

**Sustaining Pastoral Excellence**  
**Project Evaluation Survey**  
**2007 REPORT**



S U S T A I N I N G  
**Pastoral**  
E X C E L L E N C E

November 2007



CHRISTIAN  
REFORMED  
CHURCH

CALVIN  
College

**CSR**  
Center for Social Research



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**PROJECT EVALUATION SURVEY**  
**2007 REPORT**



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**Pastoral**  
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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With support from the Lilly Endowment Inc., the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA or CRC) launched the “Sustaining Pastoral Excellence” (SPE) project in 2003. The purpose of the project has been to cultivate and sustain a culture of pastoral excellence in the CRC. To do so, SPE has focused on assisting pastors through peer learning, continuing education events and mentoring.

The SPE project requested the Calvin College Center for Social Research to conduct a two-wave survey evaluation of the project. The first wave was conducted in fall and winter 2004-2005, the second in spring 2007.

### ***A brief review of the 2005 baseline report***

This report follows the format of the previous report issued in the fall of 2005<sup>1</sup>. The 2005 report established a baseline; this report focuses on changes from that baseline. Among the most important baseline findings of the 2005 report were:

- An overall impression of a fairly healthy pastorate.
- Respectable levels of self-reported spiritual formation activity, pastoral satisfaction, and understanding of the Reformed faith.
- Moderately high levels of joint reflection with council coupled with moderately low levels of systematic feedback on preaching.
- Strong self-reported perceived leadership competence in “structures and accountability” and “formal and informal authority” and weak perceived competence in “cross-cultural ministry,” “dynamics of conflict” and “solving vs. learning.”
- Evidence of fairly weak communication or common perceptions between pastors and clerks of council about the pastor’s participation in continuing education, systematic feedback on preaching and joint reflection on the pastor’s role.

The 2005 report concluded with a suggestion that SPE focus on improving communication between pastors and congregational leaders.

### ***Response rates and survey contents***

The survey was administered by mail. Pastors’ and clerks’ confidentiality was protected through the assignment of randomly-generated church identification numbers, which allowed the two survey waves to be linked without including personal information in the dataset. Responses were received from 550 pastors and 522 clerks of council in 2004-2005 (64 percent and 60 percent response rates, respectively) and from 512 pastors and 451 clerks of council in 2007 (72 percent and 63 percent response rates, respectively)<sup>2</sup>. 353 pastors responded to both waves of the survey; we refer to them as “repeat respondents.” Because they are measurements of the same individuals over time, the repeat respondents offer the best means to detect any individual-level changes and thus any measurable effects of the SPE project.

The two surveys posed questions about pastors’ spiritual formation, participation in peer learning, mentoring, and continuing education, general satisfaction and personal well-being, discipling others, and related factors such as time use. The second wave also requested general evaluations of the effects of the SPE project on the pastors and the CRC.

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<sup>1</sup> The report on the first wave is available online at [http://www.crcna.org/pages/spe\\_survey.cfm](http://www.crcna.org/pages/spe_survey.cfm)

<sup>2</sup> The increased response rates with decreased total numbers reflect a decrease in the scope of the church mailing list in the 2007 wave. The 2004-2005 wave included a greater number of churches without pastors.

Our investigation of the survey data suggests the following summary statements:

***SPE gets positive subjective ratings from pastors.***

The only new content in the 2007 survey was a series of three questions evaluating the SPE project's effects. Pastors gave SPE high marks overall for its contribution to their ministry, to themselves personally, and to the denominational culture overall. Those who confirmed they had specific experience of the project were the most positive. For example, about forty percent of responding pastors with direct experience of SPE events and groups said the project's effect on their role as pastor was "very positive," and another 47.5 percent said it was "positive," while just 1.2 percent said the effect was negative and 5.8 percent had no opinion.

The written comments of pastors include some powerful endorsements of the value of SPE. For example, there is this ringing endorsement:

*I can't imagine the last several years in ministry without SPE. I would be much less effective and on my way to burning out. Instead I am healthy, balanced, and eager for ministry. Thanks!*

And this pastor's experience is echoed in other comments:

*I am part of a peer learning group that is revolutionizing my view of the church and ministry. It is exciting, rejuvenating, stimulating, and just really good to be a part of. Thanks SPE!*

Those with no SPE experience were also relatively positive, but were also much less likely to offer an opinion. Clerks of council offered generally positive ratings as well, but with nearly double the "don't know rate" (over 60 percent marked "don't know" to each of the three ratings).

***Most pastoral behaviors and opinions were highly stable from wave to wave.***

There was little or no significant change between survey waves in the vast majority of the questions. In fact, the overall corporate degree of stability over time is remarkable. Unfortunately, this means it is very difficult to attempt to explain change, since there was relatively little broad change to explain. This observation of stability holds whether we compare all respondents for each wave (which could represent generational change or just change in who elected to respond to the survey) or only the repeat respondents (change in individuals).

To the extent that the original observations in 2004-2005 reflected "pastoral excellence," we may say that it has largely been "sustained"—the level of overall stability in responses over time is remarkably consistent. However, to the extent that marked progress on particular measures was desired, the data are disappointing.<sup>3</sup>

***A few indicators of excellence improved ...***

A few items showed notable improvement:

- Pastors reporting systematic feedback on their preaching increased from 37 percent in 2004 to 45 percent in 2007; among repeat respondents, the increase was from 39 percent to 45 percent.
- Reported understanding of the Reformed faith improved, from 50 percent "thorough" in 2004-2005 to 61 percent "thorough" in 2007.

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<sup>3</sup> It may be important to note that the initial survey wave was not a true pre-test, in that it did not precede SPE's earliest influence on CRC pastors through events and publications (the project launched in November of 2002). It is possible, though unlikely, that any substantial improvements inspired by the project, in terms of the items measured by the survey, were realized early on and simply have not been capable of further improvement.

- Among repeat respondents, pastors' average number of current pre-Christian disciples increased from 1.1 to 1.6; likewise, the average number of mature Christian disciples increased from 2.5 to 2.9.

**... while a few others declined.**

- The proportion of pastors reporting that their councils assisted them in reflecting on their roles as pastors declined from 64 percent in 2004-2005 to 58 percent in 2007.
- Reported personal devotional frequency declined among the 161 repeat-respondent pastors who were 55 or younger in 2007. In 2004-2005, 40 percent of them reported engaging in personal prayer and meditation on a daily basis; by 2007, that proportion had fallen to 33 percent, while the proportion reporting a frequency of fewer than three times a week rose from 6 percent to almost 12 percent.<sup>4</sup>
- Pastoral satisfaction among repeat respondents declined slightly from 76 percent in the top two levels of the scale to 73 percent. Put another way, the 68 pastors whose satisfaction level improved were outnumbered almost 2 to 1 by the 127 whose reported satisfaction level fell.
- Pastors' reported frequency of feeling isolated increased. Almost half of pastors (50 percent) were in the two least-isolated categories in 2004-2005; that figure fell to 47 percent. Among repeat respondents, the fall was from 54 percent to 49 percent. Rural and urban pastors accounted for almost all of the increasing feelings of isolation.
- The average reported number of new Christian disciples fell slightly from 1.9 to 1.7, and the percentage of pastors with zero disciples grew in each of the three categories (pre-, new, and mature Christians), meaning a small number of pastors accounted for most increases in disciples.

**There is some evidence of the value of SPE's activities.**

Some important items suggest modest support for SPE's underlying theory of pastoral health. We looked for groups of repeat-response pastors who were likely to be *more* satisfied, *less* isolated and to sense a *better* fit with their congregations. One such group was 50 pastors who reported systematic reflection with council on their pastoral roles in 2007 but not in 2004-2005. In other words, those who improved in reflection improved in satisfaction, while all others declined in satisfaction. Those who enjoyed council reflection in both waves declined by lesser increments than those who reported no reflection in either wave or who lost it over the period. Unfortunately, as noted previously, the overall rate of council reflection declined, so the beneficial effect of this practice is not extending to more pastors and congregations.

Likewise, the 57 pastors who reported the presence of preaching feedback in 2007 but not in 2004 remained stable on satisfaction and congregational fit, while the groups with stable or decreased feedback declined in satisfaction and perceived fit.

Finally, pastors were less likely to feel isolated if they reported meeting with peers about deeper relationships with God or involvement in a peer learning group. However, there was no evidence that joining a peer learning group between waves actually led to decreased feelings of isolation, suggesting that pastors who feel isolated might be less likely to join peer learning groups.

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<sup>4</sup> Older repeat respondents held steady, with about half reporting daily devotions in both periods.

### ***The bottom line***

Several interpretations of these findings are possible. Either SPE's influence over the measured factors is small, or it consists primarily of contributions that are unfortunately not detectable *using these survey indicators*. It is also possible that the project is having a generally beneficial effect that is completely offset by a countervailing general trend toward lower pastoral commitment to excellence and toward lower satisfaction. There is some appearance in the data of such a trend, as satisfaction declined overall and perceived isolation increased while most other reports were relatively stable.

If SPE leaders believe the survey results do not adequately represent the project's contribution, future evaluations should pursue different measurement strategies that are more tightly linked to the project's theory of change, immediate goals and direct activities. Alternately, if the survey questions are believed to be the right indicators of pastoral excellence, SPE should experiment with new strategies in order to produce the desired change.



## II. INTRODUCTION

### **About the survey**

The Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) office collaborated with the Calvin College Center for Social Research (CSR) in developing questionnaires for pastors and clerks of all congregations of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) in North America. This report covers the results for two survey waves: benchmark results gathered in winter and spring 2004-2005 and a follow-up survey conducted in spring 2007, with the focus on the 2007 wave. The results are intended to facilitate evaluation of the current SPE project, which received a five-year grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc.

From March 2007 through June 2007, 512 Christian Reformed Church pastors and 451 clerks responded to the survey by mail. 8 pastors and 7 clerks explicitly declined to participate. The final pastor response rate was 72.3 percent (512/711, excluding the 8 declining pastors); the final clerk response rate was 63.3 percent (451/712, excluding the 7 declining clerks). Both pastor and clerk responded (referred to here as “paired” responses) from 377 of the 711 churches surveyed, a rate of 53 percent. The responses were processed by the CSR so as to prevent connecting responses with specific persons or churches, preserving pastor and clerk confidentiality.

Here are some summary statistics for the 2007 respondents:

- 92.4 percent of the 512 responding pastors are white, 7.6 percent are persons of color – compared to an estimated actual distribution in the CRC of 85 percent white. The survey thus under-represents minority clergy.
- Returns were received from pastors and clerks within each classis, with the ratio of returns from Canada (29.1 percent) and the United States (70.9 percent) over-representing Canada slightly (24.1 percent of churches were Canadian as of September 2007).
- 84.4 percent of responding pastors reported an M. Div. degree, and 89 percent came to ministry in the CRCNA through Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS).<sup>5</sup> The “typical” responding CRC pastor is male (99.0 percent), was ordained at age 31, has been in ministry for 17.2 years and in the current position for 6.9 years.
- As shown in Table 1 (opposite)<sup>6</sup>, the “typical” CRC congregation has 324 members, and is more likely suburban (40.6 percent) than rural (29.7) or urban (26.2). Due to the larger size of suburban church memberships, almost half of CRC members attend suburban churches. The responding churches are slightly more likely to be rural than in 2004-2005.

### **Section summary**

Section III introduces the subjective evaluations of the SPE project added to the end of the 2007 survey. The rest of the report mirrors the structure of the 2005 report. The survey questions were originally conceived and organized in relation to the *Marks of Good Ministry* identified in the original proposal to the Lilly Endowment for “Creating a Culture of Pastoral Excellence.” The proposal’s headline for each mark of good ministry is found in the section headings for sections IV through IX. Section X focuses on communication and support issues between pastors and councils. Section XI offers some concluding recommendations.

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<sup>5</sup> Please note that the first wave report incorrectly reported on page 3 that 90.3 percent of responding pastors had M.Div. degrees; this was the percent of those who took the CTS route-to-ministry who reported M.Div. degrees from CTS. The correct figure for 2004-2005 was 85.9 percent, so the 2007 figure of 84.4 percent reflects a very slight decrease.

<sup>6</sup> Tables and figures refer to the relevant survey questions by number; Pq refers to a pastors’ question, Cq to a clerks’ question. The complete questionnaires are included as Appendix C of this report.

**Table I - Churches and membership by location type, 2007 (Pq07 by Pq06)**

<b>Ministry Location</b>	<b>Churches</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Cases reporting membership</b>	<b>Average membership</b>	<b>Total membership</b>	<b>%</b>
Urban	134	26.2%	132	272.6	35,978	22.5%
Suburban	208	40.6%	203	375.4	76,212	47.6%
Rural	152	29.7%	147	299.2	43,983	27.5%
No rating	18	3.5%	1	635.0 <sup>7</sup>	635	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>512</b>		<b>483</b>	<b>324.7</b>	<b>156,808</b>	

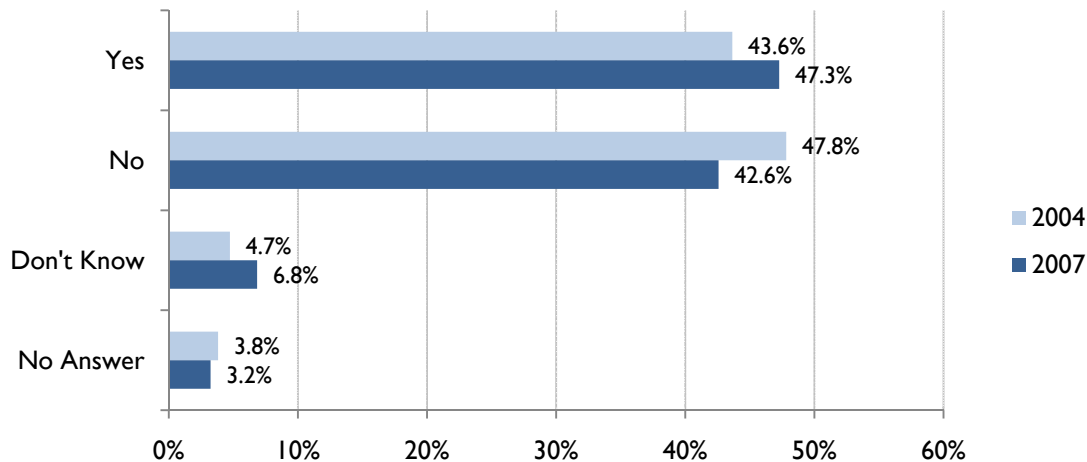
<sup>7</sup> This is the membership of the sole church reporting its membership without offering a location type.

### III. EVALUATIONS OF THE SPE PROJECT'S EFFECTS

#### ***SPE participation***

Pastors were asked whether their involvement in continuing education, peer learning or mentoring were part of the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence project. Figure 1 below shows small increases in overall exposure to the project from 2004-2005 to 2007. These proportions provide important context for the following subsection.

**Figure 1 – Pastors' reports of SPE involvement (Pq45)**



#### ***Pastors' ratings***

The 2007 survey included a new section requesting multiple-choice subjective evaluations of the SPE project's overall effects. Three questions were asked of both pastors and clerks:

- Rate SPE's effect on your role as a pastor and on your ministry.
- Rate SPE's effect on you personally.
- Rate SPE's effect on the culture of the CRCNA.

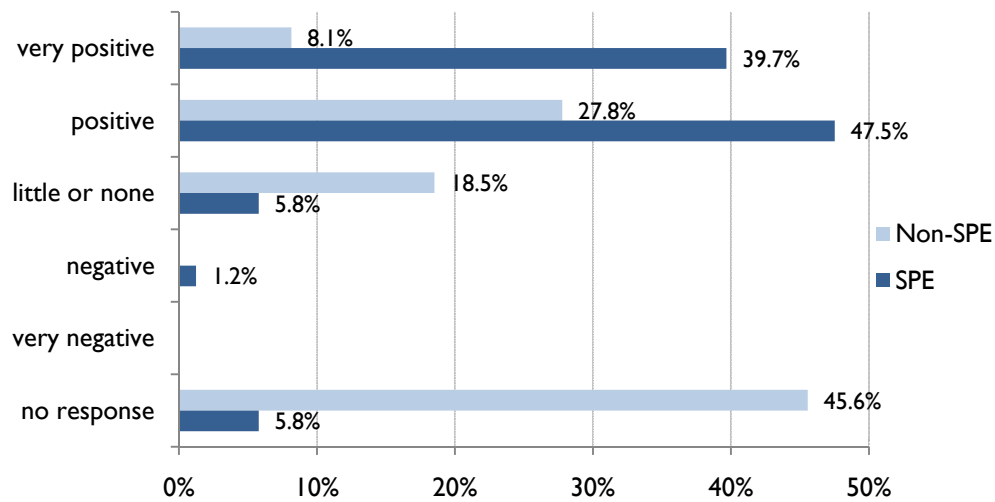
The results are overwhelmingly positive; for 375 pastors actually answering the first question, over 80 percent said either "positive" or "very positive." This figure conceals an even more positive rating from those who actually reported involvement in an SPE group; 92.5 percent of those answering the question said "very positive" or "positive." Figure 2 (opposite) breaks down these ratings visually. It displays percentages including pastors offering no response due to lack of familiarity with the SPE project. Over 45 percent of those with no recent or current SPE involvement offered no opinion.

The following two questions follow a very similar pattern. As Figure 3 shows, ratings of SPEs effect on "you personally" were only very slightly less positive. So few pastors offered a different opinion, the second question might be regarded as a duplicate of the first. If SPE positively affects the pastor's role, it's also positive for him or her personally.

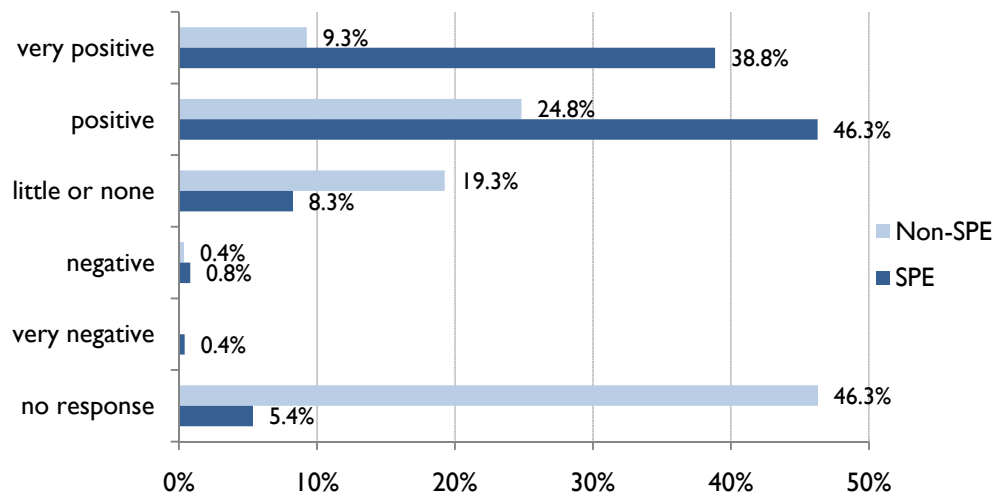
Figure 4 similarly shows high positive ratings for the project's impact on the denominational culture. SPE participants became a bit less positive on average than they were about the previous questions, while non-participants with an opinion became slightly more positive. Participants are always more positive on average than non-participants, but the gap in opinion narrows when the culture is the object rather than the individual experience.



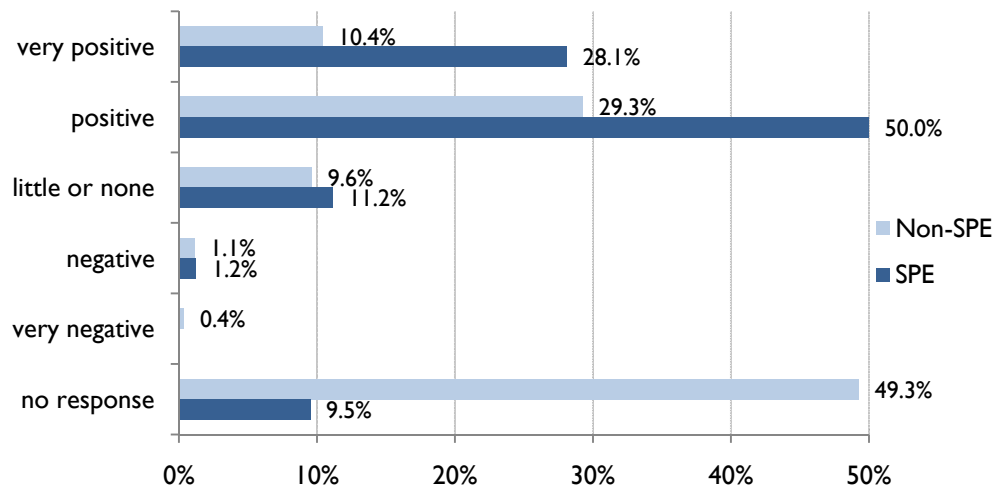
**Figure 2 – Pastors' ratings of SPEs effect on role as pastor and ministry, 2007 (Pq46a)**



**Figure 3 – Pastors' ratings of SPEs effect on self personally, 2007 (Pq46b)**



**Figure 4 – Pastors' ratings of SPEs effect on the culture of the CRCNA, 2007 (Pq46c)**



### **Pastors' comments**

The survey also requested open-ended comments. Many of these included overall assessments of the SPE project. See Appendix B, Comments for a collection of selected quotations. Here are a few relevant examples:

Positive about ministry:

*My SPE group formed me into a preacher where my seminary [education] fell short. Thank God I fell into a group when I did!!*

Positive on personal life:

*I can't imagine the last several years in ministry without SPE. I would be must less effective and on my way to burning out. Instead I am healthy, balanced, and eager for ministry. Thanks!*

Positive on CRCNA culture:

*I appreciate the greatly heightened awareness of and support for parish ministry over the past five years.*

Perceptions of little or negative impact:

*This issue of accountability for a pastor can't be done through more activity but by the power of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the pastor.*

*Peer groups in my area are more concerned with human formulas and strategies than being aware of God's activity. We need a contemplative and reflective pastorate. Provide for me time to watch the sunset and be awed by its grandeur. As soon as I have to write a report on it, it's gone.*

*Denominational expectations and requests far exceed the ability of the local pastor and congregation to aptly respond to.... [They] are being taxed and stretched to the point of beginning to suffer and become antagonistic towards the denomination.*

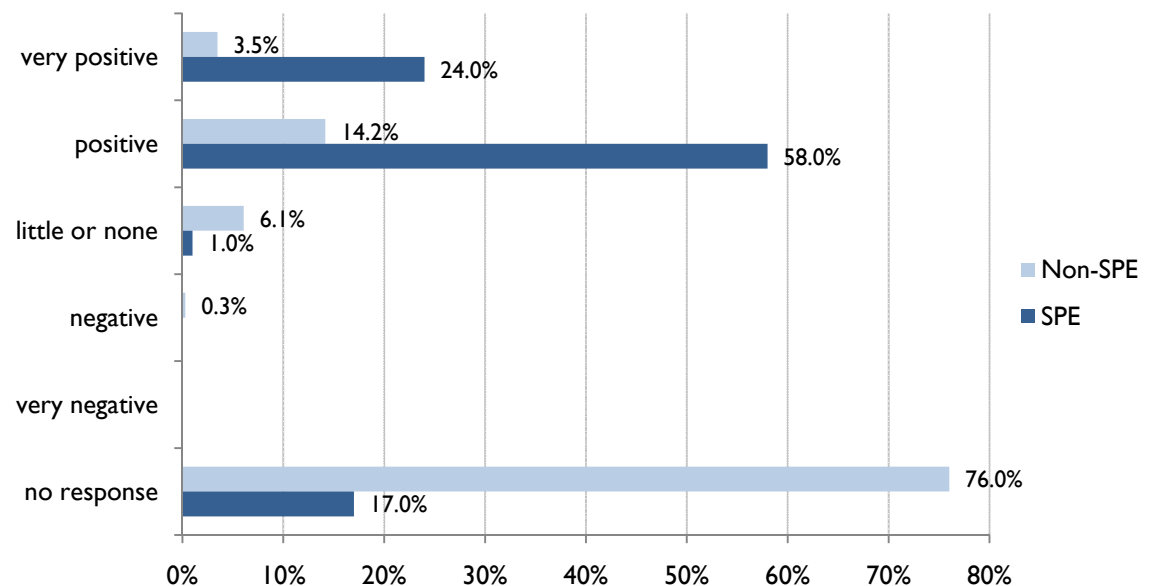
The last comment may be indicative of the general miscommunication between those who lead and participate in SPE and those who decline without direct experience.

