

Pastors' Views on Sexual Abuse or Assault by a Pastor

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

Lifeway research

Methodology

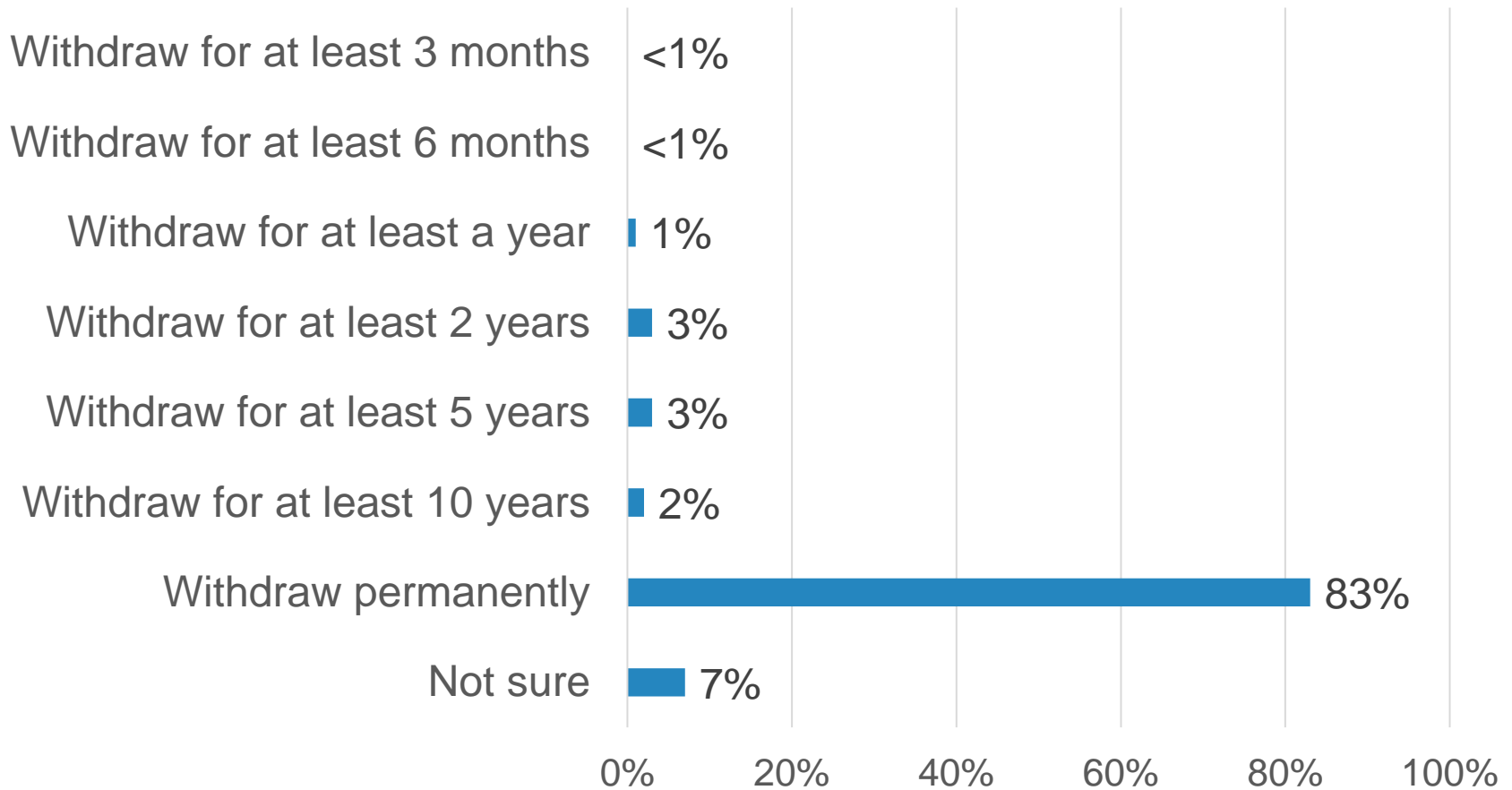
- The mixed mode survey of 1,007 Protestant pastors was conducted September 2–October 1, 2020 using both phone and online interviews
- Phone: The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- Online: Invitations were emailed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

83% believe a pastor should permanently withdraw from public ministry if they commit child sexual abuse

