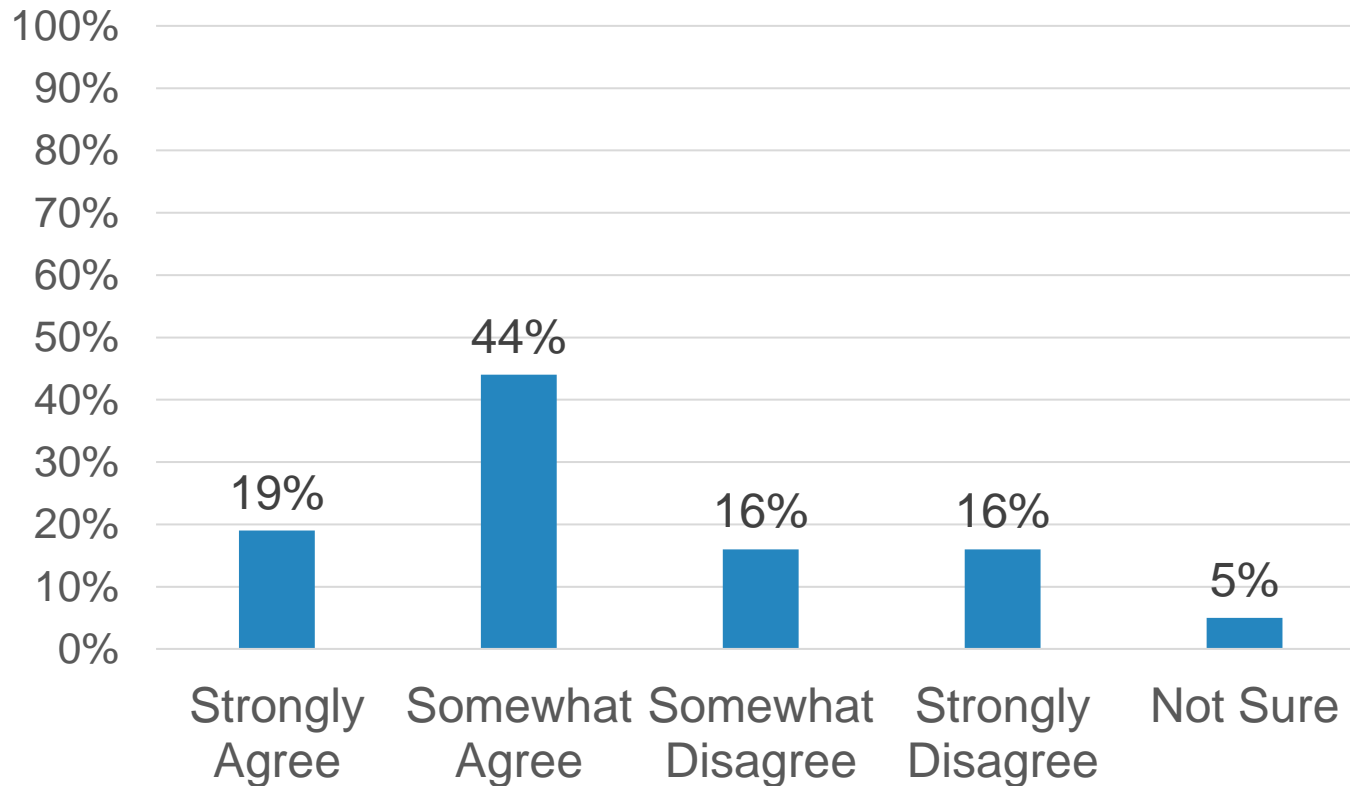


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Q: "Our congregation considers it vital for our congregation to be a part of a denomination." Asked of those whose church is in a denomination or denomination-like group. n=925