### Clerks' ratings

Clerks of council also rated SPEs impact as positive, but with a far higher rate of nonresponse to the question. 168 clerks offered opinions on the question about SPEs effect on the pastor's role and ministry, and over 85 percent said "very positive" or "positive." Clerks were unlikely to be aware of SPE involvement by their pastors; out of 446 responding clerks, just 100 (22.4 percent) believed that their pastors were involved in SPE-sponsored continuing education, peer learning or mentoring activities. Of these 100, 83 offered a rating of SPEs effect on the pastor, and their ratings were 99 percent positive.

Ratings for the other two questions were almost perfectly correlated with the first question, so we present only the chart for the first question below as Figure 5. Of the 77 percent of clerks who had no knowledge of pastoral involvement in SPE, three-quarters did not offer an opinion.

**Figure 5 – Clerk's rating of SPEs effect on pastor's role and ministry, 2007 (Cq1 8a)**



### Clerks' comments

Clerks also provided open-ended comments on the SPE project; a more extensive collection of selected quotes is also found in Appendix B.

Positive impressions:

*Our pastor regularly reiterates to Council the value of this program and it has been a factor in his improved performance.*

*[Pastors'] working [together] on common sermon series has been very positive in sermon results. [W]orking together as colleagues has been very good to prevent feelings of isolation. The spouse's workshop was well received as well. She wrote Council a thank-you note.*

*We are an urban, fairly wealthy church (by most standards) and we could not/would not have provided our pastors with these critical avenues for growth without the grant monies provided. As Council, we are thankful for the resources provided as part of this program grant. All in all it is an effective, timely offer of support to our pastors, their families and therefore their congregations.*

Perceptions of little or negative effect:

*Our pastor is highly regarded as a preacher, pastoral counselor and advisor, and a man of faith. The demands on his time are numerous and this limits time that can be spent on retreats and development opportunities.*

*Pastoral excellence says to me that the goal of training good ministers would involve preaching the word and support it with the Bible. Over the past 10 to 15 years I have noticed a lot of ministers that have to read their sermons. Whatever happened to preaching with notes??*

*Too much corporate America is working its way into the church. We need to get back to the basics of this proclamation and explanation of the Word.... Ladies and gentlemen, this is not the minister of the era of your oma and opa.... Let's not forget our history.*



## IV. SPIRITUAL FORMATION

*A deep authentic relationship with God marked by prayer, godliness and fruits of the Spirit.*

### **Devotional frequency**

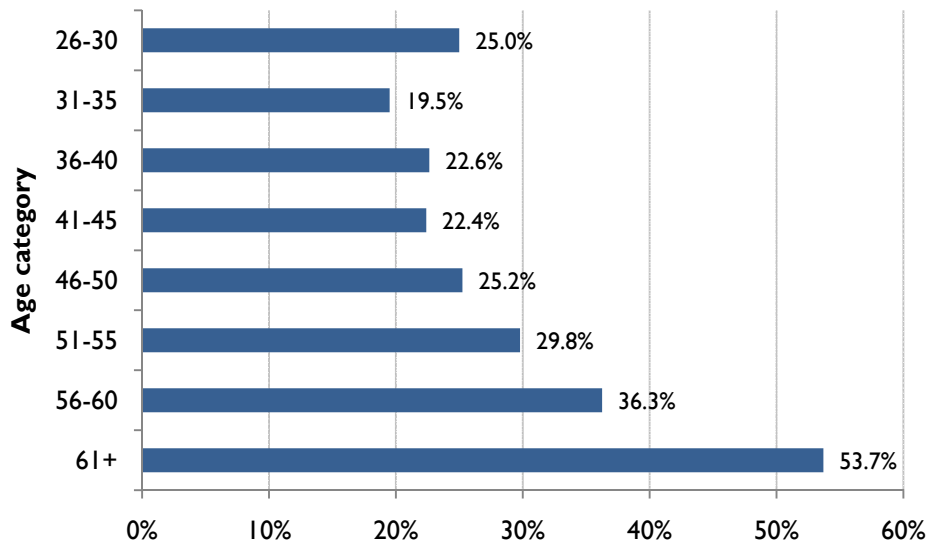
Pastors were asked to answer, “How often do you have personal prayer and meditation time (including Bible reading)?” As shown in Figure 7 (opposite), more than forty percent of pastors in the second wave reported daily prayer and meditation (“devotions” for short). Over ninety percent reported devotions at least three times a week. The 2004-2005 wave reported higher devotional frequency, with almost half of pastors reporting daily devotions; that number fell to 41.3 percent in 2007.

Figure 7 (opposite, top) includes all respondents from each wave; including those who responded to one wave but not the other. It is possible that the decline in devotional frequency is due to corporate changes in who responded rather than individual-level declines. To check for individual-level changes, we must look only at “repeat respondents” who participated in both waves.

Figure 8 (opposite bottom) shows data only for the 324 “repeat respondents” who answered the question in both survey waves. Though the decline was smaller, 4 percent fewer pastors reported daily devotions, and 3.6 percent more reported devotions fewer than three times per week.

A simple dynamic explains much of the change: daily devotions are reported more frequently among older pastors, as shown in Figure 6 below.

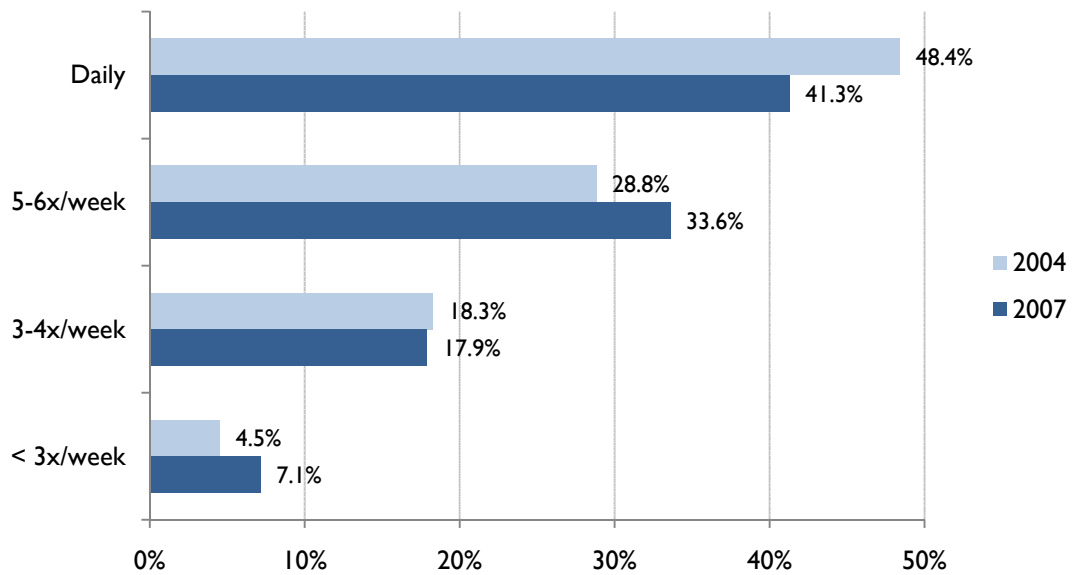
**Figure 6 - Percent reporting daily prayer and meditation, by age, 2007 (Pq17 by Pq03)**



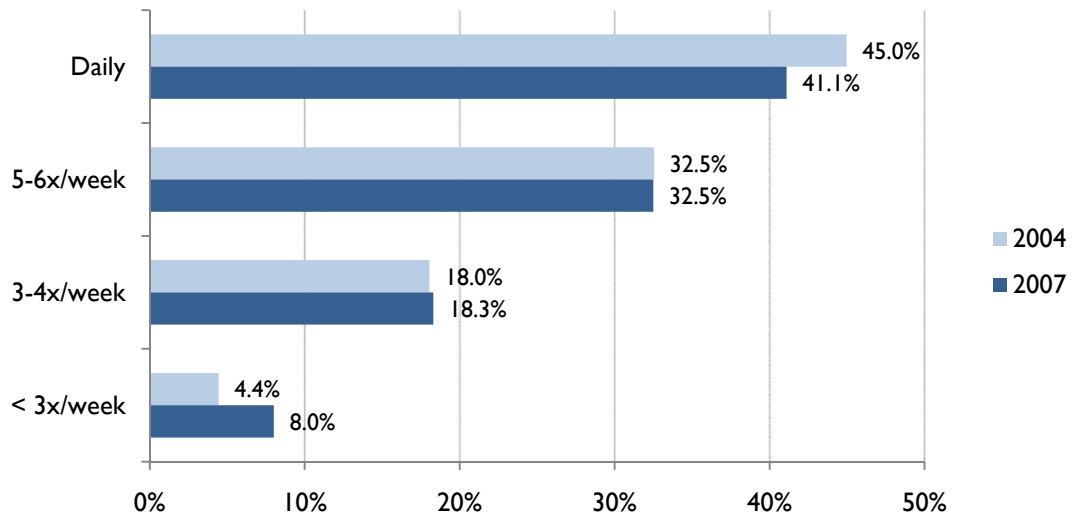
Further analysis (not shown) also reveals that younger pastors were more likely to decrease their devotional frequency over time, while older pastors held steady on average.

See Figure 31 on page 35 for some evidence that peer learning groups contribute to higher participation in some of these spiritual formation activities.

**Figure 7 - Devotional frequency (Pq17)**



**Figure 8 - Devotional frequency, repeat respondents only (Pq17)**



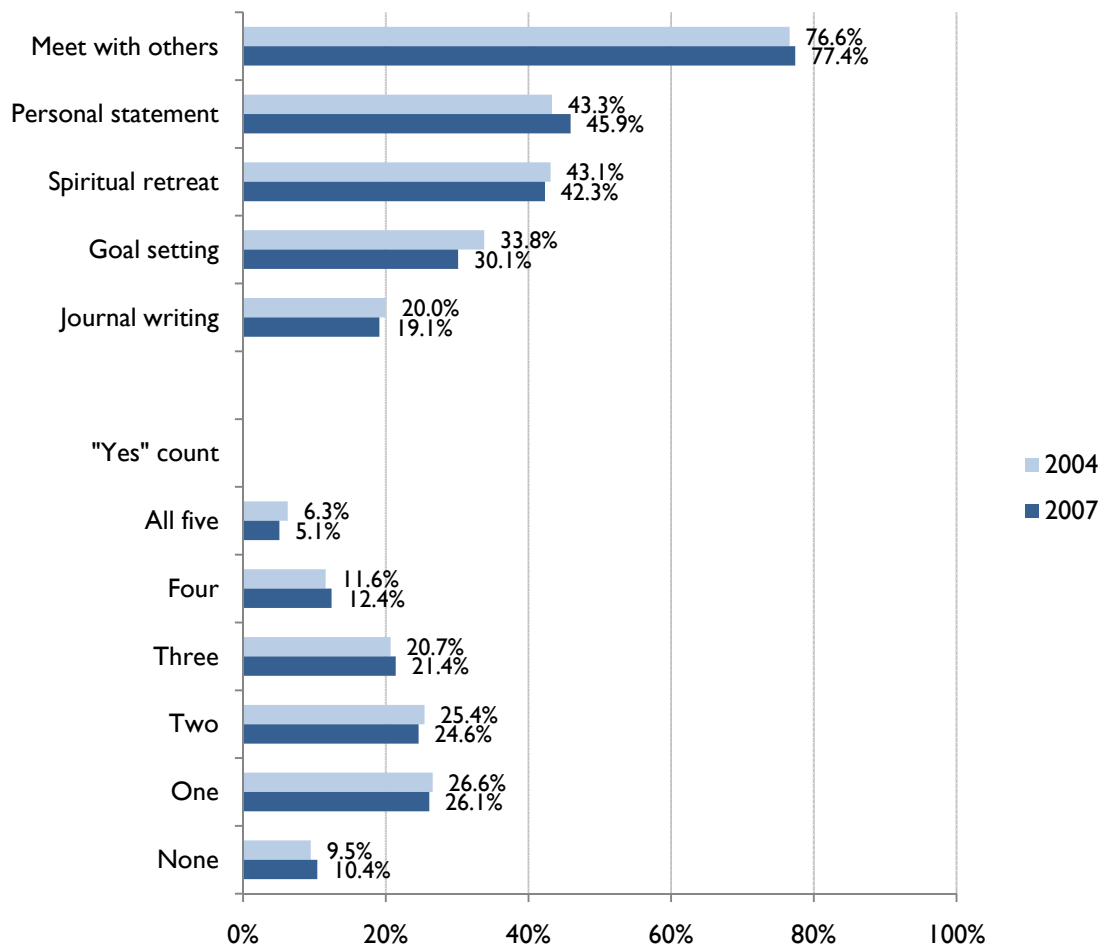
### Other spiritual formation activities

Pastors were asked five yes-or-no questions relating to intentionality in spiritual formation:

1. Have you gone on a spiritual retreat in the last twelve months? (Pq18)
2. Do you regularly meet with one or more other Christians for the purpose of deepening your relationship with God? (Pq19)
3. Do you establish annual, personal goals for spiritual growth and a way to sustain these goals? (Pq20)
4. Do you regularly keep a journal on your prayer life and your walk with God? (Pq21)
5. Have you developed a personal life mandate or statement of personal vision for ministry? (Pq22)

In 2007, most pastors answered “no” to four of the five items; the lone exception was “meeting regularly ...” to which 77.4 percent said “yes.” Journal-keeping remained the least employed practice. Changes since the first wave were generally negligible. See Figure 9:

**Figure 9 - Spiritual formation items (Pq18-Pq22)**

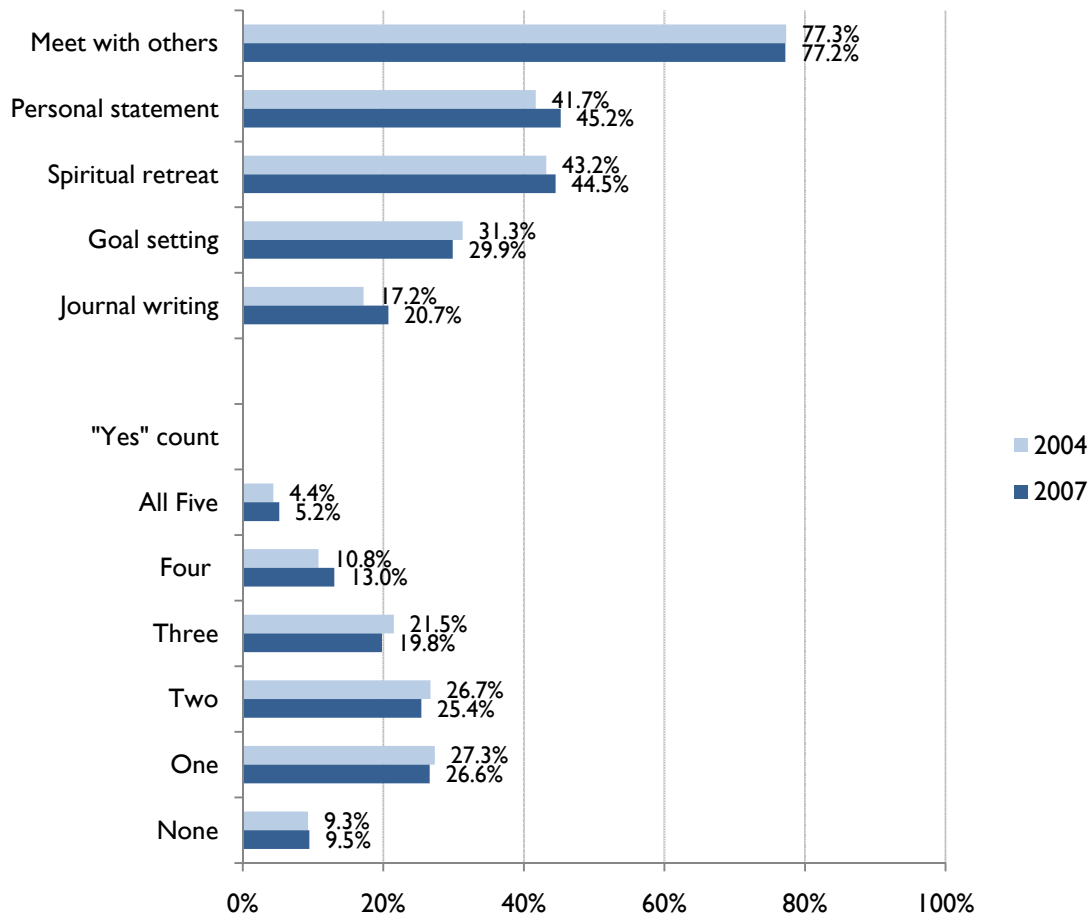


As shown in the bottom half of Figure 9, approximately 10 percent of pastors answered no to all five items in both years, while 5 to 6 percent answered yes to all five items.



Considering only repeat respondents in Figure 10, there are few notable changes. The direction of change is slightly positive for personal vision statements and journal-keeping.

**Figure 10 - Spiritual formation items, repeat respondents (Pq18-Pq22)**



## Conclusions

The survey data reveals little change in the CRC's pastoral culture with respect to devotional frequency and the presence of these five spiritual formation activities. If SPE is increasing the quality of spiritual formation among pastors through peer learning groups (see Figure 31 on page 35), it is being offset by declines in those activities by nonparticipants in peer learning groups.

## V. VISION AND MISSION

*A strong vision of the mission of the church in which the church exists not merely to sustain itself but to serve the world and minister beyond itself.*

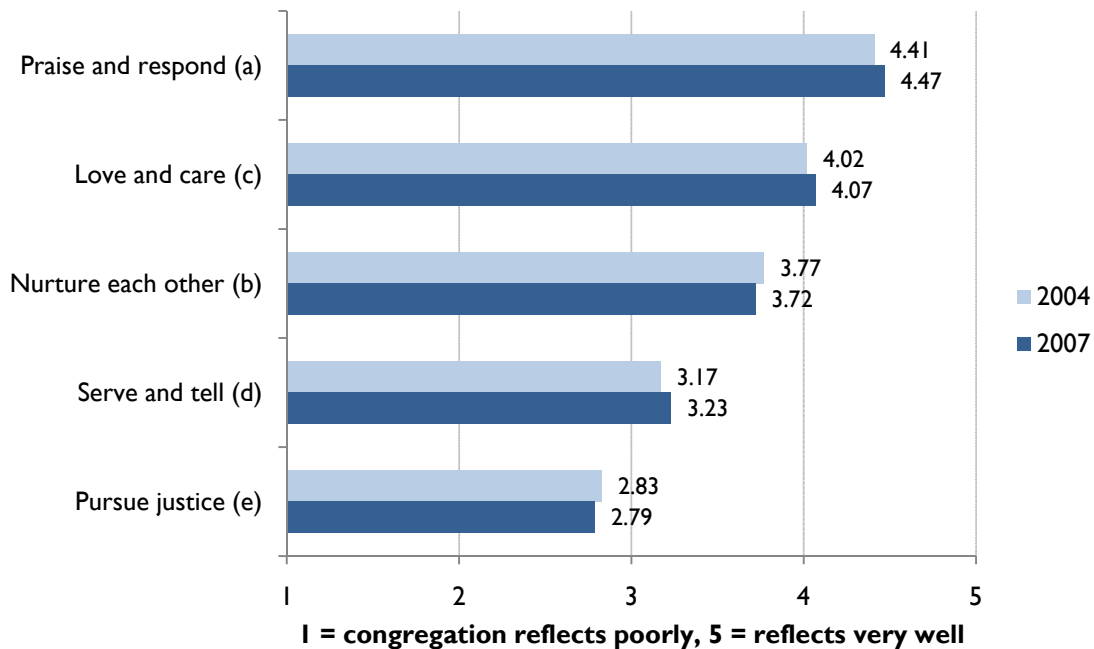
### **Core elements of the CRC mission**

Pastors were asked how well their congregations reflect the five core elements of the CRC mission statement:

- 24a We gather to praise God, listen to him and respond.
- 24b We nurture each other in faith and obedience to Christ.
- 24c We love and care for one another as God's people.
- 24d We commit ourselves to serve and to tell others about Jesus.
- 24e We pursue God's justice and peace in every area of life.

The pastors ranked each item on a scale of 5 (the congregation reflects the element “very well”) to 1 (“poorly”).<sup>8</sup> In 2007, the average ratings ranged from a high of 4.47 for praise and worship to lows of 2.79 for pursuing God's justice and peace. The rankings for 2004-2005 were very similar. The pursuit of God's justice and peace is still the core element of the CRC that pastors least perceive in their congregations.