Among Protestant Pastors

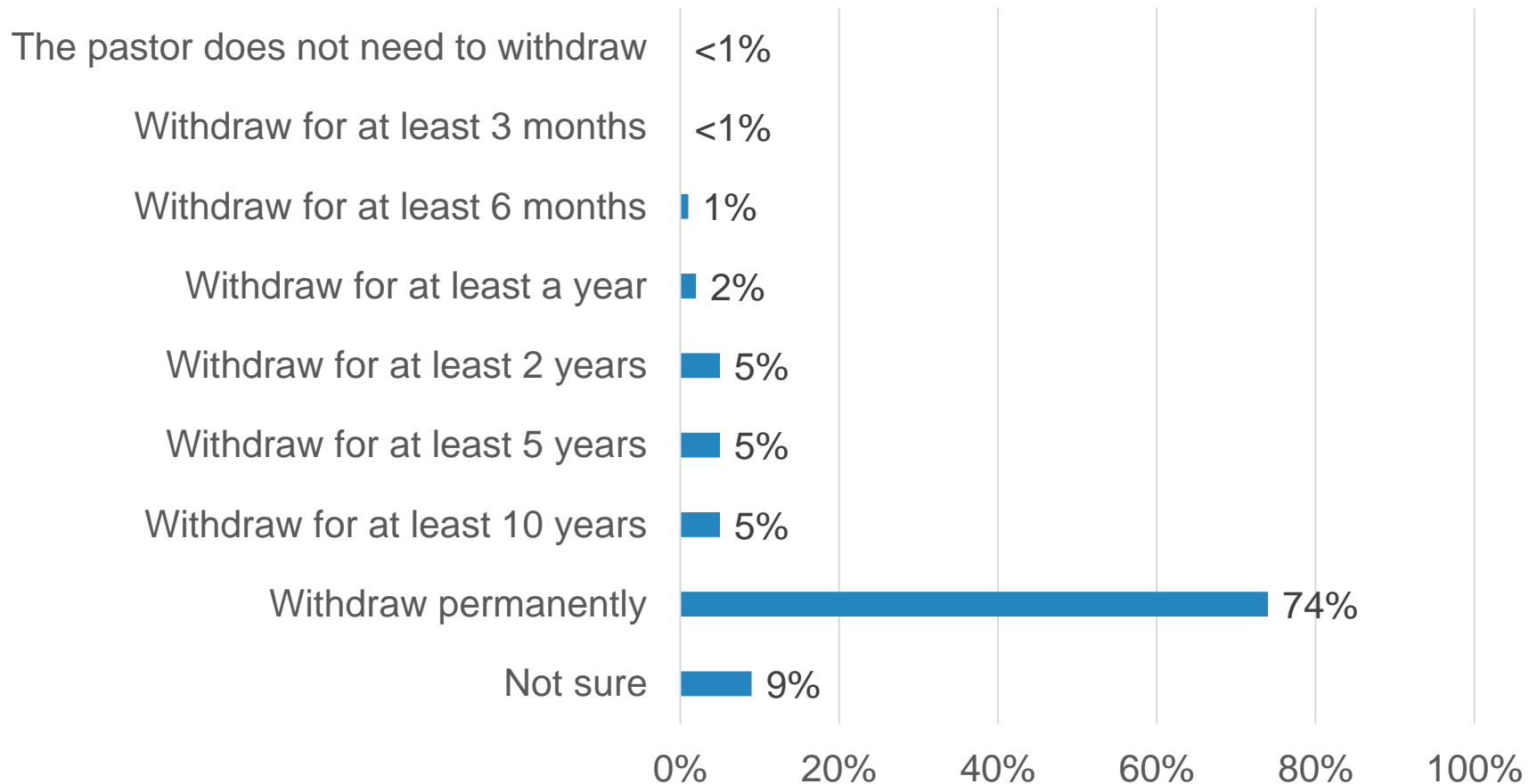


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Q: "If a pastor commits child sexual abuse, how long, if at all, should the pastor withdraw from public ministry?"

74% believe pastors should permanently withdraw from public ministry if they commit sexual assault or abuse of an adult

Among Protestant Pastors



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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

“If a pastor commits child sexual abuse, how long, if at all, should the pastor withdraw from public ministry?”

- African American pastors are the least likely to select “Withdraw permanently” (67%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select “Withdraw permanently” (76%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select “Withdraw permanently” than males (91% v. 83%)
- Pastors with no college degree are the least likely to select “Withdraw permanently” (69%)
- Lutherans (95%) are more likely to select “Withdraw permanently” than Baptists (85%), Pentecostals (60%), Presbyterian/Reformed (83%), and Christian/Church of Christ (78%)

“If a pastor commits sexual assault and abuse of an adult member of the congregation or staff, how long, if at all, should the pastor withdraw from public ministry?”

- White pastors (76%) are more likely to select “Withdraw permanently” than African American pastors (58%)
- Pastors age 45-54 (79%) are more likely to select “Withdraw permanently” than pastors age 65+ (69%)
- Pastors with a Master’s degree (77%) are more likely to select “Withdraw permanently” than those with no college degree (63%)
- Pentecostals are the least likely to select “Withdraw permanently” (44%)

Pastors' Views on Sexual Abuse or Assault by a Pastor

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