# 63% say the importance of being identified with a denomination will diminish over the next 10 years

Among Protestant Pastors



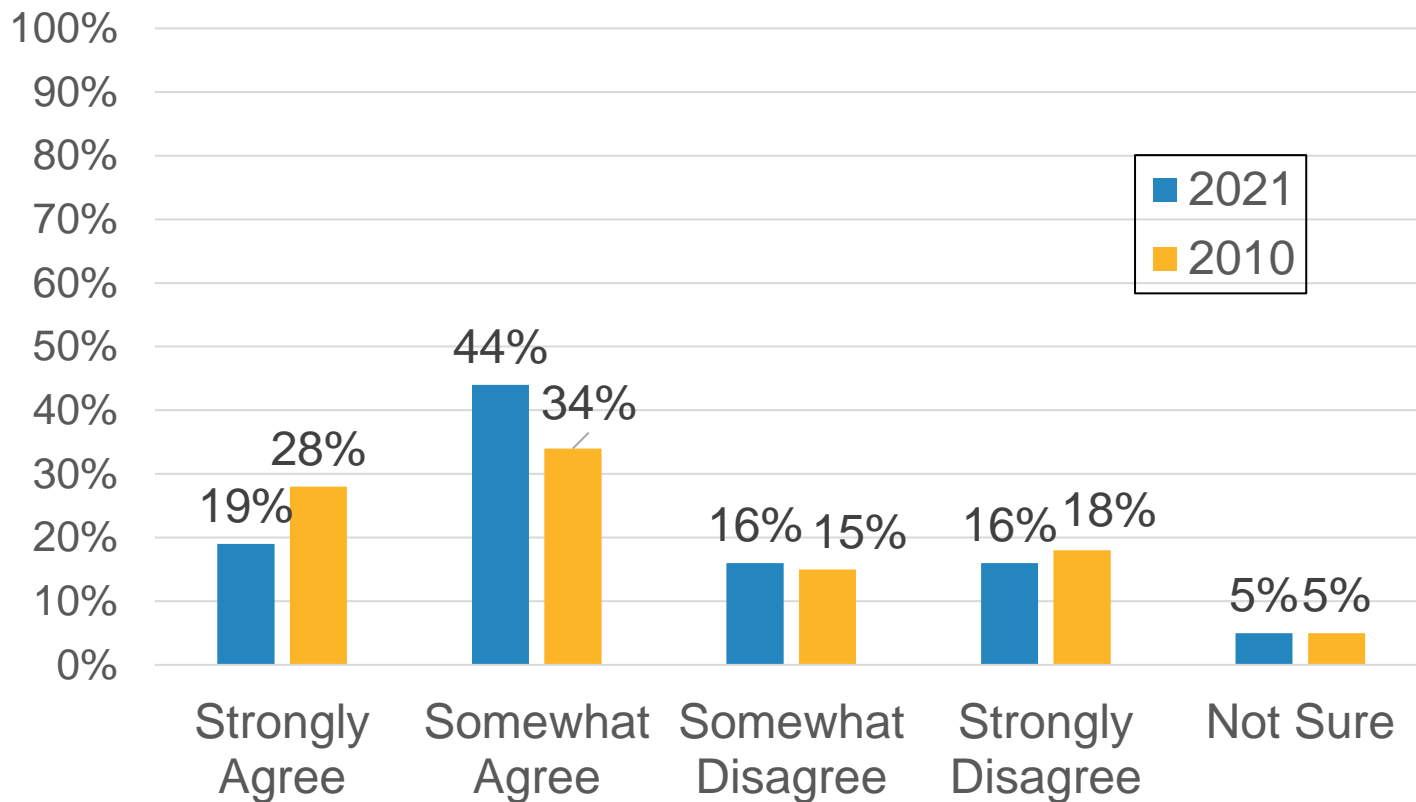
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Q: "I believe that the importance of being identified with a denomination will diminish over the next 10 years." Asked of those whose church is in a denomination or denomination-like group. n=925



# Overall pastors' agreement about the next 10 years is similar to 2010, but strong agreement is lower

Among Protestant Pastors



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Q: "I believe that the importance of being identified with a denomination will diminish over the next 10 years." Asked of those whose church is in a denomination or denomination-like group. n=925

# Significant Differences

Pastor

Age

Gender

Ethnicity

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
18-44	Male	White	No College Degree	Evangelical
45-54	Female	African American	Bachelor's Degree	Mainline
55-64		Other Ethnicities	Master's 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
Midwest	Lutheran	50-99
South	Methodist	100-249
West	Pentecostal	250+
	Presbyterian/Reformed	
	Christian/Church of Christ	

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

## **“Personally, I consider it vital for me to be part of a denomination.”**

- White pastors (80%) are more likely to Agree than African American pastors (63%)
- Pastors age 18-44 (83%) are more likely to Agree than pastors age 65+ (74%)
- Female pastors are more likely to Agree than males (95% v. 76%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree are the most likely to Agree (83%)
- Mainline pastors are more likely to Agree than Evangelical pastors (92% v. 76%)
- Lutherans are the most likely to Agree (95%); Christian/Church of Christ are the least likely to Agree (31%)

## **“Our congregation considers it vital for our congregation to be a part of a denomination.”**

- White pastors (79%) are more likely to Agree than pastors of Other Ethnicities (67%)
- Pastors age 65+ (24%) are more likely to Disagree than pastors age 18-34 (16%)
- Female pastors are more likely to Agree than males (91% v. 76%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree (81%) are more likely to Agree than those with no college degree (68%) or with a Bachelor’s degree (72%)
- Pastors in the South (79%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Northeast (69%)
- Lutherans are the most likely to Agree (92%); Christian/Church of Christ are the least likely to Agree (32%)

**“I believe that the importance of being identified with a denomination will diminish over the next 10 years.”**

- White pastors are the most likely to Agree (65%)
- Pastors age 18-44 are the least likely to Agree (54%)
- Lutherans are the most likely to Disagree (52%)
- Pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 are the most likely to Disagree (42%)

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