**Figure 11 – Pastors' ratings of congregations' reflection of CRC mission (Pq24)**



These ratings are virtually identical for repeat respondents, so that chart is omitted as redundant.

<sup>8</sup> Note that the scale is reversed from the original questionnaire (where “1” was “very well” and “5” was “poorly”) to facilitate visualization in the chart.

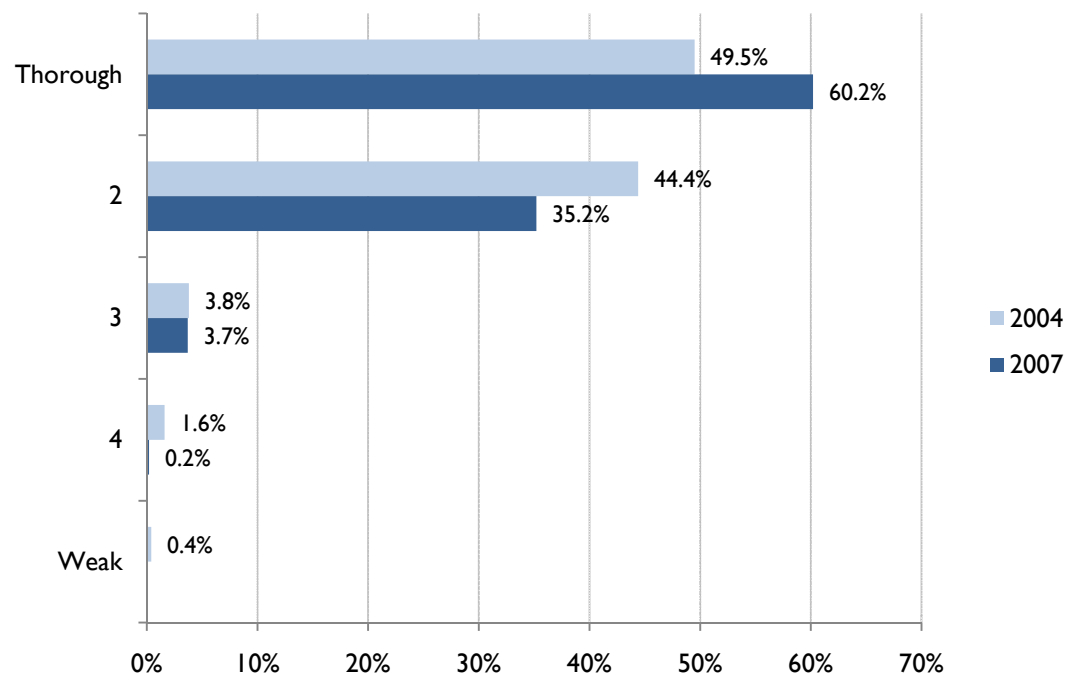
## VI. KNOWING AND COMMUNICATING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

*A thorough grasp of the biblical, pastoral and theological contours of the Christian faith and church, with an ability to communicate these contours in meaningful, relevant, and integrative ways through sound preaching and teaching, and imaginative pastoral leadership.*

### **Knowledge of the Reformed faith**

In 2007, over sixty percent of pastors reported a “thorough” understanding of the Christian faith from a Reformed perspective, up from just under fifty percent in 2004-2005 (see the top bars of Figure 12).

**Figure 12 – Pastors’ reported understanding of the Reformed faith (Pq27)**



This improvement is one of the largest aggregate shifts in the data from wave to wave. Among repeat respondents, 74 reported improvement and 37 reported reduced understanding, while 239 held steady.<sup>9</sup> There is some weak evidence that this improvement can be traced to continuing education; those who reported increased understanding also reported an average of 2.6 continuing education events, while those who stayed the same reported 2.4 events and those who decreased reported 2.1. Peer-learning members did not differ in improvement from non-members.

In 2007, three out of four pastors reported participating in reading, workshops or seminars to prepare for the task of preaching, virtually identical to the 2004-2005 wave.

Forty-five percent reported obtaining systematic feedback on their preaching from their council, a significant increase compared to the first wave in which 37 percent reported feedback from the council. The repeat respondent and overall responses are similar.

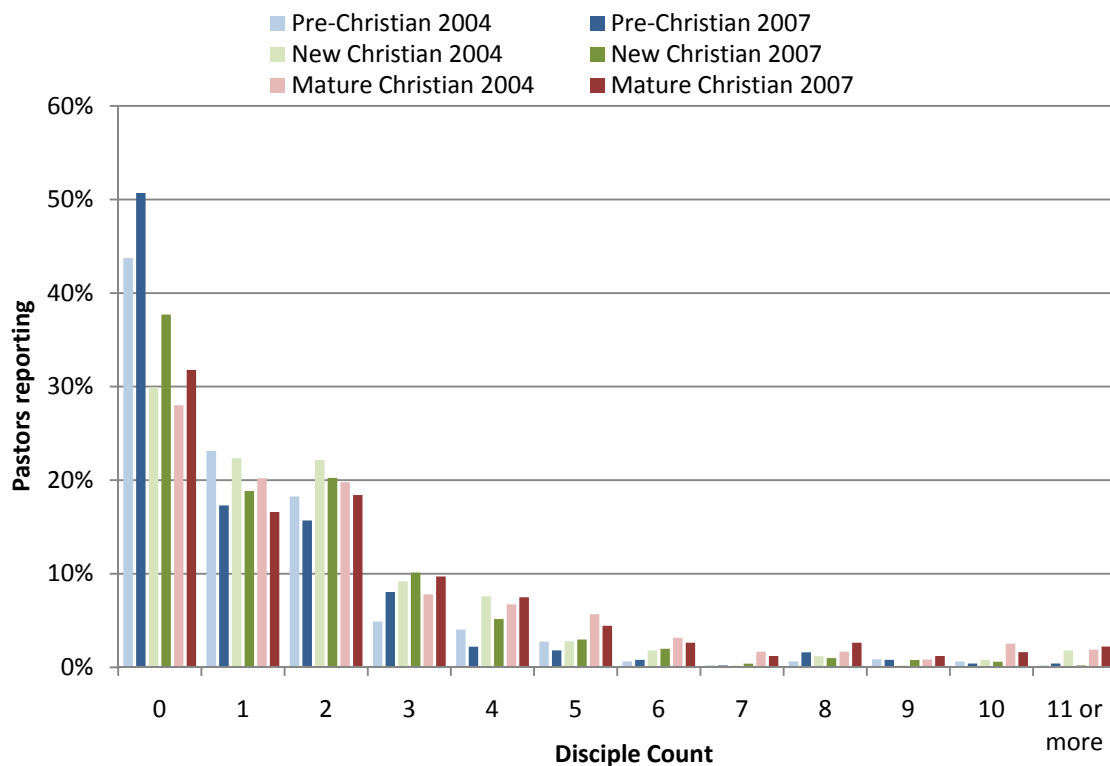
<sup>9</sup> The reduced-understanding group provides an instructive reminder that survey responses are variable; respondents were not reminded of their previous responses, and in a few cases the respondent was not the same pastor who completed the previous wave's questionnaire.

## Discipling

Pastors were asked, “how many persons are you currently discipling (in one-to-one or one-to-two relationships) in each of the following categories? Pre-Christian; new Christian; and mature Christian.” Overall, the pattern is mixed: average counts of pre- and mature Christian disciples rose, while the average number of new Christian disciples fell; the overall proportion of all pastors with no disciples in each category rose (so fewer pastors are accounting for more of the total number of disciples).

While average disciple counts rose slightly in the pre-Christian and mature Christian categories, Figure 13 (below) illustrates that the proportion of pastors reporting *zero* one-on-one or one-on-two disciples rose in each of the three categories (note that the darker column is taller in each of the first three pairs of columns). In 2007, over fifty percent (252 of 499 answering the question) had no pre-Christian disciples, up from 43.7 percent in 2004-2005. Almost thirty-eight percent had no new Christian disciples, and another thirty-one percent reported no mature Christian disciples. About 17 percent of pastors reported no disciples at all, down slightly from over 18 percent in 2004-2005. The 512 responding pastors reported a total of 3,107 disciples in all three categories, up slightly from 3,024 in the prior wave.<sup>10</sup> Responding pastors had a median value of four disciples per pastor from all categories in each wave.

**Figure 13 - Pastors’ reported disciples (Pq29a-c)**



Figures for repeat respondents were fairly similar and are omitted as redundant.

<sup>10</sup> Due to a data-handling error, the 2005 report undercounted disciples on page 6, reporting a total of 2,461 (the figure excluded large values over 20).



## VII. HEALTHY PASTORAL IDENTITY

*A pastoral identity that includes healthy self-understanding, strong relational skills, relationships with significant others that provide mentoring and accountability, and a balanced life with respect to work and non-work.*

The marks of good ministry cited above are indicated in part by survey items discussed in other sections of this report. For example, relationships with significant others are touched on in section IV in the discussion of spiritual formation, where meeting with others to deepen one's relationship with God is discussed, and in section IX on pastoral growth orientation, where participation in peer-learning and mentoring are discussed. In this section, we focus on some useful proxies for healthy self-understanding and balanced life, looking at satisfaction with present pastorate, frequency of feeling isolated, sense of fit with congregation, and career contentment. We also consider time expenditure information and reported support from spouses.

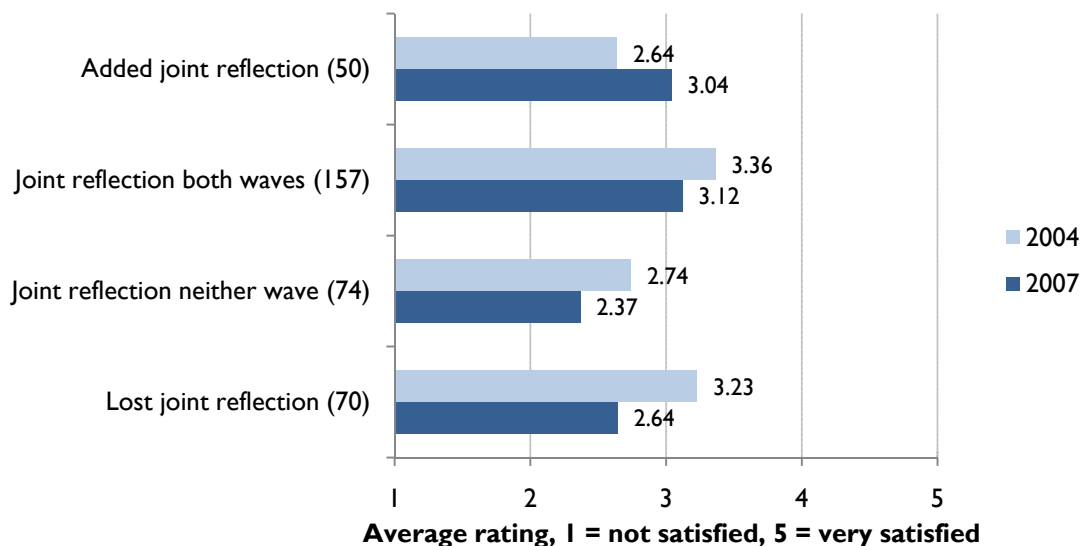
### **Satisfaction with present pastorate**

Satisfaction (or contentment) is an important aspect of self-understanding. It has its limitations: a pastor may be satisfied with his or her pastorate while maintaining an unhealthy self-understanding, and *vice versa*. Dissatisfaction can be healthy. Nevertheless, satisfaction provides some insight into pastors' sense of belonging in their current roles.

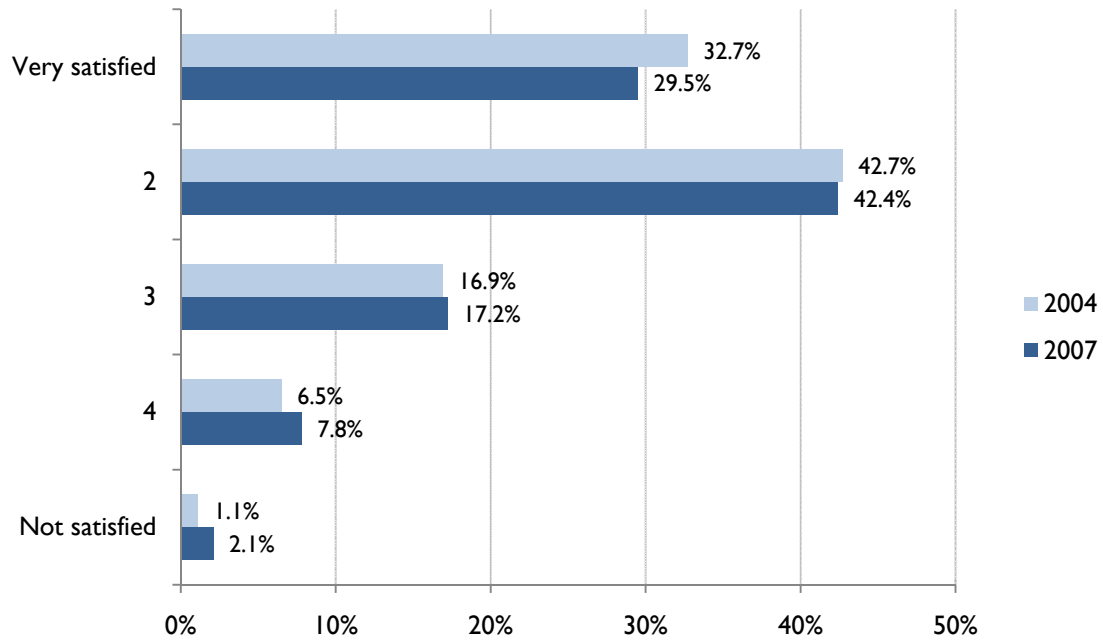
As shown in Figure 15 (opposite), the 2007 survey reveals fairly high levels of satisfaction among CRC pastors, though the numbers are lower when compared with the 2004 data. In Figure 16, the pattern of declining satisfaction is much stronger among repeat respondents, with "very satisfied" pastors decreasing more than seven points, from 36.3 percent to 28.9 percent.

Joint reflection with council emerges as an important associated factor in reported satisfaction. Pastors reporting joint reflection with council on their role as a pastor were more satisfied on average and less likely to decline in satisfaction. Figure 14 below illustrates this pattern with dynamics among repeat respondents; 50 pastors who said they had no joint reflection in 2004-2005 but had gained it by 2007 were the only group actually to improve their satisfaction, while those who reported "losing" joint reflection declined the most in expressed satisfaction.

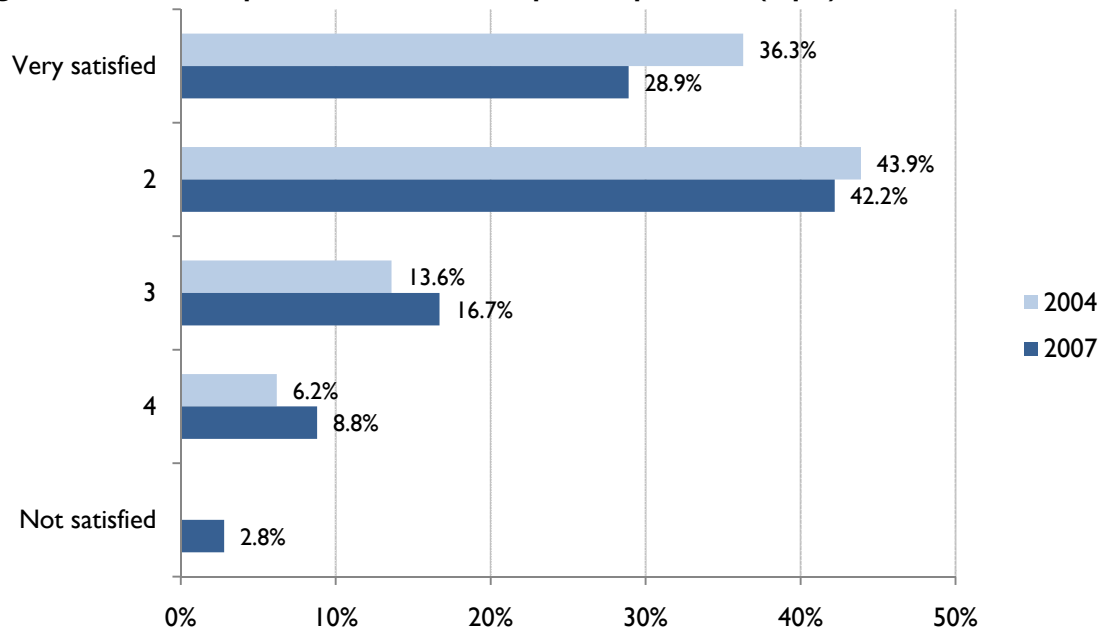
**Figure 14 - Satisfaction by change in joint reflection with council (Pq30 by Pq34)**



**Figure 15 - Perceived pastoral satisfaction (Pq30)**



**Figure 16 - Perceived pastoral satisfaction, repeat respondents (Pq30)**



Satisfaction is fairly strongly associated with the other items reported in this section (isolation, congregational fit, and career contentment). However, these items are not good candidates to “explain” pastoral satisfaction; they are better understood as parallel indicators of a general sense of belonging and contentment. That is, reporting a strong sense of fit with one’s congregation is another way of expressing satisfaction with one’s current pastorate.

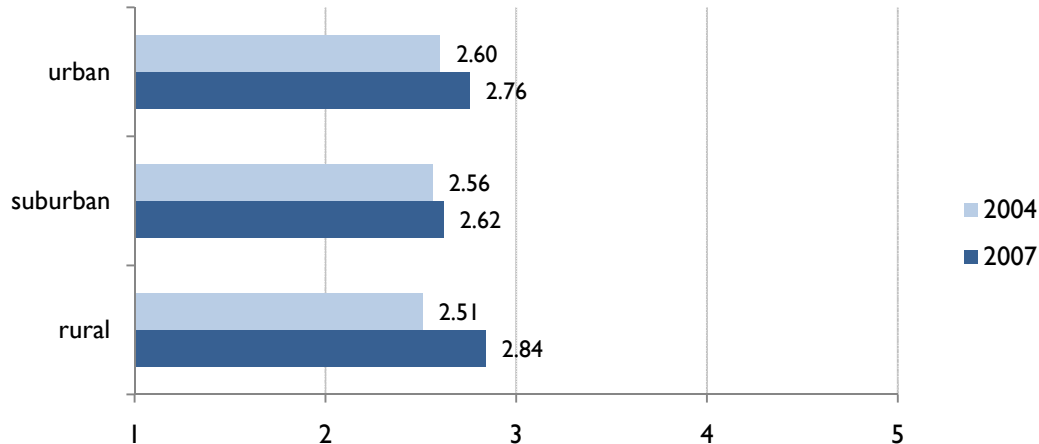
Individual changes in reported satisfaction among repeat respondents are also strongly associated with parallel changes in feelings of isolation and sense of fit with current congregation. Suburban and rural pastors were slightly more likely to decline in satisfaction than pastors of urban churches. Peer learning groups, mentoring relationships and continuing education events do not directly affect changes in satisfaction.

### **Feelings of isolation**

Existing research has observed that pastoral isolation is a major contributor to church separations and pastoral misconduct.<sup>11</sup> Most CRC pastors do not often feel isolated, but a significant minority do. When asked “how often do you feel isolated in ministry?” 1.5 percent of responding CRC pastors (8 individuals) said they “always” felt isolated in 2004, increasing to almost 3 percent (15 individuals) in 2007. Another twenty percent placed themselves in the next most isolated category (Figure 18, opposite). The proportion who “never” felt isolated fell slightly from 8.9 percent to 7.2 percent. For repeat respondents (Figure 19), increasing feelings of isolation were similar but a little more pronounced.

One likely correlate for isolation is geographic isolation. As Figure 17 shows, the differences in average isolation between urban, suburban and rural areas are small. However, the small increases in isolation between survey waves were concentrated among rural and urban pastors, while suburban pastors stayed about the same on average.

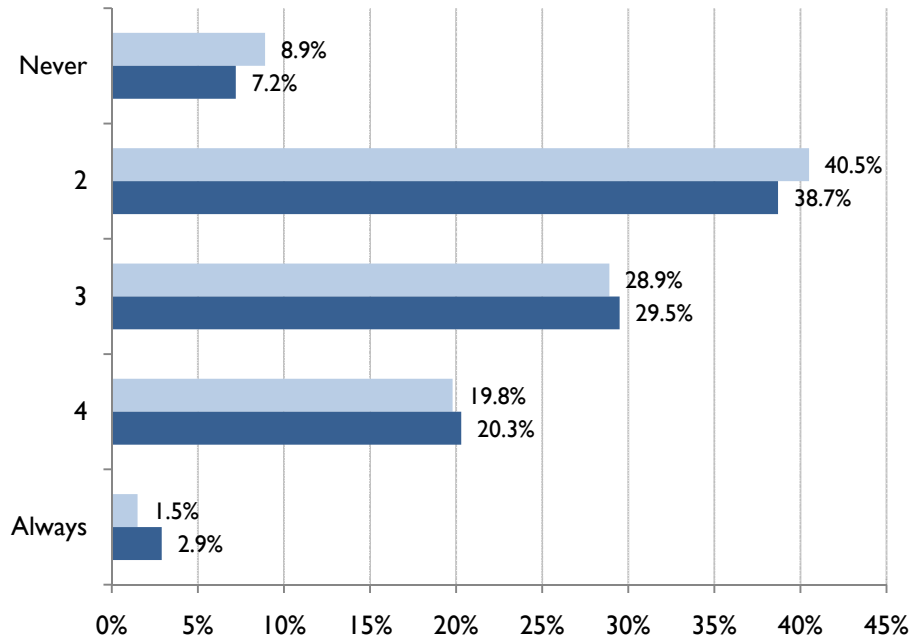
**Figure 17 - Isolation by location type (Pq32 by Pq06)**



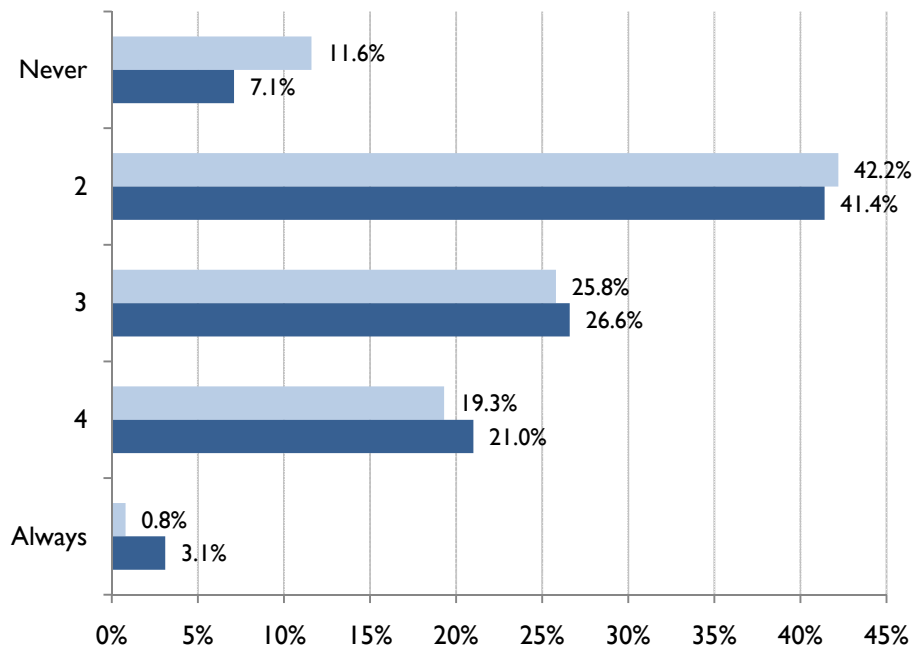
<sup>11</sup> Hoge, Dean R. and Jacqueline E. Wenger (2005), *Pastors in Transition: Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.



**Figure 18 - Perceived pastoral isolation (Pq32)**



**Figure 19 - Perceived pastoral isolation, repeat respondents (Pq32)**

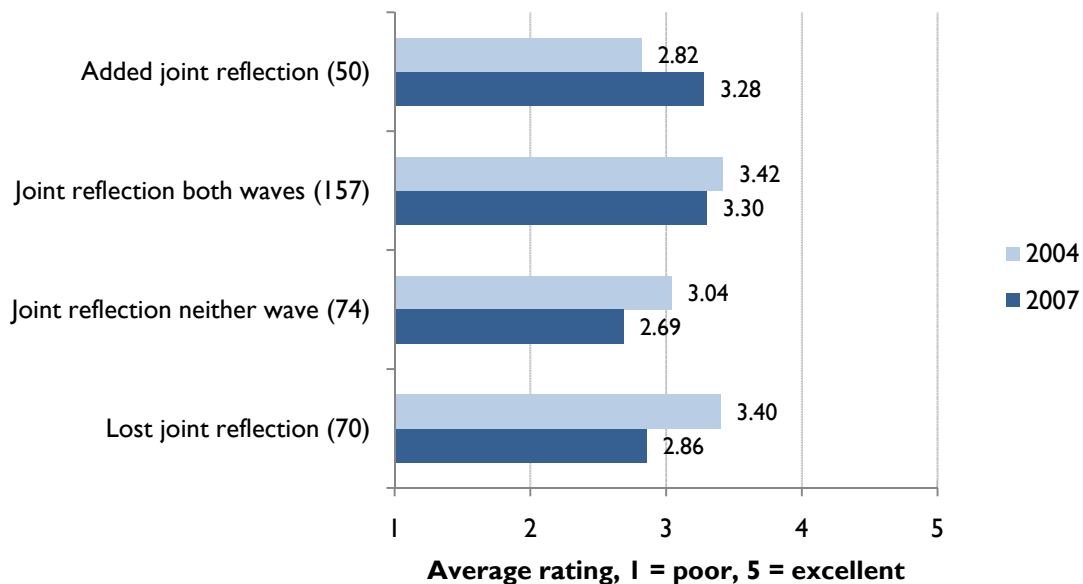


### **Perceived fit with congregation**

Pastors were asked, “How would you rate your level of fit with your congregation?” As shown in Figure 21 (opposite), most CRC pastors perceived excellent or nearly excellent fit with their congregations, both in 2004-2005 and in 2007. However, the proportion in the top two categories fell from 86.2 percent in 2004-2005 to 81.4 percent in 2007. There was a corresponding increase in those sensing less fit, concentrated on the middle category of the scale. The repeat respondents shown in Figure 22 declined even more, from 88.9 percent to 79.9 percent in the two best-fit categories.

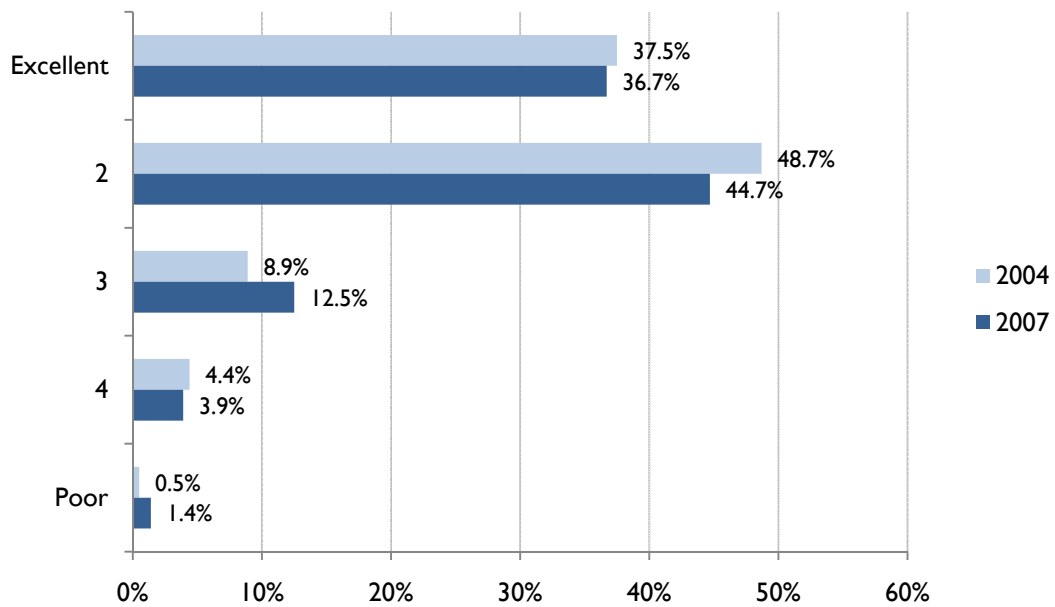
Reinforcing the pattern displayed in Figure 14, pastors who reported joint reflection with their councils in 2007 also reported a better sense of congregational fit, and repeat respondents with joint reflection did not decline, while those without it accounted for the entire aggregate decline. Viewed dynamically, the pattern is even stronger; as Figure 20 shows, those who added joint reflection with their councils between waves were the only group to improve their sense of fit, while the largest losses in sense of fit were among those who reported joint reflection in 2004 and then perceived they had lost it by 2007.

**Figure 20 - Congregational fit rating by joint reflection change (Pq35 by Pq34)**

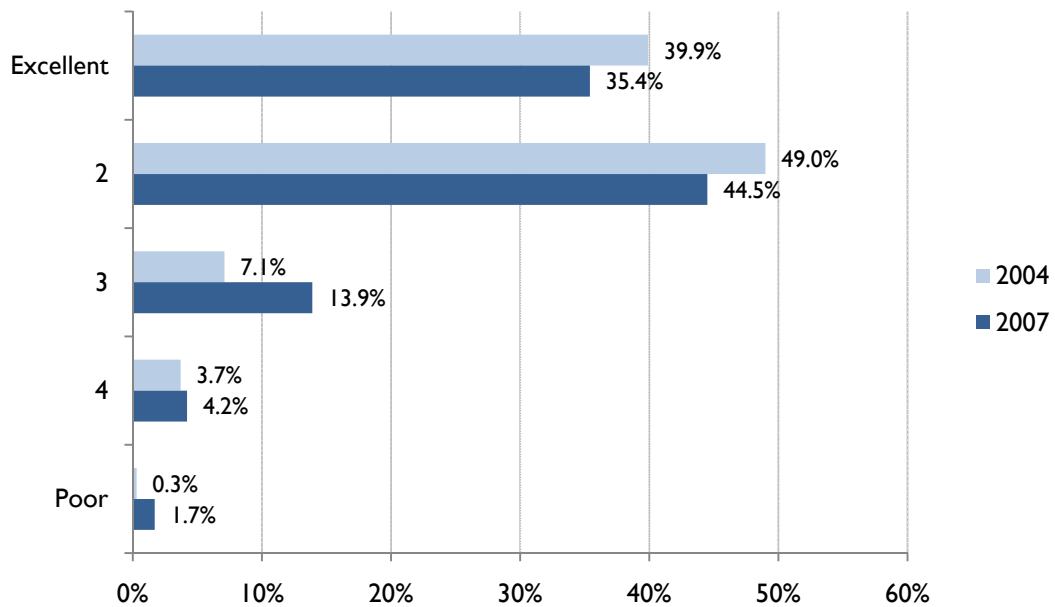


One might expect pastors with longer tenures in their current congregations to sense better fit, simply due to attrition; those with poor fit should be more likely to move on, while those with good fit stay. However, we do not find any evident association between length of tenure and sense of fit in the data. Older pastors were slightly more likely to rate their level of fit highly, but the association is very weak. Taken by individual age categories, 31- to 35-year-old pastors were the most likely to decline in their rating of congregational fit.

**Figure 21 - Perceived pastoral congregational fit (Pq35)**



**Figure 22 - Perceived pastoral congregational fit, repeat respondents (Pq35)**



### ***Career contentment (if you were to start over, would you still be a pastor?)***

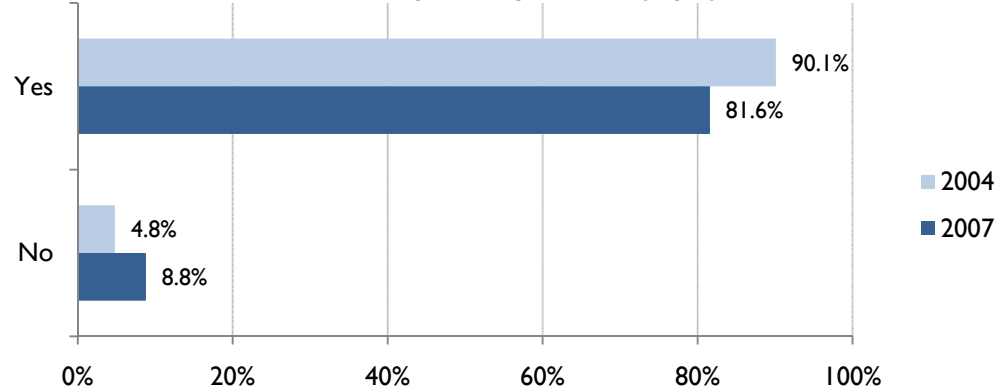
In 2007, just over eighty percent of repeat respondents said they would start careers as pastors again; of the remaining twenty percent, about half said “no” and the other half did not answer the question (see Table 2). Those who said “no” were less satisfied, felt more isolated, and rated their congregational fit as worse. The table shows a considerable decrease in those who would choose the pastorate as a career a second time.

**Table 2 - Pastors’ career contentment, repeat respondents (Pq36)**

Career Satisfaction		Yes	No	No answer	N
If you were to start your career over, would you be a pastor?	2004	90.1%	4.8%	5.1%	353
	2007	81.6%	8.8%	9.6%	353

Figure 23 illustrates the change graphically; the change would appear even more dramatic if we were to treat nonresponse as a “no”.

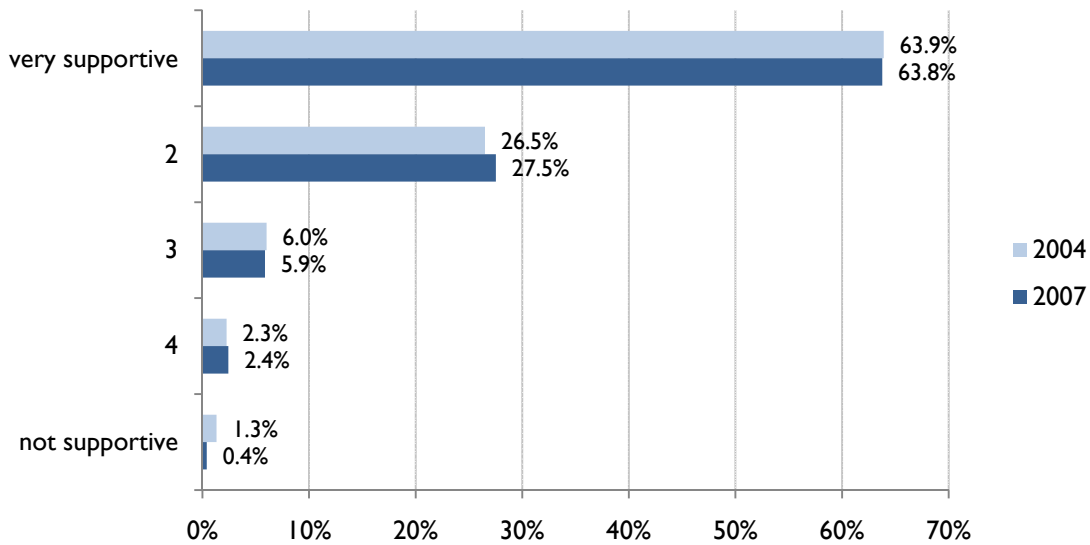
**Figure 23 – Pastors’ career contentment, repeat respondents (Pq36)**



### ***Spousal support***

Pastors were also asked, “How supportive is your spouse of your pastoral vocation?” Figure 24 shows the very steady distribution from wave to wave, with the vast majority in the top two categories. A small but tangible group of pastors, about ten percent, are working with little to no spousal support.

**Figure 24 - Spousal support for pastoral vocation (Pq31)**



### **Pastoral time use**

Pastors were requested to estimate, “In an average week, how much time do you use in each of the following areas?” followed by a list of common activities. Table 3 displays results for both survey waves. In terms of approximate time expenditure among the 2007 respondents, pastors reported that the top consumer of their time is sermon preparation, averaging 15.6 hours per week, followed by 8.9 hours of “time with spouse” and 6.8 hours of “time with children/family.” Out of sixteen options, bringing up the rear were “civic involvement” (1.3 hours per week) and “contact with other pastors or peers” (1.7 hours per week on average).

**Table 3 - Time expenditure summary, hours per average week (Pq33a-p)**

Activity	2004				2007			
	N	Median	Mean	%	N	Median	Mean	%
sermon preparation	527	15	15.75	20.5%	509	15	15.61	20.3%
time with spouse	488	8	9.73	11.8%	496	7	8.92	11.3%
time with children/family	426	5	6.85	7.2%	489	5	6.83	8.5%
administration	519	5	6.59	8.5%	509	5	6.30	8.2%
relaxation/exercise	504	5	6.35	7.9%	505	5	5.26	6.8%
visiting	526	5	5.89	7.7%	508	5	5.67	7.4%
meetings	520	5	5.47	7.0%	509	5	5.62	7.3%
general reading	515	3	4.12	5.2%	506	3	3.84	5.0%
Scripture reading	524	2	2.87	3.7%	506	2	3.10	4.0%
prayer	524	2	2.73	3.5%	507	2	2.91	3.8%
counseling	506	2	2.59	3.2%	506	2	2.49	3.2%
contact with cong. leaders	512	2	2.49	3.2%	509	2	2.29	3.0%
devotions/inspirational reading	511	2	2.41	3.1%	504	2	2.24	2.9%
contact with other pastors/peers	504	1	1.80	2.2%	507	1	1.71	2.2%
civic involvement	419	1	1.32	1.4%	495	1	1.25	1.6%
other responsibilities or interests	334	3	4.64	3.8%	487	2	3.78	4.7%

The 2007 responses differ only slightly from 2004 in the relative ranking of time expenditures; the top four activities stayed the same in both waves. Relaxation and exercise fell from fifth to seventh when ranked by mean hours per week. Mean time for most activities fell slightly, but the median value (the value for the middle pastor when sorted from low to high) fell only for time with spouse, from 8 hours to 7 hours per week, and for the catch all “other activities” category, from 3 hours to 2 hours per week. Average time with children and family did not change, but because many more respondents offered an answer (suggesting a higher proportion of pastors with children and families responding), the value rose substantially from 7.2 percent to 8.5 percent of total reported hours. Average time spent in relaxation or exercise fell, but the median value remained five hours per week.

### **A growing minority with a lack of balance?**

A key question for pastoral health is what proportion of pastors reported little or no time in “balancing” activities. In 2007, over 15 percent spent an hour or less a week on relaxation or exercise, up from just 4 percent in 2004. Over 27 percent reported an hour or less per week spent in prayer, unchanged from 2004. In 2004, just 2 percent reported an hour or less per average week alone with their spouses (unmarried pastors excluded); in 2007, it was over 8 percent.

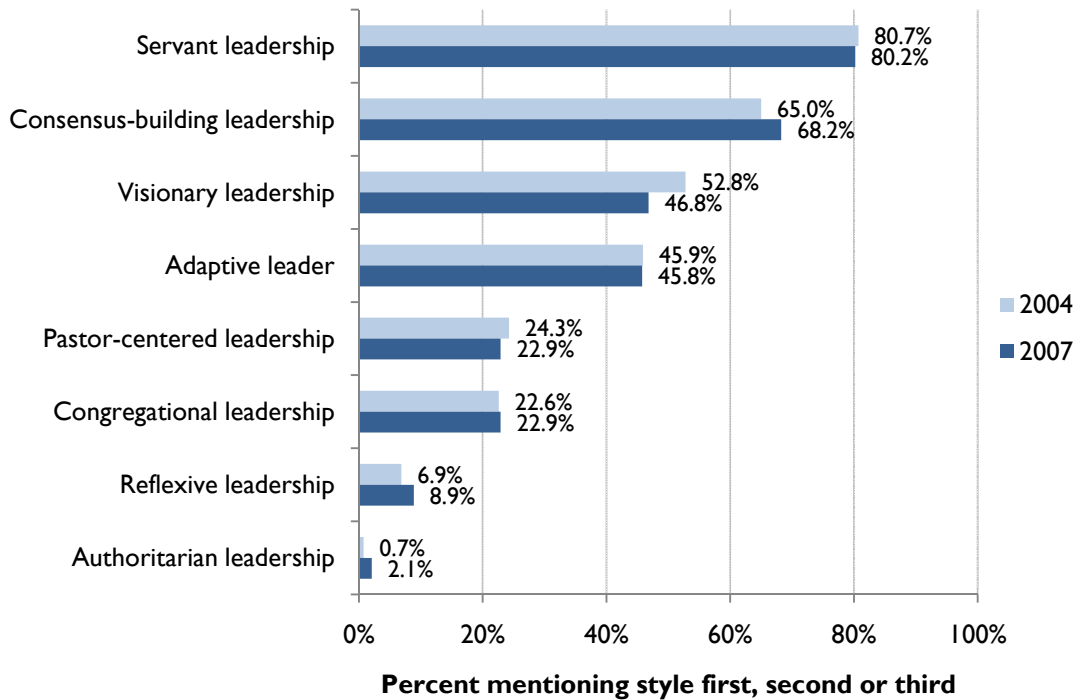
## VIII. PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

*An intelligent appreciation for the congregation as a social system that requires creative and patient leadership in the face of anxieties and conflicts.*

### **Leadership styles remain steady**

In both waves, the first option, “servant leadership” dominated pastors’ choices of leadership styles to describe themselves. Figure 25 reveals a high degree of stability from year to year. In 2007, over half of the 485 answering pastors chose this answer first, and just over eighty percent selected it for one of the three choices. The next most common first choice was “visionary leadership,” followed by “consensus-building leadership.” At the bottom of the list of choices were “reflexive leadership” and “authoritarian leadership” styles, which when combined only were chosen ten percent overall. “Visionary leadership” was mentioned six percentage points less frequently.

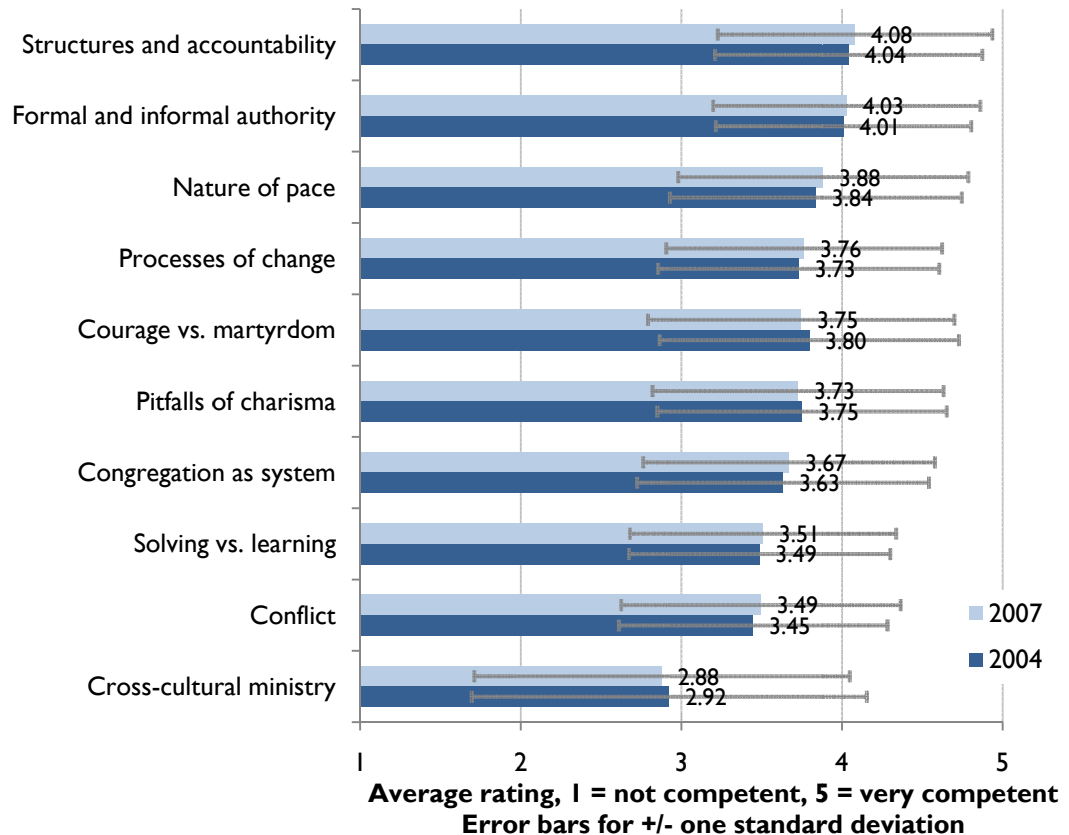
**Figure 25 - Pastoral leadership styles (Pq38)**



### Leadership competencies are extremely stable

Pastors reported having a better understanding of formal and informal authority, the importance of structure and accountability, and the “critical nature of pace in the change process.” They were less confident of their understanding regarding the dynamics of conflict, problem solving and cross-cultural ministry. The wide error bars for cross-cultural ministry in Figure 26 indicate that there were more divergent answers—more high and low values—than with the other items, and this was evident in both years.

**Figure 26 – Leadership competencies (Pq39)**



There is little difference in these ten competency ratings between the two waves of respondents, and repeat respondents differ even less (so the chart is omitted). In short, the CRC’s pastoral culture is extremely consistent in its aggregate interpretation of these survey items.

### Change in cross-cultural ministry competence eludes analysis

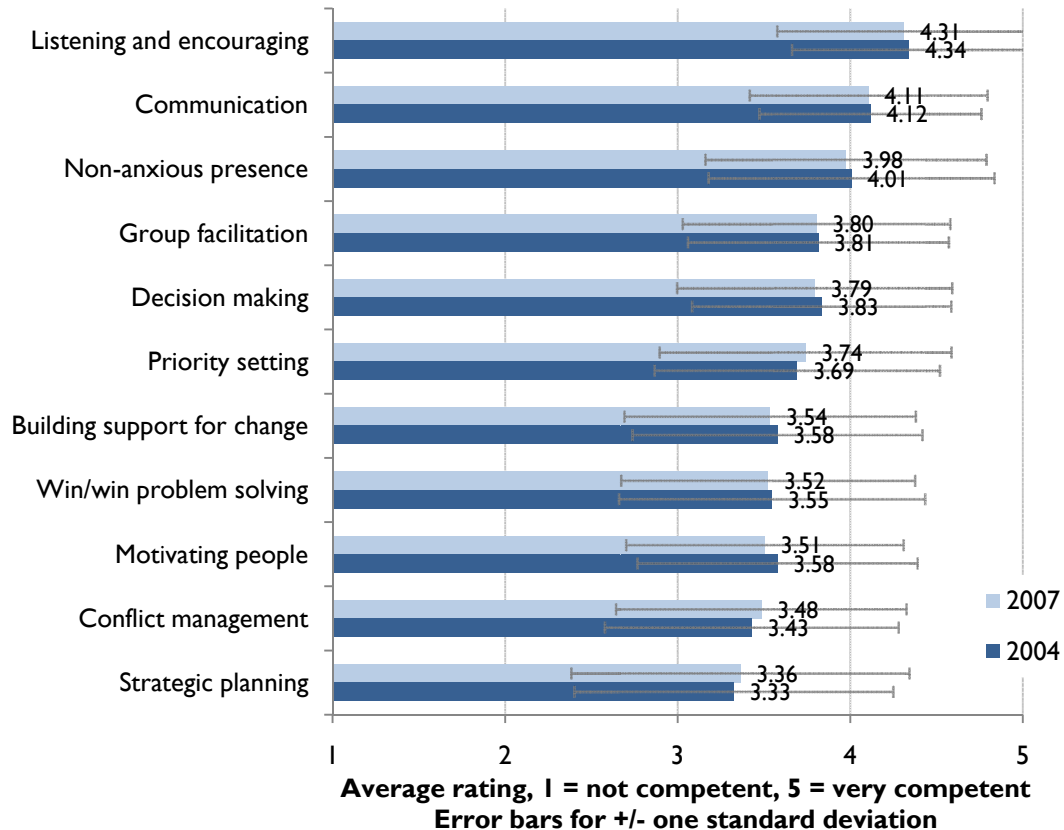
Cross-cultural ministry is an area of particular concern. About half of 321 repeat respondents changed their reported competency, about a quarter moving higher and a quarter moving lower. Explicit SPE activities offer little leverage in explaining change—continuing education participants, peer-learning group members, and mentors and mentees did not improve their competencies. Repeat-respondent urban pastors reported slightly *lower* competencies on average, suburban pastors held steady, and rural pastors reported slightly *higher* competency in cross-cultural issues.



### Leadership skills also hold stable

As in 2004-2005, pastors in 2007 reported the most perceived competence in listening and encouraging and in communication, but felt least competent in conflict management and strategic planning (see Figure 27). The values are again remarkably stable from wave to wave.

**Figure 27 - Leadership skills (Pq40)**



### Leadership competence scale

The two lists above of leadership competencies and skills cohere tightly as a reliable scale in each year.<sup>12</sup> This means that the relative competence of pastors as a group from item to item may be less important than the overall level of individual self-confidence expressed across all the items. A quick analysis shows that those repeat respondents whose perceived overall competence increased were also markedly more satisfied as pastors. While the survey data do not demonstrate the direct influence of specific SPE activities like peer groups, the data do strongly suggest that increasing pastoral confidence on these measures is a worthy goal.

<sup>12</sup> Cronbach's alpha = 0.89 in 2004, 0.90 in 2007 for all twenty-one items.

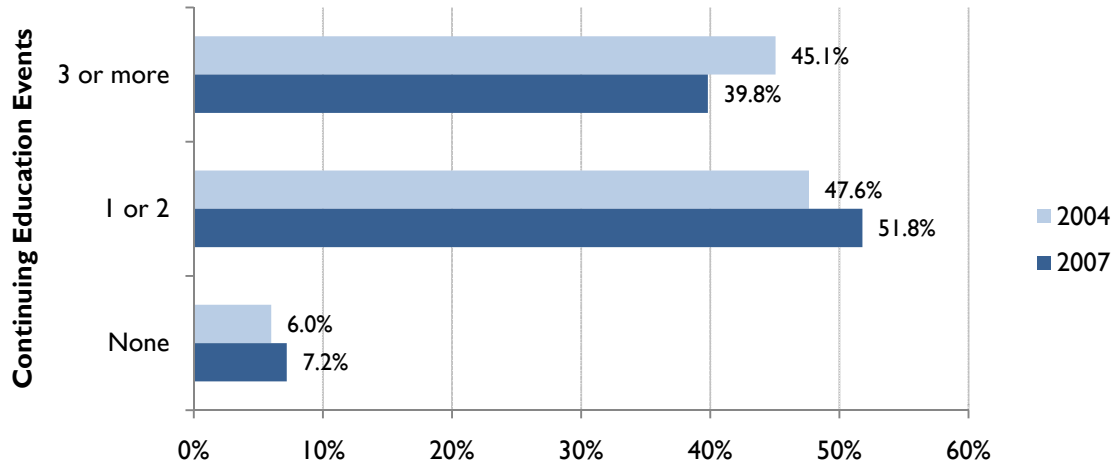
## IX. PASTORAL GROWTH ORIENTATION

*A commitment to life-long learning, including personal, spiritual, intellectual, and professional growth and development.*

### Continuing education

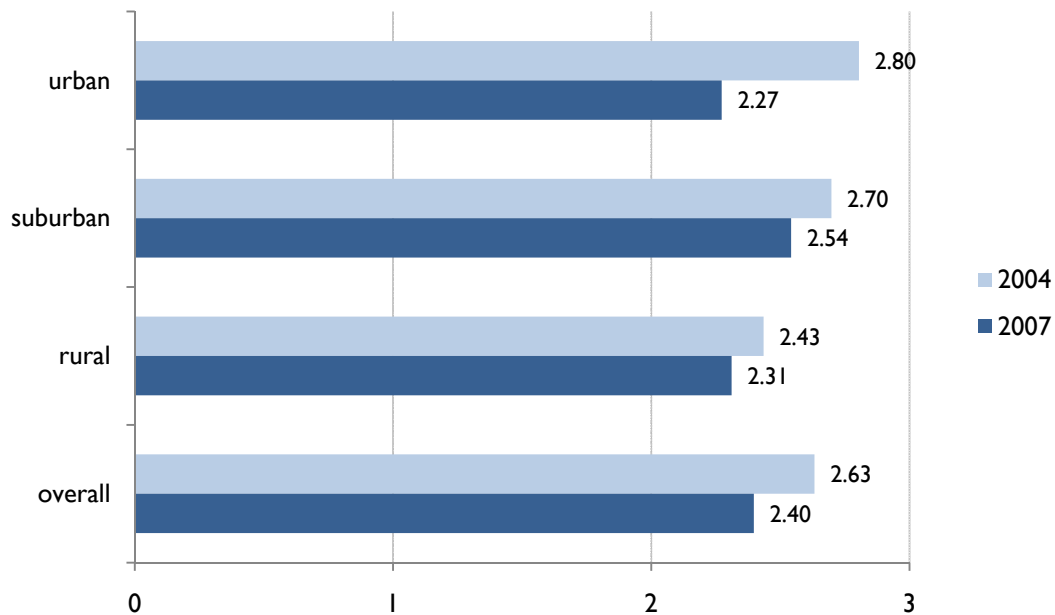
As shown in Figure 30, about 40 percent of pastors reported attending three or more events in the last year, five percent fewer than in 2004-2005. Taken together with about 52 percent who attended 1 to 2 events, we find that over ninety percent reported at least one event in 2007, about the same as in 2004-2005.

**Figure 28 – Pastor's report of continuing education events (Pq42)**



The average number of continuing education events fell slightly from 2.6 in 2004 to 2.4 in 2007. Urban pastors' events fell the most, from 2.8 to 2.3; suburban fell from 2.7 to 2.5; while rural pastors' events only fell from 2.4 to 2.3.

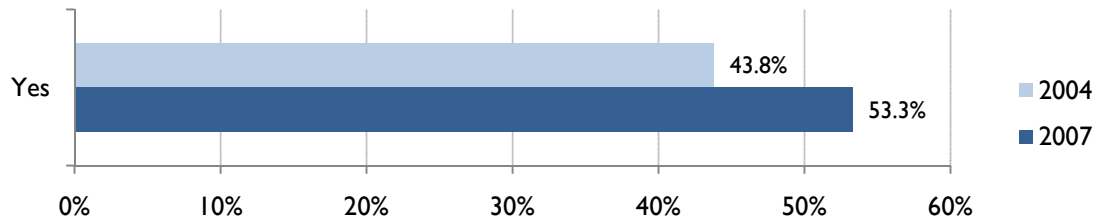
**Figure 29 - Continuing education events by location (Pq42 by Pq06)**



### Peer learning groups

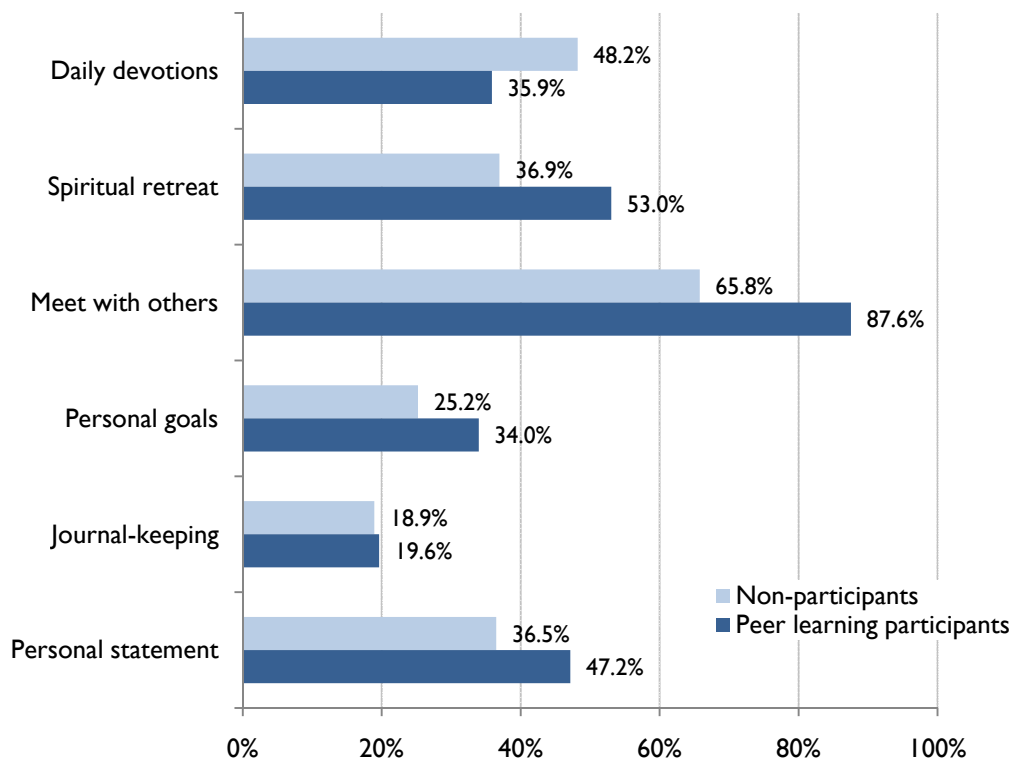
SPE's impact is visible in the increase in peer learning group participation shown in Figure 30. Repeat respondents increased similarly, from 47 percent "yes" to 54 percent "yes."

**Figure 30 – Pastors' reports of peer learning group participation (Pq43)**



Peer learning groups are highly lauded by participants' comments, but it is difficult to identify many strong associations between peer group participation and particular outcomes. Peer learning group participants are not more satisfied or less isolated, but they do report higher rates of participation in some spiritual formation activities. As shown in Figure 31, peer learning participants are, logically, more likely to meet with others to deepen their relationship with God and more likely to take spiritual retreats. They are also more likely to set personal goals and keep personal vision statements. But they are substantially less likely to say they pray and meditate daily.

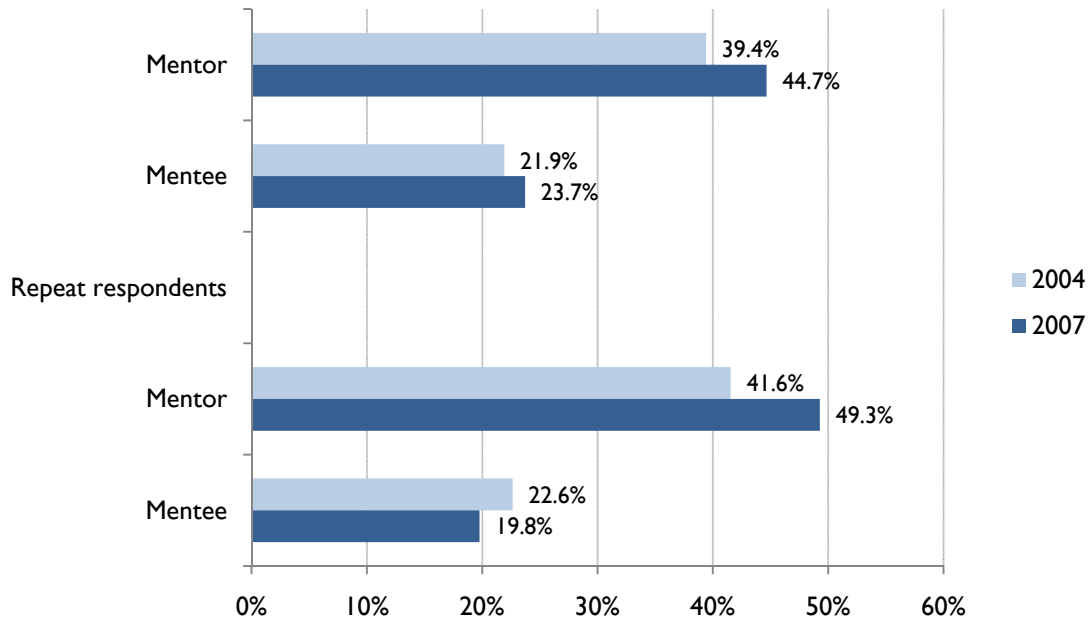
**Figure 31 - Peer learning and spiritual formation, 2007 (Pq17-22 by Pq43)**



### ***Mentoring relationships***

SPE's influence may be apparent in the increase in pastors reporting that they are mentors, almost five percent for all respondents and almost eight percent for repeat respondents. Given that excellence is partly a product of being mentored, the low proportion of pastors who say they are mentees is disappointing. Repeat respondents actually declined in their receipt of mentoring (though this is partly a function of aging, as younger pastors were far more likely to be mentees).

**Figure 32 – Pastors' reports of mentoring relationships (Pq44)**



## X. COUNCIL FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

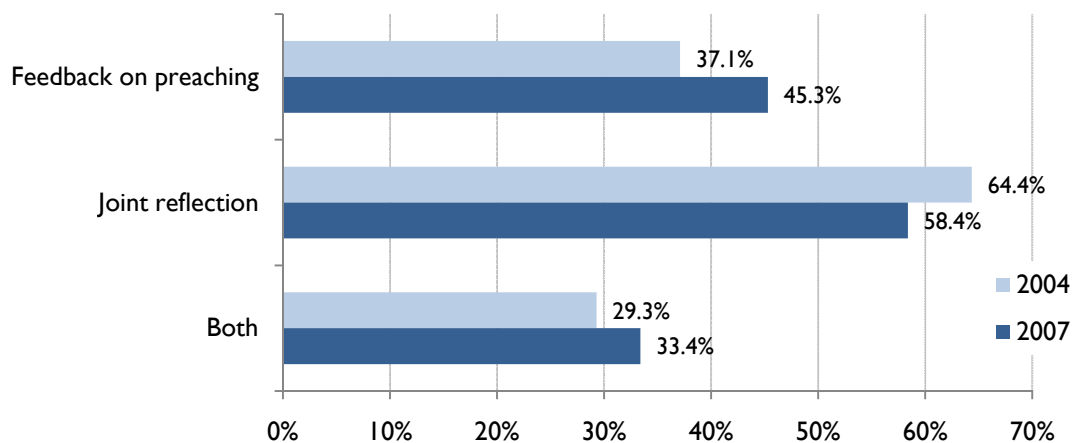
*Council feedback on spiritual formation, preaching, pastoral role and function, and training/learning opportunities.*

The study's findings about provision of support for pastors remain mixed. Substantial proportions of pastors and clerks report various kinds of support, but a minority of responding churches reported that reinforcing forms of support are in place.

### **Feedback on preaching and joint reflection on the pastoral role**

Two key areas of such support are in systematic feedback on preaching and in joint reflection about the pastor's role. Figure 33 shows the changes in these two practices between waves.

**Figure 33 – Pastors' reports of council feedback and joint reflection (Pq25 and Pq34)**

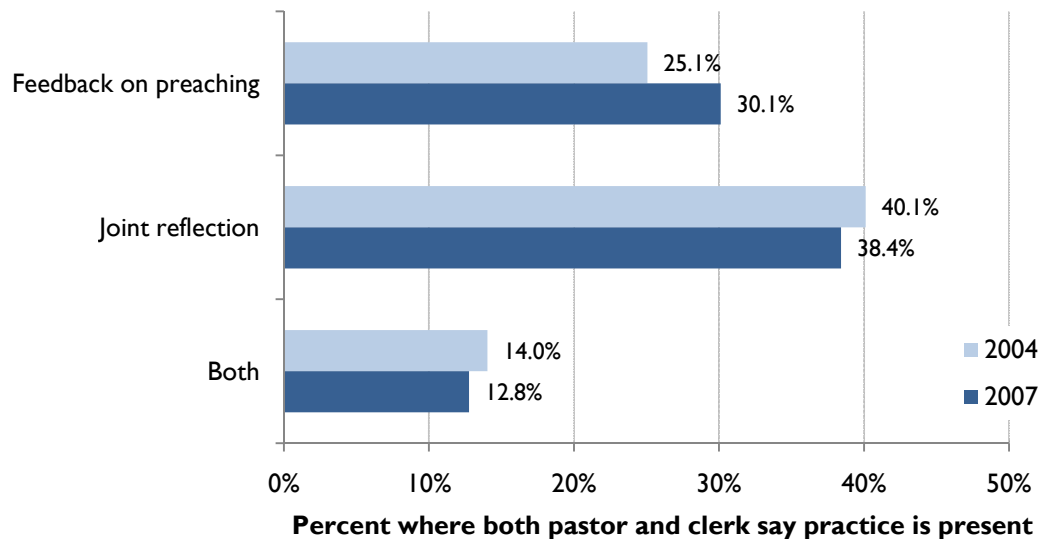


In 2007, 45 percent of pastors said they receive systematic feedback on preaching, up from 37 percent in 2004. Almost three-fifths of responding pastors say their councils assist them by reflecting on the pastor's role together, but this declined from 64 percent in 2004-2005. One in three says he or she has the benefit of both feedback and joint reflection, up slightly from three in ten.

### **Pastor and clerk agreement**

As shown in Figure 34, the proportion of pastors with reinforcing support practices shrinks further when pastor and clerk responses from the same church are paired to verify the presence of each practice. Of 376 churches with both pastor and clerk responses in 2007, thirty percent agreed from both sources that systematic preaching feedback is in place (up from 25 percent in 2004-2005). Joint reflection was confirmed in 38 percent of churches, down slightly from 2005. Both forms were confirmed present in just one-eighth of churches.

**Figure 34 – Pastor-clerk agreement on feedback and reflection (Pq25, Cq09, Pq34, Cq07)**



Substantial numbers of pastors who said they did *not* receive these supports had clerks who reported that they *do*, and *vice versa* (pastors who said they *do* receive support had clerks who reported that the pastors did *not*). The strength of the correlation between pastor and clerk responses on these two items has not improved between waves, a possible indication of continuing low quality of communication around issues of council support for pastors.

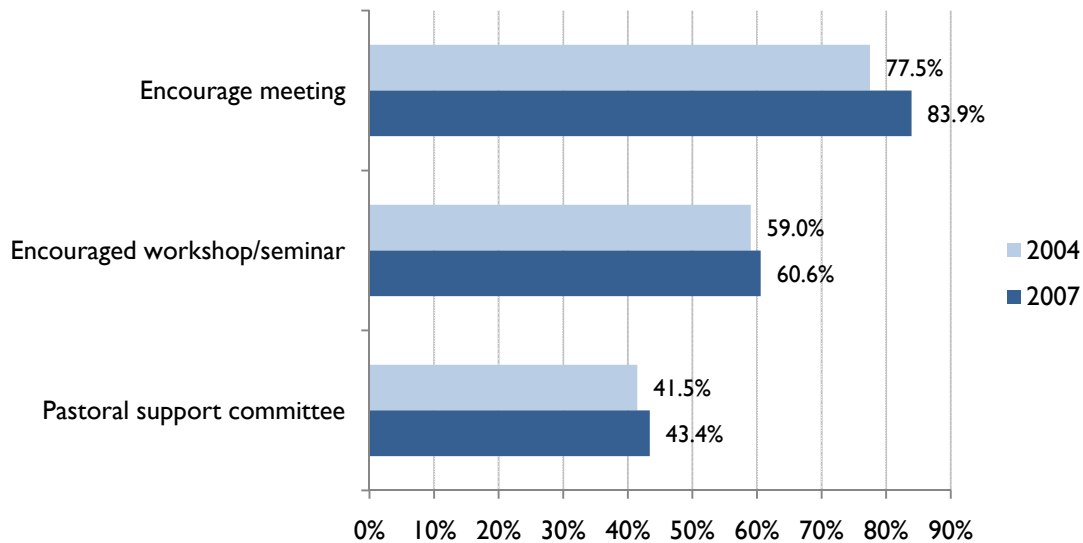
Similar patterns are found with clerks' awareness of their pastors' participation in peer learning groups and continuing education events. Clerks' responses are weakly correlated with pastors' responses, and substantial proportions of clerks respond "don't know".

### **Other forms of council encouragement and support**

Figure 35 shows three other forms of encouragement, displaying the number of “yes” responses to these questions:

- “Does the council encourage your pastor to meet regularly with one or more other Christians for the purpose of deepening his/her relationship with God?”
- “Has the council encouraged your pastor to participate in a workshop/seminar on pastoral preaching and teaching in the last twelve months?”
- “Does your church have a pastor/church committee through which support of the pastor is demonstrated?”

**Figure 35 - Clerks' reports of forms of pastoral encouragement (Cq06, Cq10, Cq11)**



Clerks were most likely to report encouraging their pastors to meet with other Christians, and this proportion increased from 77.5 percent to 83.9 percent. The high rate of encouragement corresponds to the high rate of pastors' participation in this activity shown earlier in Figure 9 on page 16.

Encouragement to participate in a preaching and teaching workshop remained steady at about 60 percent of clerks' responses.

Clerks reported a support committee at 43.4 percent of responding congregations in 2007, up slightly from 41.5 percent in 2004-2005; however, repeat-respondent clerks (not shown) actually declined, from 48.0 percent to 42.4 percent.

### **Council support for pastoral continuing education**

The proportion of congregations offering continuing education budgets rose from 68 percent in 2004-2005 to 73 percent in 2007. Based on information from 300 churches with budgets in 2007, the minimum budget line is \$100, the maximum is \$10,000, the most common value is \$1,000, and the average is \$1,385, up from \$1,345 in 2004-2005 (but repeat respondent clerks reported a small decline in average budget, from \$1,518 to \$1,469). The combined total of all reported budgets from these 300 churches is \$415,577, virtually unchanged from the previous wave.

## **XI. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Sustaining Pastoral Excellence project in the Christian Reformed Church receives a mixed review from the survey data. Pastors who participate in the project's activities give it high marks, and their comments about the value of the project and specific activities are routinely positive. More pastors are reporting participation in peer learning groups and mentoring. Peer learning groups are associated with greater participation in personal goal-setting and spiritual retreat-taking. However, there is relatively scarce evidence in this data that these activities are directly influencing the broad range of measurable outcomes selected as marks of good ministry.

Meanwhile, several of the survey's important broad measures have declined since 2004-2005. It is unclear whether this reflects a failure of the SPE project or the sheer force of wider denominational and societal trends that swamp beneficial effects of SPE.

This tension suggests two recommendations: first, pursue a more personal connection with non-participants to overcome prejudicial judgments of the SPE project's basic nature and of the culture-change agenda it represents; second, tie some evaluation benchmarks more directly to pastors' and clerks' evaluations of these direct personal experiences.

### ***Pursue more personal communication and experience***

Evaluations of the SPE program appear to be highly conditioned by direct exposure. Most pastors and clerks who explicitly confirm direct knowledge of SPE are overwhelmingly positive. However, many pastors and clerks of council are still looking in on SPE from the outside, and their judgments of the project seem to be shaped as much by the inevitably reductionist nature of our multiple-choice survey questions as by direct experience.

A critique of SPE implicit in some non-participants' comments is that it is an external, denominational demand that fosters the very kind of burnout and distraction that the project is intended to combat. The participants' judgments imply that nonparticipants could not maintain that opinion after direct involvement.

One possible inference is that reliance on impersonal mass communications, though cost-effective, may allow a significant minority of pastors and councils to stereotype SPE as a bureaucratic imposition rather than an ally in the war on worldliness and weariness. It seems apparent from the ratings and comments of participants that this stereotype is incomplete and probably inaccurate. More direct, personal communication of the "culture change" mission through long-term relationships with prior participants might be more effective. Pastoral reluctance to join formal peer-learning groups might have to be overcome through prior engagement in more informal settings. Councils may need more visits from SPE representatives before they will be receptive to mailings and Internet communication.

### ***Tie some evaluations of SPE to more direct, recent experiences of the project***

The present multi-year panel survey strategy asks pastors and clerks for long, retrospective views of personal practices, CRC denominational culture and SPE's activities. While the patterns in these recollections are fairly stable and informative, they do not offer much capacity to detect cause-and-effect relationships between particular strategies and outcomes. Of course, the survey is not the only evaluation method in place, but it might be desirable to merge some survey research methods with the less statistical procedures already in place.

Here are some examples of possible evaluation strategies:

- Collect monthly, short evaluation reports from peer group participants.
- Select a group of thirty to sixty pastors and follow them for a year through very short monthly questionnaires, evaluations by SPE staff, and record-keeping on participation in specific SPE activities.



- Send follow-up evaluation requests to pastors who order literature, visit the web site or attend in-person or remote-communication events.

While these activities may be taking place already, they are not presently tracked in a way that would facilitate their analysis in concert with the wider, infrequently-collected survey data. Such integrated evaluation should help SPE better achieve its objectives.



## Appendix A: Codebook

### Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Program Evaluation 2004-2007

Center for Social Research (study number 499)

1<sup>st</sup> wave: Fall 2004 – Winter 2005

2<sup>nd</sup> wave: Spring – Summer 2007

**Pastors' responses 2004 (N = 550) & 2007 (N = 512):**

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq01	How would you describe yourself [in terms of ethnicity]?				
	1=North American Indian/Aboriginal	4	0.7	2	0.4
	2=Asian/Asian American	29	5.3	19	3.7
	3=Black/African American	7	1.3	4	0.8
	4=Hispanic/Latino	9	1.6	6	1.2
	5=Native Hawaiian/ other Pacific Islander	1	0.2	1	0.2
	6=White/Caucasian/Anglo	493	89.6	473	92.4
	7=Other	7	1.3	7	1.4
Pq02	Are you male or female?				
	1=Male	544	99.3	500	99.0
	2=Female	4	0.7	5	1.0
Pq03	How old are you?				
	1=20-25	1	0.2	0	0
	2=26-30	14	2.6	20	3.9
	3=31-35	41	7.5	41	8.0
	4=36-40	52	9.5	53	10.4
	5=41-45	88	16.0	67	13.1
	6=46-50	109	19.8	103	20.1
	7=51-55	104	18.9	94	18.4
	8=56-60	90	16.4	80	15.6
	9=61-65	45	8.2	52	10.2
	10=66 or more	6	1.1	2	0.4
Pq04	Is your present church in the US or Canada?				
	1=Canada	146	26.6	149	29.1
	2=US	404	73.5	363	70.9

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq05	Of which classis is your church a member?				
	3=Alberta North	18	3.3	18	3.5
	6=Alberta South/Saskatchewan	10	1.9	15	2.9
	7=Arizona	6	1.1	4	0.8
	8=Atlantic Northeast	8	1.5	6	1.2
	9=B.C. North-West	12	2.2	10	2.0
	10=B.C. South-East	15	2.8	12	2.4
	12=Northern Michigan	10	1.9	8	1.6
	15=California South	10	1.9	9	1.8
	18=Central California	17	3.2	14	2.8
	21=Chatham	17	3.2	19	3.7
	24=Northern Illinois	9	1.7	10	2.0
	27=Chicago South	11	2.0	7	1.4
	28=Columbia	8	1.5	8	1.6
	30=Eastern Canada	15	2.8	17	3.3
	32=Southeast U.S.	6	1.1	9	1.8
	33=Grand Rapids East	12	2.2	9	1.8
	36=Grand Rapids South	12	2.2	13	2.6
	39=Grand Rapids North	13	2.4	11	2.2
	42=Grandville	13	2.4	11	2.2
	43=Greater Los Angeles	18	3.3	15	2.9
	44=Georgetown	14	2.6	14	2.8
	45=Hackensack	11	2.0	9	1.8
	48=Hamilton	10	1.9	9	1.8
	51=Holland	23	4.3	18	3.5
	54=Hudson	6	1.1	6	1.2
	55=Huron	15	2.8	12	2.4
	56=Illiana	10	1.9	11	2.2
	57=Kalamazoo	14	2.6	12	2.4
	60=Lake Erie	9	1.7	12	2.4
	63=Lake Superior	9	1.7	16	3.1
	66=Minnkota	6	1.1	7	1.4
	69=Muskegon	13	2.4	10	2.0
	71=Niagara	8	1.5	11	2.2
	72=Northcentral Iowa	13	2.4	10	2.0
	75=Heartland	10	1.9	12	2.4
	76=Pacific Hanmi	2	0.4	3	0.6
	78=Pacific Northwest	18	3.3	16	3.1
	81=Pella	15	2.8	11	2.2
	82=Quinte	12	2.2	8	1.6
	83=Red Mesa	6	1.1	5	1.0
	84=Rocky Mountain	20	3.7	15	2.9
	87=lakota	13	2.4	14	2.8
	89=Thornapple Valley	8	1.5	7	1.4
	90=Toronto	8	1.5	14	2.8
	93=Wisconsin	12	2.2	10	2.0
	95=Yellowstone	4	0.7	2	0.4
	96=Zeeland	11	2.0	10	2.0
	97=CANE	0	0	1	0.2

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq06	Is your ministry located in an area that is [urban, suburban, rural]?				
	1=Urban	143	27.1	134	27.1
	2=Suburban	237	44.9	208	42.1
	3=Rural	148	28.0	152	30.8
Pq07	What is the size of your total membership?				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	1600		1900	
	Mean	302.55		308.19	
	Standard Deviation	246.05		250.15	
Pq08	How many years have you been in your current church?				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	39		50	
	Mean	6.51		6.92	
	Standard Deviation	5.59		6.80	
Pq09	Are you the [sole pastor, senior pastor, or a pastor on staff]?				
	1=Sole pastor	373	70.5	336	68.2
	2=Senior pastor with other pastors on staff	146	27.6	148	30.0
	3=A pastor on staff (not the senior pastor)	10	1.9	9	1.8
Pq10	How many years have you been in pastoral ministry?				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	46		45	
	Mean	17.83		17.22	
	Standard Deviation	10.81		10.99	
Pq11	Have your years of ministry been continuous?				
	1=Yes	490	92.6	468	94.7
	2=No	39	7.4	26	5.3
Pq12	How many congregations have you served (including your present charge)?				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	260		1000	
	Mean	3.86		4.88	
	Standard Deviation	13.74		44.32	

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq13	Has your congregation had a pastoral separation in the past three years?				
	1=No	499	94.3	473	95.9
	2=Yes, under Article 16 (leave of absence)	4	0.8	4	0.8
	3=Yes, under Article 17 (release from ministry in the congregation)	26	4.9	16	3.3
Pq14	What route did you follow to ministry in the CRCNA?				
	1=Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS)	418	81.2	396	89.0
	2=Other seminary	42	8.2	30	6.7
	3=Classis/special gifts – Article 7	13	2.5	8	1.8
	4=Other denomination – Article 8	16	3.1	8	1.8
	5=Ordained evangelist (2004 only)	22	4.3	-	-
	5=Ministry associate (2007 only)	-	-	3	0.7
	6=Other	4	0.8	0	0
Pq14a	[Which] Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS) degree [did you receive?]				
	1=M. Div.	298	90.3	317	90.6
	2=SPMC	32	9.7	33	9.4

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq14b	Other seminary: Which one?				
	3=Reformed Bible College	1	2.5	1	3.3
	4=R.T.S. Jackson, MS	3	7.5	2	6.7
	5=Western Theological Seminary	4	10.0	6	20.0
	6=Trinity Evangelical Divinity School	3	7.5	1	3.3
	8=Korean Presbyterian Seminary	1	2.5	0	0.0
	9=Fuller	7	17.5	6	20.0
	10=Gordon-Conwell	2	5.0	0	0.0
	11=Westminster – PA	5	12.5	2	6.7
	14=Reformed Theological Seminary	0	0.0	1	3.3
	15=Yale Divinity School	1	2.5	0	0.0
	16=Covenant	3	7.5	0	0.0
	17=Austin Presbyterian Theological	1	2.5	0	0.0
	18=Westminster – California	2	5.0	3	10.0
	19=Prairie Bible Institute	1	2.5	0	0.0
	20=University of Pretoria (South Africa)	1	2.5	1	3.3
	21=Mid-America Reformed Seminary	1	2.5	1	3.3
	22=Regent College	1	2.5	0	0.0
	23=China Evangelical Seminary	1	2.5	0	0.0
	24=Seminario Evangelico de Lima, Peru	1	2.5	0	0.0
	25=Asian Theological Seminary	1	2.5	0	0.0
	26=Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary	-	-	1	3.3
	27=Korean General Assembly Theological Seminary	-	-	1	3.3
	29=Tyndale (Toronto)	-	-	1	3.3
	30=Bethel Seminary (St. Paul)	-	-	1	3.3
	31=China Bible Seminary	-	-	1	3.3
	32=Trinity Western Seminary	-	-	1	3.3
Pq15	Degrees or diplomas you have earned:				
	1=Associates	26	5.0	24	4.7
	2=Bachelors	422	80.4	418	81.6
	3=M.A. or M.S.	65	12.4	47	9.2
	4=Ph.D.	11	2.1	6	1.2
	5=Legal degree	4	0.8	3	0.6
	6=Medical degree	0	0	2	0.4
	7=M.Div.	451	85.9	418	81.6
	8=M.T.S.	3	0.6	6	1.2
	9=Th.M.	47	9.0	39	7.6
	10=Th.D.	4	0.8	3	0.6
	11=D.Min.	-	-	53	39.3
	12=Other (specify)	97	18.5	38	7.68

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq16	At what age were you ordained?				
	Minimum	21		23	
	Maximum	59		59	
	Mean	30.96		30.96	
	Standard Deviation	6.48		6.22	
Pq17	How often do you have personal prayer and meditation time (including Bible reading)?				
	1=Daily	257	48.4	203	41.3
	2=Five or six times a week	153	28.8	165	33.6
	3=Three or four times a week	97	18.3	88	17.9
	4=Fewer than three times a week	24	4.5	35	7.1
Pq18	Have you gone on a spiritual retreat in the last twelve months?				
	1=Yes	231	43.3	225	45.9
	2=No	302	56.7	265	54.1
Pq19	Do you regularly meet with one or more other Christians for the purpose of deepening your relationship with God?				
	1=Yes	409	76.6	380	77.4
	2=No	125	23.4	111	22.6
Pq20	Do you establish annual, personal goals for spiritual growth and a way to sustain these goals?				
	1=Yes	180	33.8	148	30.1
	2=No	353	66.2	343	69.9
Pq21	Do you regularly keep a journal on your prayer life and your walk with God?				
	1=Yes	107	20.0	94	19.1
	2=No	427	80.0	397	80.9
Pq22	Have you developed a personal life mandate or statement of personal vision for ministry?				
	1=Yes	229	43.1	207	42.3
	2=No	303	57.0	282	57.7
Pq22a	How often do you reference [your personal life mandate or vision statement]?				
	1=Monthly	69	30.5	53	25.1
	2=Quarterly	66	29.2	50	23.7
	3=Annually	59	26.1	73	34.6
	4=Less than annually	32	14.2	35	16.6



Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq23	Does your congregation have vision and mission statements?				
	1=Yes	425	81.4	408	84.3
	2=No	97	18.6	76	15.7
Pq23a	How often does your preaching refer to these [vision and mission] statements?				
	1=Monthly	122	30.3	97	25.2
	2=Quarterly	115	28.5	124	32.2
	3=Semi-annually	82	20.4	66	17.1
	4=Annually	84	20.8	98	25.5
Pq23b	How frequently does your congregational leadership review your church's vision and mission statements?				
	1=Bi-annually	87	20.5	72	17.5
	2=Annually	211	49.7	168	40.9
	3=Every 5 years or more	127	29.9	171	41.6
Pq24	Indicate how well your congregation reflects the following core elements of CRC's mission statement using a scale of 1=very well to 5=poorly.				
Pq24a	We gather to praise God, listen to Him and respond.				
	1=Very well	323	61.2	307	63.0
	2	141	26.7	134	27.5
	3	30	5.7	23	4.7
	4	24	4.6	16	3.3
	5=Poorly	10	1.9	7	1.4
Pq24b	We nurture each other in faith and obedience to Christ.				
	1=Very well	105	19.8	93	19.1
	2	237	44.7	216	44.3
	3	150	28.3	132	27.1
	4	36	6.8	45	9.2
	5=Poorly	2	0.4	2	0.4
Pq24c	We love and care for one another as God's people.				
	1=Very well	169	31.9	160	32.8
	2	246	46.4	229	46.9
	3	82	15.5	74	15.2
	4	25	4.7	21	4.3
	5=Poorly	8	1.5	4	0.8

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq24d	We commit ourselves to serve and to tell others about Jesus.				
	1=Very well	52	9.8	62	12.8
	2	149	28.1	125	25.7
	3	186	35.1	183	37.7
	4	123	23.2	97	20.0
	5=Poorly	20	3.8	19	3.9
Pq24e	We pursue God's justice and peace in every area of life.				
	1=Very well	29	5.5	31	6.4
	2	100	18.9	79	16.3
	3	201	37.9	187	38.5
	4	151	28.5	134	27.6
	5=Poorly	49	9.3	55	11.3
Pq25	Do you obtain systematic feedback on your preaching?				
	1=Yes	197	37.1	222	45.3
	2=No	334	62.9	268	54.7
Pq26	Have you participated in a workshop/seminar or done reading on pastoral preaching/teaching in the last 12 months?				
	1=Yes	403	73.7	376	74.0
	2=No	144	26.3	132	26.0
Pq27	How would you evaluate your understanding of the Reformed Christian faith?				
	1=Thorough	272	49.6	308	60.6
	2	244	44.5	180	35.4
	3	21	3.8	19	3.7
	4	9	1.6	1	0.2
	5=Weak	2	0.4	0	0
Pq28	What has most helped you come to this understanding [of the Reformed Christian faith]? Please rate each of the following using a scale of 1=most important to 7=least important.				
Pq28a	Theological reading				
	1=Most important	180	33.8	169	34.7
	2	149	28.0	146	30.0
	3	108	20.3	107	22.0
	4	51	9.6	34	7.0
	5	27	5.1	19	3.9
	6	12	2.3	9	1.9
	7=Least important	6	1.1	3	0.6

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq28b	Peers/mentors				
	1=Most important	62	11.7	61	12.7
	2	146	27.6	122	25.4
	3	123	23.3	115	24.0
	4	88	16.6	86	17.9
	5	67	12.7	57	11.9
	6	38	7.2	30	6.3
	7=Least important	5	1.0	9	1.9
Pq28c	Creeds and confessions				
	1=Most important	116	21.9	117	24.2
	2	163	30.8	137	28.4
	3	128	24.2	101	20.9
	4	73	13.8	72	14.9
	5	34	6.4	42	8.7
	6	11	2.1	10	2.1
	7=Least important	4	0.8	4	0.8
Pq28d	College/seminary training				
	1=Most important	287	54.7	257	52.6
	2	116	22.1	122	25.0
	3	68	13.0	62	12.7
	4	32	6.1	19	3.9
	5	10	1.9	14	2.9
	6	8	1.5	8	1.6
	7=Least important	4	0.8	7	1.4
Pq28e	Prayer/meditation				
	1=Most important	54	10.3	39	8.3
	2	83	15.8	66	14.0
	3	97	18.5	87	18.5
	4	77	14.7	99	21.1
	5	108	20.6	74	15.7
	6	87	16.6	24	5.1
	7=Least important	18	3.4		
Pq28f	Synodical study reports				
	1=Most important	4	0.8	5	1.1
	2	39	7.5	26	5.5
	3	65	12.5	66	14.0
	4	75	14.4	77	16.4
	5	93	17.8	71	15.1
	6	158	30.3	159	33.8
	7=Least important	88	16.9	67	14.2

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq28g	Other (please specify)				
	1=Most important	40	30.8	36	24.5
	2	18	13.9	15	10.2
	3	7	5.4	10	6.8
	4	2	1.5	3	2.0
	5	6	4.6	5	3.4
	6	5	3.9	8	5.4
	7=Least important	52	40.0	70	47.6
Pq29	How many persons are you currently discipling (in one-to-one or one-to-two relationships) in each of the following categories?				
Pq29a	Pre-Christian				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	30		90	
	Mean	1.38		1.50	
	Standard Deviation	2.31		4.58	
Pq29b	New Christian				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	31		11	
	Mean	2.04		1.63	
	Standard Deviation	2.97		1.96	
Pq29c	Mature Christian				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	113		50	
	Mean	2.81		3.06	
	Standard Deviation	6.15		5.93	
Pq30	What is your level of satisfaction with your present pastorate?				
	1=Very satisfied	180	32.7	151	29.8
	2	235	42.7	217	42.8
	3	93	16.9	88	17.4
	4	36	6.6	40	7.9
	5=Not satisfied	6	1.1	11	2.2
Pq31	How supportive is your spouse of your pastoral vocation?				
	1=Very supportive	340	63.9	315	63.8
	2	141	26.5	136	27.5
	3	32	6.0	29	5.9
	4	12	2.3	12	2.4
	5=Not supportive	7	1.3	2	0.4

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq32	How often do you feel isolated in ministry?				
	1=Never	49	8.9	37	7.3
	2	223	40.7	198	39.2
	3	159	29.0	151	30.0
	4	109	19.9	104	20.6
	5=Always	8	1.5	15	3.0
Pq33	In an average week, how much time do you use in each of the following areas?				
Pq33a	Prayer				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	15		30	
	Mean	2.73		2.91	
	Standard Deviation	2.00		3.20	
Pq33b	Scripture reading				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	25		70	
	Mean	2.87		3.10	
	Standard Deviation	2.54		4.35	
Pq33c	Devotions/inspirational reading				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	25		25	
	Mean	2.41		2.24	
	Standard Deviation	2.19		2.46	
Pq33d	Sermon preparation				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	50		48	
	Mean	15.75		15.61	
	Standard Deviation	6.95		7.48	
Pq33e	Visiting				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	50		44	
	Mean	5.89		5.67	
	Standard Deviation	4.33		4.43	
Pq33f	Counseling				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	50		44	
	Mean	2.59		2.49	
	Standard Deviation	3.18		2.94	
Pq33g	Administration				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	50		30	
	Mean	6.59		6.30	
	Standard Deviation	5.04		4.62	

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq33h	Meetings				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	50		95	
	Mean	5.47		5.62	
	Standard Deviation	3.44		5.72	
Pq33i	General reading				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	50		44	
	Mean	4.12		3.84	
	Standard Deviation	3.48		3.44	
Pq33j	Contact with other pastors or peers				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	50		15	
	Mean	1.80		1.71	
	Standard Deviation	2.63		1.56	
Pq33k	Contact with congregational leaders				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	50		20	
	Mean	2.49		2.29	
	Standard Deviation	2.86		2.14	
Pq33l	Relaxation/exercise				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	62		56	
	Mean	6.35		5.26	
	Standard Deviation	5.17		4.97	
Pq33m	Time with spouse				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	100		100	
	Mean	9.73		8.92	
	Standard Deviation	9.31		9.84	
Pq33n	Time with children/family				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	60		70	
	Mean	6.85		6.83	
	Standard Deviation	5.97		8.30	
Pq33o	Civic involvement				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	20		40	
	Mean	1.32		1.25	
	Standard Deviation	1.76		2.53	

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq33p	Other responsibilities or interests				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	40		40	
	Mean	4.64		3.78	
	Standard Deviation	5.25		4.72	
Pq34	Does your council assist you by reflecting with you on your role as pastor?				
	1=Yes	352	64.4	296	58.4
	2=No	195	35.7	211	41.6
Pq35	How would you rate your level of fit with your congregation?				
	1=Excellent	206	37.5	188	37.0
	2	268	48.7	229	45.1
	3	49	8.9	64	12.6
	4	24	4.4	20	3.9
	5=Poor	3	0.6	7	1.4
Pq36	If you were to start your career over, would you be a pastor?				
	1=Yes	495	94.7	421	91.3
	2=No	28	5.4	40	8.7
Pq37	Evaluate your level of participation as a leader in other settings-community, denominational and ecumenical.				
	1=High	69	12.7	51	10.6
	2	157	29.0	153	31.7
	3	186	34.3	154	31.9
	4	92	17.0	84	17.4
	5=Low	38	7.0	41	8.5
Pq38.1	Which three of the following best describe your leadership style? (first choice)				
	1=Servant leadership	270	50.0	250	51.6
	2=Pastor-centered leadership	44	8.2	31	6.4
	3=Congregational leadership	19	3.5	14	2.9
	4=Authoritarian leadership	0	0	2	0.4
	5=Consensus-building leadership	84	15.6	73	15.1
	6=Reflexive leadership	8	1.5	4	0.8
	7=Visionary leadership	86	15.9	86	17.7
	8=Adaptive leadership	29	5.4	25	5.2

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq38.2	Which three of the following best describe your leadership style? (second choice)				
	1=Servant leadership	79	14.7	70	14.5
	2=Pastor-centered leadership	49	9.1	52	10.8
	3=Congregational leadership	45	8.4	53	11.0
	4=Authoritarian leadership	1	0.2	2	0.4
	5=Consensus-building leadership	182	33.8	165	34.2
	6=Reflexive leadership	18	3.3	22	4.6
	7=Visionary leadership	89	16.5	61	12.6
	8=Adaptive leadership	76	14.1	58	12.0
Pq38.3	Which three of the following best describe your leadership style? (third choice)				
	1=Servant leadership	87	16.3	69	14.5
	2=Pastor-centered leadership	38	7.1	28	5.9
	3=Congregational leadership	58	10.8	44	9.2
	4=Authoritarian leadership	3	0.6	6	1.3
	5=Consensus-building leadership	85	15.9	93	19.5
	6=Reflexive leadership	11	2.1	17	3.6
	7=Visionary leadership	110	20.6	80	16.8
	8=Adaptive leadership	143	26.7	139	29.2
Pq38	COMBINED (mentioned option first, second or third)				
	1=Servant leadership	436	80.7	389	80.2
	2=Pastor-centered leadership	131	24.3	111	22.9
	3=Congregational leadership	122	22.6	111	22.9
	4=Authoritarian leadership	4	0.7	10	2.1
	5=Consensus-building leadership	351	65.0	331	68.2
	6=Reflexive leadership	37	6.9	43	8.9
	7=Visionary leadership	285	52.8	227	46.8
	8=Adaptive leadership	248	45.9	222	45.8
Pq39	Please rate your grasp of each of the following leadership competencies using a scale of 1=very competent to 5=not competent.				
Pq39a	Understanding authority including both formal and informal				
	1=Very competent	142	26.6	140	29.3
	2	281	52.6	241	50.4
	3	88	16.5	71	14.9
	4	20	3.8	23	4.8
	5=Not competent	3	0.6	3	0.6



Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq39b	Understanding the importance of clear structures and practices of accountability				
	1=Very competent	164	30.7	163	34.0
	2	257	48.1	222	46.3
	3	87	16.3	70	14.6
	4	23	4.3	21	4.4
	5=Not competent	3	0.6	4	0.8
Pq39c	Understanding dynamics and processes of change				
	1=Very competent	96	18.0	90	18.8
	2	246	46.2	223	46.6
	3	148	27.8	135	28.2
	4	37	6.9	25	5.2
	5=Not competent	6	1.1	6	1.3
Pq39d	Understanding issues involved in cross-cultural ministry				
	1=Very competent	65	12.2	48	10.0
	2	119	22.3	99	20.7
	3	130	24.4	137	28.6
	4	149	28.0	137	28.6
	5=Not competent	70	13.1	58	12.1
Pq39e	Understanding the dynamics of conflict and how to lead in the context of conflict				
	1=Very competent	43	8.1	45	9.4
	2	221	41.8	216	45.1
	3	199	37.6	156	32.6
	4	61	11.5	55	11.5
	5=Not competent	5	1.0	7	1.5
Pq39f	Understanding the congregation as a system				
	1=Very competent	81	15.3	82	17.1
	2	241	45.4	213	44.5
	3	151	28.4	134	28.0
	4	49	9.2	44	9.2
	5=Not competent	9	1.7	6	1.3
Pq39g	Understanding the critical nature of pace when it comes to change				
	1=Very competent	121	22.7	122	25.5
	2	259	48.6	221	46.1
	3	105	19.7	100	20.9
	4	41	7.7	30	6.3
	5=Not competent	7	1.3	6	1.3

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq39h	Understanding the difference between courage and the temptation to martyrdom				
	1=Very competent	116	21.9	103	21.6
	2	247	46.7	209	43.9
	3	120	22.7	112	23.5
	4	34	6.4	44	9.2
	5=Not competent	12	2.3	8	1.7
Pq39i	Understanding the pitfalls of charisma				
	1=Very competent	100	18.9	81	17.0
	2	255	48.1	241	50.4
	3	126	23.8	111	23.2
	4	41	7.7	34	7.1
	5=Not competent	8	1.5	11	2.3
Pq39j	Knowing the difference between solving problems and creating opportunities for learning				
	1=Very competent	49	9.2	40	8.4
	2	215	40.4	218	45.6
	3	220	41.4	174	36.4
	4	42	7.9	37	7.7
	5=Not competent	6	1.1	9	1.9
Pq40	Please rate your level of ability in relation to each of the following leadership skills using a scale of 1=very competent to 5=not competent.				
Pq40a	Listening and encouraging				
	1=Very competent	241	44.9	212	44.1
	2	242	45.1	219	45.5
	3	51	9.5	42	8.7
	4	2	0.4	4	0.8
	5=Not competent	1	0.2	4	0.8
Pq40b	Communication				
	1=Very competent	139	25.9	133	27.7
	2	328	61.2	275	57.2
	3	62	11.6	64	13.3
	4	7	1.3	9	1.9
	5=Not competent	0	0	0	0
Pq40c	Group facilitation				
	1=Very competent	91	17.0	74	15.4
	2	275	51.4	268	55.8
	3	148	27.7	110	22.9
	4	21	3.9	26	5.4
	5=Not competent	0	0.0	2	0.4

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq40d	Decision making				
	1=Very competent	96	17.9	86	17.9
	2	273	50.8	236	49.2
	3	152	28.3	131	27.3
	4	15	2.8	27	5.6
	5=Not competent	1	0.2	0	0
Pq40e	Priority setting				
	1=Very competent	75	14.0	84	17.5
	2	270	50.3	228	47.4
	3	147	27.4	130	27.0
	4	42	7.8	38	7.9
	5=Not competent	3	0.6	1	0.2
Pq40f	Strategic planning				
	1=Very competent	47	8.8	62	12.9
	2	190	35.5	149	31.1
	3	200	37.4	182	38.0
	4	86	16.1	73	15.2
	5=Not competent	12	2.2	13	2.7
Pq40g	Conflict management				
	1=Very competent	40	7.5	37	7.7
	2	227	42.4	224	46.6
	3	203	37.9	163	33.9
	4	55	10.3	49	10.2
	5=Not competent	11	2.1	8	1.7
Pq40h	Maintaining a non-anxious presence				
	1=Very competent	156	29.2	129	26.9
	2	252	47.2	233	48.5
	3	103	19.3	96	20.0
	4	20	3.8	21	4.4
	5=Not competent	3	0.6	1	0.2
Pq40i	Motivating people to perform at their full potential				
	1=Very competent	57	10.6	42	8.7
	2	245	45.7	210	43.7
	3	190	35.5	180	37.4
	4	39	7.3	47	9.8
	5=Not competent	5	0.9	2	0.4
Pq40j	Building support for and ownership of a process of change				
	1=Very competent	60	11.2	48	10.0
	2	245	45.8	218	45.4
	3	181	33.8	163	34.0
	4	42	7.9	45	9.4
	5=Not competent	7	1.3	6	1.3

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq40k	Using win/win problem solving techniques				
	1=Very competent	62	11.7	51	10.7
	2	238	44.7	203	42.6
	3	171	32.1	175	36.7
	4	51	9.6	41	8.6
	5=Not competent	10	1.9	7	1.5
Pq41	On average, how much time do you spend reading ministry-related material each week?				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	65		50	
	Mean	4.80		4.63	
	Standard Deviation	5.19		5.03	
Pq42	How many continuing education events (conferences, lectures, workshops etc.) have you attended in the last year?				
	0=None	33	6.1	37	7.3
	1	91	16.8	102	20.2
	2	171	31.5	163	32.2
	3	135	24.9	108	21.3
	4	52	9.6	53	10.5
	5	26	4.8	22	4.4
	6	16	3.0	8	1.6
	7=More than 6	19	3.5	13	2.6
Pq43	Are you a part of a peer learning group?				
	1=Yes	241	44.8	273	53.9
	2=No	297	55.2	234	46.2
Pq43a	How often do you [and your peer learning group] meet?				
	1=Once a week	22	9.1	22	8.1
	2=Twice a month	18	7.4	22	8.1
	3=Once a month	143	58.9	143	52.4
	4=Every other month	29	11.9	34	12.5
	5=Less than every 2 months	31	12.8	52	19.1
Pq44	Are you in a mentor/mentee relationship?				
	1=Yes, as a mentor	173	31.9	191	37.8
	2=Yes, as a mentee	78	14.4	85	16.8
	3=No	251	46.2	195	38.5
	4=Yes, as mentor and a mentee	41	7.6	35	6.9

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Pq45	Are any of the above (continuing education, peer learning group, mentor/mentee relationship) connected with the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program in the CRCNA?				
	1=Yes	240	45.4	242	48.9
	2=No	263	49.7	218	44.0
	3=Don't know	26	4.9	35	7.1
Pq46a	Rate SPE's effect on your role as a pastor and on your ministry.				
	1=Very positive	-	-	118	31.5
	2=Positive	-	-	190	50.7
	3=Little or none	-	-	64	17.1
	4=Negative	-	-	3	0.8
	5=Very negative	-	-		
Pq46b	Rate SPE's effect on you personally.				
	1=Very positive	-	-	119	31.8
	2=Positive	-	-	179	47.9
	3=Little or none	-	-	72	19.3
	4=Negative	-	-	3	0.8
	5=Very negative	-	-	1	0.3
Pq46c	Rate SPE's effect on the culture of the CRCNA.				
	1=Very positive	-	-	96	27.0
	2=Positive	-	-	200	56.2
	3=Little or none	-	-	53	14.9
	4=Negative	-	-	6	1.7
	5=Very negative	-	-	1	0.3

**Clerks' responses 2004 (N = 522) & 2007 (N = 451):**

		<b>2004</b>		<b>2007</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Cq01	How would you describe your congregation? Use percentages, which should total 100.				
Cq01.1	North American Indian / Aboriginal				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	95		95	
	Mean	0.39		0.75	
	Standard Deviation	4.36		6.24	
Cq01.2	Asian/Asian American				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	100		100	
	Mean	4.19		3.10	
	Standard Deviation	17.92		14.62	
Cq01.3	Black/African American				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	90		97	
	Mean	1.97		1.83	
	Standard Deviation	8.92		7.44	
Cq01.4	Hispanic/Latino				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	100		100	
	Mean	2.09		1.81	
	Standard Deviation	10.24		7.68	
Cq01.5	Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	40		25	
	Mean	0.22		0.14	
	Standard Deviation	2.37		1.32	
Cq01.6	White/Caucasian/Anglo				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	100		100	
	Mean	86.93		90.29	
	Standard Deviation	29.19		23.17	
Cq01.7	Other				
	Minimum	0		0	
	Maximum	100		100	
	Mean	1.02		1.50	
	Standard Deviation	8.85		11.06	

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Cq02	Is your ministry located in an area that is [urban, suburban, or rural?] 1=Urban 2=Suburban 3=Rural	126 225 165	24.4 43.6 32.0	128 181 135	28.8 40.8 30.4
Cq03	In what year was your congregation established? Minimum Maximum Mean Standard Deviation	1847 2004 1949.40 35.41		1847 2007 1950.02 33.84	
Cq04	How many pastors has your congregation had during this time? Minimum Maximum Mean Standard Deviation	0 27 7.83 5.30		0 25 8.25 5.24	
Cq05	Has your pastor gone on a spiritual retreat in the last twelve months? 1=Yes 2=No	300 214	58.4 41.6	253 159	61.4 38.6
Cq06	Does the council encourage your pastor to meet regularly with one or more other Christians for the purpose of deepening his/her relationship with God? 1=Yes 2=No	382 111	77.5 22.5	350 67	83.9 16.1
Cq07	Does the council (or its representatives) reflect with the pastor on the pastor's own goals for spiritual formation and growth and how to sustain these goals? 1=Yes 2=No	296 185	61.5 38.5	274 135	67.0 33.0
Cq08	Does your congregation have vision and mission statements? 1=Yes 2=No	416 71	85.4 14.6	371 49	88.3 11.7
Cq08a	How often does your pastor's preaching refer to these [vision and mission] statements? 1=Monthly 2=Quarterly 3=Semi-annually 4=Annually	110 108 68 101	28.4 27.9 17.6 26.1	91 113 95 68	24.8 30.8 25.9 18.5

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Cq08b	How frequently do you, the council, review your Church's vision and mission statements?				
	1=Bi-annually	80	19.5	45	12.1
	2=Annually	183	44.5	173	46.6
	3=Every 5 years or more	148	36.0	153	41.2
Cq09	Does the council systematically offer feedback on your pastor's preaching?				
	1=Yes	241	49.2	216	51.9
	2=No	249	50.8	200	48.1
Cq10	Has the council encouraged your pastor to participate in a workshop/seminar on pastoral preaching/teaching in the last 12 months?				
	1=Yes, and s/he attended	270	54.8	227	54.6
	2=Yes, but s/he did not attend	21	4.3	25	6.0
	3=No	202	41.0	164	39.4
Cq11	Does your church have a pastor/church committee through which support of the pastor is demonstrated?				
	1=Yes	202	41.5	181	43.4
	2=No	285	58.5	236	56.6
Cq12	How frequently does the council discuss with the pastor his/her use of time?				
	1=Regularly	115	23.6	95	22.9
	2	92	18.9	90	21.7
	3	112	23.0	106	25.5
	4	78	16.0	75	18.1
	5=Never	91	18.7	49	11.8
Cq13	Does your church have a budget line for the pastor's continuing education?				
	1=Yes	354	72.7	329	79.3
	2=No	133	27.3	86	20.7
Cq13a	How much is [the continuing education budget]?				
	Minimum	100		100	
	Maximum	10000		10000	
	Mean	1344.66		1385.26	
	Standard Deviation	1239.30		1239.51	
Cq13b	Does the pastor use all of the funds available each year?				
	1=Yes	187	57.0	184	56.4
	2=No	141	43.0	142	43.6



Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Cq14	How many continuing education events (conferences, lectures, workshops etc) has your pastor attended in the last year?				
	0=None	36	7.5	44	10.1
	1	110	22.9	96	22.1
	2	157	32.7	161	37.0
	3	107	22.3	78	17.9
	4	42	8.8	32	7.4
	5	16	3.3	8	1.8
	6	4	0.8	8	1.8
	7=More than 6	8	1.7	8	1.8
Cq15	Is your pastor a part of a peer learning group?				
	1=Yes	238	46.6	235	52.5
	2=No	148	29.0	105	23.4
	3=Don't know	125	24.5	108	24.1
Cq15a	Does your pastor share experiences/learnings from this group with the council?				
	1=Yes	193	68.9	191	70.7
	2=No	87	31.1	79	29.3
Cq16	Is your pastor currently in a mentor/mentee relationship?				
	1=Yes	258	50.5	248	55.5
	2=No	144	28.2	119	26.6
	3=Don't know	109	21.3	80	17.9

Question	Description	2004		2007	
		N	%	N	%
Cq17	Are any of the above (continuing education, peer learning group, mentor/mentee relationship) connected with the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program in the CRCNA which is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.?				
	1=Yes	128	25.1	100	22.4
	2=No	210	41.2	179	40.1
	3=Don't know	172	33.7	167	37.4
Cq18a	Below, please rate the overall effect of the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) project on [your pastor's role as a pastor and on the pastor's ministry].				
	1=Very Positive	-	-	36	21.4
	2=Positive	-	-	108	64.3
	3=Little or none	-	-	23	13.7
	4=Negative	-	-	1	0.6
	5=Very Negative	-	-	0	0
Cq18b	Below, please rate overall effect of the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) project on [your pastor personally].				
	1=Very Positive	-	-	44	26.7
	2=Positive	-	-	99	60.0
	3=Little or none	-	-	21	12.7
	4=Negative	-	-	1	0.6
	5=Very Negative	-	-	0	0
Cq18c	Below, please rate overall effect of the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) project on [the culture of the CRCNA].				
	1=Very Positive	-	-	25	16.2
	2=Positive	-	-	102	66.2
	3=Little or none	-	-	26	16.9
	4=Negative	-	-	1	0.7
	5=Very Negative	-	-	0	0

## Appendix B: Comments

### A. SAMPLE COMMENTS ON THE SPE PROGRAM

*P = Pastor C = Clerk*

#### (I) Affirmation and Appreciation

P: I credit SPE with giving me tools to remain and thrive in ministry. It has made a world of difference.

P: I was part of two SPE groups in the past three years. I benefited and my church benefited greatly from them. Keep up the great work.

P: I think the SPE is a wonderful tool. I'm truly thankful for it and because of it I have been involved in a peer learning group for several years, even long after our SPE funding had ended.

P: I am part of a peer learning group that is revolutionizing my view of the church and ministry. It is exciting, rejuvenating, stimulating, and just really good to be a part of. Thanks SPE!

P: The mentorship conferences have been amazing! Having the spouses along has also been a great part of it. Keep them coming!

P: Learning as leaders together is the best way I've found to gain insight, inspiration and encouragement.

P: I've really enjoyed the 2 or 3 SPE groups I've been part of. I and my wife have benefited from getting to know other pastors and wives better. And they have greatly benefited my ministry and relationships with our classis.

P: The SPE program and the peer learning groups have been possibly the single most important factor that has helped me to grow as a pastor and person.

P: The mentor-mentee meetings... were very helpful. The mentor that I had for the first few years in ministry was very helpful.

P: Our wives have been holding monthly get togethers which have been awesome. One wife said in more than 20 years of ministry she has never felt this connected. I have been part of a peer learning group that has been really good for me as a new pastor. I've learned – connected, and had a great time doing it.

P: I attended the pastoral identity class offered by CTS and it was amazingly helpful, especially the two leadership books.

P: Our peer group has been a tremendous source of support and help to me. SPE has been very helpful in moving our group forward and into deeper relationships.

P: The work to pastor's wives has been the most effective.

P: I want to encourage you in the good work that you are doing to help me and many others to strive for excellence in our work – in our ministry. Thank you!!

P: I get much insight, encouragement and help from being in a (SPE) group that is thoughtfully working through similar ministry challenges. Thank you.

P: My SPE group formed me into a preacher where my seminary ed fell short. Thank God I fell into a group when I did!!

P: I appreciate the greatly heightened awareness of and support for parish ministry over the past five years.

P: I can't imagine the last several years in ministry without SPE. I would be must less effective and on my way to burning out. Instead I am healthy, balanced, and eager for ministry. Thanks!

P: The SPE program has been a definite benefit to pastors in the CRC. It is my feeling that all pastors need to consider themselves as lifelong learners and be strongly encouraged to continue attending educational and spiritual development opportunities.

P: Congregations now expect pastors to lead, which was not true for established churches 30 years ago. You're on the right track.

P: I have never not been part of a supportive network of pastors in my career.

P: Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Great Questions! Great Work!

C: Our pastor regularly reiterates to Council the value of this program and it has been a factor in his improved performance.

C: Our pastor has thrived personally in his peer learning group because of the friendships he's built. I don't see a big advantage to the church other than his personal sanity ☺.

C: The spouse's workshop was well received as well. She wrote Council a thank-you note.

C: We are an urban, fairly wealthy church (by most standards) and we could not/would not have provided our pastors with these critical avenues for growth without the grant monies provided. As Council, we are thankful for the resources provided as part of this program grant. All in all it is an effective, timely offer of support to our pastors, their families and therefore their congregations.

## **(2) Lack of Awareness, Ambiguity, and Restraints**

P: I greatly support the efforts and intention of SPE but just haven't pursued anything with it yet.

P: Small churches and their pastors are very much alone. There is little support from classis or the more capable churches, staff or lay leaders.

P: The one sustaining thing in the up and down times in my ministry has been the absolute sense of the call of almighty God on my life to be a minister in this church...."

P: Many of your questions presuppose a systematic approach to spiritual development and the luxury of time to carry it out.

P: I feel somewhat out of sorts with my congregation. They are not a very open people, and so while the people enjoy my visits I do not always enjoy visiting them. I am a friend to everyone and yet a friend to no one. In that sense I feel somewhat isolated. I am currently entertaining calls.

P: This issue of accountability for a pastor can't be done through more activity but by the power of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the pastor.

C: Our pastor's time is well spent taking care of his members and reaching out to the unchurched.

C: Council encourages our Pastor to be involved in anything that will encourage and strengthen him.

C: Our pastor is currently seriously considering an SPE program. He is near burn-out and really needs something like this.

C: Our church does not have a budgeted item for continuing education. Therefore the pastor must receive approval from the council. Such a request is rarely denied.

C: The church is not able to participate with other churches in this SPE program because of the remote distance. Travel would be cost prohibitive.

C: We are a small and isolated community. This makes pastors in our community feel isolated. More interaction would perhaps be beneficial, but budget restraints also do not help in this.

C: Our pastor is highly regarded as a preacher, pastoral counselor and advisor, and a man of faith. The demands on his time are numerous and this limits time that can be spent on retreats and development opportunities.

C: We allow him time for his own personal growth, but he is so focused on the care of our congregation that we believe and he confirms that he grows spiritually by his daily devotions and interactions with our congregation and community.

C: Pastoral excellence says to me that the goal of training good ministers would involve preaching the word and support it with the Bible. Over the past 10 to 15 years I have noticed a lot of ministers that have to read their sermons. What ever happened to preaching with notes??

### **(3) Negative or critical spirit**

P: "The passion for promoting SPE is experienced as very pushy and intrusive."

P: Congregations and pastors have lost sight in the CRC of what used to be most important as a minister, that of the preaching of the Word and the sacraments.

P: There are not questions here about the doctrinal content of sermons, the ministry of healing, etc. It feels like this survey is based on the work of Rick Warren, not the Bible or Reformed faith. Very disappointing.

P: (Application denied) “You seemed to care more about your own rules and parameters than in really helping us.”

P: SPE didn’t exist for the first 30 years of my ministry, so as far as I am concerned I can do without it now as well... From the material we receive from SPE it must be the greatest things since sliced bread. Wonderful! But some of us still prefer to bake our own bread.

P: I answered the survey last time, and at that time commented on the simplistic, close-ended questions. Nothing has changed. Do you really believe that the relationship the church has with its pastor can be quantified with yes/no questions? Too bad, if you do.

P: Peer groups in my area are more concerned with human formulas and strategies than being aware of God’s activity. We need a contemplative and reflective pastorate. Provide for me time to watch the sunset and be awed by its grandeur. As soon as I have to write a report on it, it’s gone.

P: Denominational expectations and requests far exceed the ability of the local pastor and congregation to aptly respond to.... (They) are being taxed and stretched to the point of beginning to suffer and become antagonistic towards the denomination.

P: There is a disconnect between Grand Rapids and rural Midwest churches. We have difficulty making use of the services of any denomination, not only the CRC. In addition rural Christians have a give-up spirit as they see their churches decline, and part of my job is to constantly encourage. This puts a strain on other things that need to be done in the congregation.

P: A long time ago at CTS a leader in the CRC said what people really want is that pastors preach good sermons and visit the people. I have found that this formula works. Accountability? The whole congregation keeps me accountable. This term and concept for ministry is simply crap. Get out in the field... and see how real ministers live!

C: Our council views this as an intrusion. We have done well by our Pastor including granting a half year sabbatical but resist submitting this information so mandates can be issued from “Headquarters” regarding these matters.

C: Too much corporate America is working its way into the church. We need to get back to the basics of this proclamation and explanation of the Word.... Ladies and gentlemen, this is not the minister of the era of your oma and opa.... Let’s not forget our history.

## **B. PASTOR / COUNCIL COMMUNICATION, CONCERNS**

P: One great challenge is relating to and helping council understand the changing demands and dynamics of ministry.

P: Please keep working on educating lay people (especially rank and file members) about the challenges of ordained ministry/leadership... too many prefer to sit on the sidelines and grumble from a distance....

P: I find the relationship between pastors and congregations troubling. In my experience pastors are viewed primarily as employees. They (and their families) are dispensable members of the community who are desired only for their ability to do a job.

P: Pastors need encouragement and help, but congregations need to better understand the need and stress of their pastors. I don't see anyone addressing that.

C: I am aware that our pastor meets with a peer group once a month. Perhaps this initiative is also thanks to the SPE project. If so, that's great. However, once again our council never hears about this group or our pastor's participation in it.

C: There has to be more training for the role of a pastor's wife. The last three pastors' wives didn't understand that their husbands had to have time to do their own work, and not spend work time with them, even doing the housework and most of taking care of the young children during work time.

C: Pastors need to be trained on how to set priorities, learning what is most important each week, and not first doing the easy things week after week and omitting important things that come up each week.

C: We are an isolated (from the CRC) church. Despite encouragement over the years our pastor has not formed strong relationships with Reformed fellow ministers in the area. It's not his personality apparently.

C: Our pastor seems intent in forcing his agenda on the congregation. In the process he has alienated over half of the members so that they are attending other non-CRC churches in the area.

C: Pastors can grow only to the extent they are willing to participate and learn. I'm sure ministry is difficult and can be a demanding task, but interpersonal relationships, a willingness to accommodate the desires of people and work with councils, and an openness to hear and respond to constructive criticism would be characteristics that would benefit a minister. When those topics are addressed (at least in our case) then SPE programs will be valuable.

C: What are you doing to sustain our Pastors in the Historical Reformed Creeds and Confessions to re-establish our Identity as a Church?

C: We have a few old timers who consider themselves as "defenders" of the faith. They voice their displeasure in an unacceptable, often public manner.... Is there a way to address this type of situation /issue...??

C: When the church has a significant portion of members who feel it is their duty to criticize and generally complain about the pastor because he has not moved on after three years, then it is difficult to maintain a robust positive attitude about anything.

## **C. MISCELLANEOUS SUGGESTIONS/REQUESTS**

P: The mentoring program is excellent but some "spiritual training" events for pastors would be more excellent.

P: I don't know if the denomination can do anything to change this clergy-killing culture in some of our churches, but if you can, do it! And soon please! A nearly burned out again, fed up, Pastor.

P: Bi-vocational ministry is now required for some. How is the CRC/SPE going to respond?

P: I wonder whether congregations ought to rethink the number of areas of proficiency or giftedness that they expect of their pastor. It seems to me there are too many areas of the congregation's life and ministry that are dependent on the Pastor to succeed. (For example) If the pastor is not particularly gifted in leading the congregation in prayer, then other members of the congregation can be called up to fill this role.

P: Having served churches in both the US and Canada my observation is that the ministry environment in Canada is far more difficult and troubling than in the US.

P: We need a SCE program – Sustaining Council Excellence. I may as well be talking Chinese when trying to get Elders to think about, reflect upon and take some risks on leadership issues.

P: In my experience and in my knowledge of the experience of other pastors, our church councils have a very poor grasp of their function and of their relationship to their pastor. I would welcome anything that would help pastors deal with this in healthy and constructive ways.

P: Although equipping pastors is hugely helpful, someone other than the pastor has to instruct the rest of the leadership. Once a strain has developed the pastor won't be heard as well.

P: I believe mentoring/coaching is where we need to go next, plus the whole leadership development team approach.

P: I do think the calling system is broken in the CRC, which is resulting in a lack of options to move, especially for pastors in their fifties. This is a strange situation in a time when we constantly hear about the crying need for pastors and the high number of vacant churches.

P: We need a larger Sustaining Leaders support and development for our lay leaders to catch the transition vision from maintenance to missional ministry.

P: What about elders? Aren't they pastors too – at least Biblically speaking? The best support for a Sr. Pastor is good elders. Build this vision!

P: I recently attended the CTS course "Theology and Practice of Pastoral Ministry." Excellent course. Can you think of ways to teach parts of that class at a classis meeting?

C: That the survey questions recognize that some churches have more than one pastor

C: Our church is not growing in number and I am very worried that we have less people now than when he first started (23 years ago). I know that it is the responsibility of the whole congregation to fulfill the Great Commission, but it seems that it is not (our pastor's) gift and no one seems to take the lead.

C: A form with some questions that we could ask a pastor would be easier for Council. It can be hard to bring some of these topics up during a meeting without sounding intrusive or critical.

C: I find it difficult for our council/elders to have frank conversations with pastors. There's some intimidation and a lack of willingness. The pastors are offended when asked how they spend their time.



C: I feel that our pastor doesn't solicit feedback on what his areas of needed growth are. We would appreciate ongoing dialogue on how to grow well together, but he seems resistant to this... It is difficult as volunteers to fully understand his work and workload, but we would love to journey with him.

C: We need better direction and forms or systems to follow for giving our pastor good feedback on his sermons / performance.

C: Would like to see a Centre for Excellence in Pastoral Care be developed to round out the work SPE is doing.

C: Would it be possible to conduct some form of preaching course on the internet where pastors could send in sermon tapes or videos and discuss ways in which they can improve their preaching styles and delivery?

C: I think the pastors over 45 need a refresher course on how to make services appealing to the newer generations.

#### **D. ADDITIONAL POINTS TO “PONDER” (Laugh or Cry)**

P: I hear people talking of what they are doing in their peer learning groups, and sometimes it makes me feel left out, and even more isolated because of it.

P: Please empower groups to take seriously the empowering of local congregations to start new churches and start denominational agencies.

P: The SPE peer learning grant scheme has been a big help to an ethnically challenged group like ours.

P: Help with staff council tension. Who really leads in the Church? Why the CRC must change, denomination must help churches fulfill their local calling. Ministry shares too high.

C: The first question is rather strange and is based totally on the US conception of ethnicity and race. The CRC in Canada would be classified as an ethnic church (largely Dutch). French is not considered an ethnic minority here.

C: I must be a lousy clerk, or clerks typically are more involved in these matters. I didn't know the answer to most of the questions.

C: There should be a question related to age of the pastor. Ours is 66 and plans to go to 70+ or ? This age “bracket” is not likely to participate in any “excellence” programs other than by necessity.



## **Appendix C: Questionnaires**





SUSTAINING  
**Pastoral**  
EXCELLENCE

# Pastor Survey

to be completed by the sole or senior pastor

Spring 2007

## Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Pastor Survey

Thank you for responding to our request. Please answer each of the following questions to the best of your ability by marking options or filling in blanks. Please avoid making extraneous marks. Additional space is given at the end of the survey if you wish to make additional comments on questions 1 to 46. **All responses are confidential.**

**1. How would you describe yourself?** *Please mark one circle:*

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> North American Indian/Aboriginal
- ☐ <sub>2</sub> Asian/Asian American
- ☐ <sub>3</sub> Black/African American
- ☐ <sub>4</sub> Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ <sub>5</sub> Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander
- ☐ <sub>6</sub> White/Caucasian/Anglo
- ☐ <sub>7</sub> Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Are you male or female?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Male
- ☐ <sub>2</sub> Female

**3. How old are you?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> 20-25 years old
- ☐ <sub>2</sub> 26-30
- ☐ <sub>3</sub> 31-35
- ☐ <sub>4</sub> 36-40
- ☐ <sub>5</sub> 41-45
- ☐ <sub>6</sub> 46-50
- ☐ <sub>7</sub> 51-55
- ☐ <sub>8</sub> 56-60
- ☐ <sub>9</sub> 61-65
- ☐ <sub>10</sub> 66 or more

**4. Is your present church in Canada or the United States?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Canada
- ☐ <sub>2</sub> US

**5. Of which classis is your church a member?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Is your ministry located in an area that is:**

*Please mark only the best choice.*

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> urban  
☐ <sub>2</sub> suburban  
☐ <sub>3</sub> rural

**7. What is the size of your total membership?**

\_\_\_\_\_ *Please write in one number, not a range*

**8. How many years have you been in your current church?**

\_\_\_\_\_ *Please write in one number, not a range*

**9. Are you the: (Circle only one)**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> sole pastor,  
☐ <sub>2</sub> senior pastor with other pastors on staff, or  
☐ <sub>3</sub> a pastor on staff (not the senior pastor)?

**10. How many years have you been in pastoral ministry?**

\_\_\_\_\_ *Please write in one number, not a range*

**11. Have your years of ministry been continuous?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐ <sub>2</sub> No

**12. How many congregations have you served (including your present charge)?**

\_\_\_\_\_ *Please write in one number, not a range*

**13. Has your congregation had a pastoral separation in the past three years?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> No  
☐ <sub>2</sub> Yes, under Article 16 (leave of absence)  
☐ <sub>3</sub> Yes, under Article 17 (release from ministry in the congregation)

**14. What route did you follow to ministry in the CRCNA?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Calvin Theological Seminary (CTS)

**14a. Your CTS degree:**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> M. Div.  
☐ <sub>2</sub> SPMC/EPMC

- ☐ <sub>2</sub> Other seminary

**14b. Which other seminary was that?**

\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ <sub>3</sub> Classis/special gifts – Article 7  
☐ <sub>4</sub> Other denomination – Article 8  
☐ <sub>5</sub> Ministry associate  
☐ <sub>6</sub> Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Degrees or diplomas you have earned: Check all that apply**

- ☐ <sub>a</sub> Associates  
☐ <sub>b</sub> Bachelors  
☐ <sub>c</sub> M.A. or M.S.  
☐ <sub>d</sub> Ph.D.  
☐ <sub>e</sub> Legal degree  
☐ <sub>f</sub> Medical degree  
☐ <sub>g</sub> M.Div.  
☐ <sub>h</sub> M.T.S.  
☐ <sub>i</sub> Th.M.  
☐ <sub>j</sub> Th.D.  
☐ <sub>l</sub> D.Min.  
☐ <sub>k</sub> Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

**16. At what age were you ordained?**

\_\_\_\_\_ *Please write in one number, not a range*

**17. How often do you have personal prayer and meditation time (including Bible reading)?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Daily  
☐ <sub>2</sub> Five or six times a week  
☐ <sub>3</sub> Three or four times a week  
☐ <sub>4</sub> Fewer than three times a week

**18. Have you gone on a spiritual retreat in the last twelve months?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐ <sub>2</sub> No

**19. Do you regularly meet with one or more other Christians for the purpose of deepening your relationship with God?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐ <sub>2</sub> No

**20. Do you establish annual, personal goals for spiritual growth and a way to sustain these goals?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐ <sub>2</sub> No

**21. Do you regularly keep a journal on your prayer life and your walk with God?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐ <sub>2</sub> No

**22. Have you developed a personal life mandate or statement of personal vision for ministry?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Yes → Please answer Q22a as well  
☐ <sub>2</sub> No → Please skip to Q23

**22a. If yes, how often do you reference it?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Monthly  
☐ <sub>2</sub> Quarterly  
☐ <sub>3</sub> Annually  
☐ <sub>4</sub> Less than annually

**23. Does your congregation have vision and mission statements?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Yes → Please answer Q23a and Q23b as well  
☐ <sub>2</sub> No → Please skip to Q24

**23a. If yes, how often does your preaching refer to these statements?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> monthly  
☐ <sub>2</sub> quarterly  
☐ <sub>3</sub> semi-annually  
☐ <sub>4</sub> annually

**23b. How frequently does your congregational leadership review your church's vision and mission statements?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> bi-annually  
☐ <sub>2</sub> annually  
☐ <sub>3</sub> every 5 years or more

**24. How well does your congregation reflect the following core elements of the CRC's mission statement?**

**Please rate each item from 1 = very well to 5 = poorly**

*Write one number on each line*

As people called by God,

- \_\_\_\_ We gather to praise God, listen to Him and respond.  
 \_\_\_\_ We nurture each other in faith and obedience to Christ.  
 \_\_\_\_ We love and care for one another as God's people.  
 \_\_\_\_ We commit ourselves to serve and to tell others about Jesus.  
 \_\_\_\_ We pursue God's justice and peace in every area of life.

**25. Do you obtain systematic feedback from your council on your preaching?**

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐ <sub>2</sub> No



26. Have you participated in a workshop/seminar or done reading on pastoral preaching/teaching in the last 12 months?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

27. How would you evaluate your understanding of the Reformed Christian faith?

thorough ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ weak

28. What has most helped you come to this understanding?

Please rate each of the following using a scale of 1 = most important to 7 = least important.

- \_\_\_\_ theological reading  
\_\_\_\_ peers/mentors  
\_\_\_\_ creeds and confessions  
\_\_\_\_ college/seminary training  
\_\_\_\_ prayer/meditation  
\_\_\_\_ Synodical study reports  
\_\_\_\_ other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

29. How many persons are you currently discipling (in one-to-one or one-to-two relationships) in each of the following categories? (Place one number on each line)

- a. Pre-Christian \_\_\_\_\_  
b. New Christian \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Mature Christian \_\_\_\_\_

30. What is your level of satisfaction with your present pastorate?

very satisfied ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ not satisfied

31. How supportive is your spouse of your pastoral vocation?

very supportive ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ not supportive ☐ N/A

32. How often do you feel isolated in ministry?

never ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ always

33. In an average week, how much time do you use in each of the following areas (using hours or fractions thereof)?

<b>Meditative</b>	<b>Hours</b>
Prayer	_____
Scripture reading	_____
Devotions/inspirational reading	_____
<b>Vocational</b>	
Sermon preparation	_____
Visiting	_____
Counseling	_____
Administration	_____
Meetings	_____
General reading (not the Bible)	_____
Contact with other pastors/peers	_____
Contact with congregational leaders	_____

#### Family/Personal

Time alone with spouse \_\_\_\_\_ ☐88 unmarried  
Time with children/family \_\_\_\_\_  
Civic involvement \_\_\_\_\_  
Other responsibilities/interests \_\_\_\_\_  
Relaxation/exercise other than above \_\_\_\_\_

34. Does your council assist you by reflecting with you on your role as pastor?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

35. How would you rate your level of fit with your congregation?

excellent ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ poor

36. If you were to start your career over, would you be a pastor?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

37. Evaluate your level of participation as a leader in other settings—community, denominational and ecumenical.

high ☐ <sub>1</sub> ☐ <sub>2</sub> ☐ <sub>3</sub> ☐ <sub>4</sub> ☐ <sub>5</sub> low

38. Which three of the following best describe your leadership style? Place the three letters in the spaces below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. servant leadership
- b. pastor-centered leadership
- c. congregational leadership
- d. authoritarian leadership
- e. consensus-building leadership
- f. reflexive leadership
- g. visionary leadership
- h. adaptive leadership

39. Please rate your grasp of each of the following leadership competencies using a scale of:  
 1 = very competent to 5 = not competent.

- \_\_\_\_\_ understanding authority including both formal and informal
- \_\_\_\_\_ understanding the importance of clear structures and practices of accountability
- \_\_\_\_\_ understanding dynamics and processes of change
- \_\_\_\_\_ understanding issues involved in cross-cultural ministry
- \_\_\_\_\_ understanding the dynamics of conflict and how to lead in the context of conflict
- \_\_\_\_\_ understanding the congregation as a system
- \_\_\_\_\_ understanding the critical nature of pace when it comes to change
- \_\_\_\_\_ understanding the difference between courage and the temptation to martyrdom
- \_\_\_\_\_ understanding the pitfalls of charisma
- \_\_\_\_\_ knowing the difference between solving problems and creating opportunities for learning

40. Please rate your level of ability in relation to each of the following leadership skills using a scale of:  
 1 = very competent to 5 = not competent.

- \_\_\_\_\_ listening and encouraging
- \_\_\_\_\_ communication
- \_\_\_\_\_ group facilitation
- \_\_\_\_\_ decision making
- \_\_\_\_\_ priority setting
- \_\_\_\_\_ strategic planning
- \_\_\_\_\_ conflict management
- \_\_\_\_\_ maintaining a non-anxious presence
- \_\_\_\_\_ motivating people to perform at their full potential
- \_\_\_\_\_ building support for and ownership of a process of change
- \_\_\_\_\_ using win/win problem solving techniques

41. On average, how much time do you spend reading ministry-related material each week?

\_\_\_\_\_ hours

42. How many continuing education events (conferences, lectures, workshops etc) have you attended in the last year?

none    1    2    3    4    5    6    more than 6  
☐ <sub>0</sub>   ☐ <sub>1</sub>   ☐ <sub>2</sub>   ☐ <sub>3</sub>   ☐ <sub>4</sub>   ☐ <sub>5</sub>   ☐ <sub>6</sub>   ☐ <sub>7</sub>

43. Are you a part of a peer learning group?

☐ <sub>1</sub> Yes → Go to Q43a  
☐ <sub>2</sub> No → Go to Q44

43a. If yes, how often do you meet?

☐ <sub>1</sub> Once a week  
☐ <sub>2</sub> Twice a month  
☐ <sub>3</sub> Once a month  
☐ <sub>4</sub> Every other month  
☐ <sub>5</sub> Less than every 2 months

44. Are you in a mentor/mentee relationship?

☐ <sub>1</sub> Yes, as a mentor  
☐ <sub>2</sub> Yes, as a mentee  
☐ <sub>3</sub> No

45. Are any of the above (continuing education, peer learning group, mentor/mentee relationship) connected with the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program in the CRCNA?

☐ <sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐ <sub>2</sub> No  
☐ <sub>3</sub> Don't know

46. Below, please rate the overall effect of the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) project on each area.

*SPE has included peer learning groups, continuing education events, mentoring relationships, regional pastor funding, and a pastors' spouses' retreat. You may answer "NA" if you have not been a part of any SPE programs and/or are unaware of their effects.*

Rate SPE's effect:		Very positive	Positive	Little or none	Negative	Very negative	NA
a.	on your role as a pastor and on your ministry.	<input type="radio"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>9</sub>
b.	on you personally.	<input type="radio"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>9</sub>
c.	on the culture of the CRCNA.	<input type="radio"/> <sub>1</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>2</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>3</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>4</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>5</sub>	<input type="radio"/> <sub>9</sub>

47. OPTIONAL COMMENT #1:

Your frank comments as a pastor are important to us and will be considered carefully by the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence team. Is there anything on your mind as a pastor that you would like to communicate to us? Write your thoughts as legibly as possible in the space below. Please do not identify yourself.

Please continue to the next page; you may continue writing if desired.

*Please continue to the next page*

If you have any questions and/or suggestions concerning the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program, please contact:

Lis Van Harten  
(877) 279-9994, ext. 0805  
vanhartl@crcna.org

Thank you very much for your time. When you have completed the questionnaire, please return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope, or mail it to:

Center for Social Research  
Calvin College  
3201 Burton St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

**Questionnaire No. 1**



SUSTAINING  
**Pastoral**  
EXCELLENCE

# Clerk Survey

Spring 2007

**Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Clerk Survey**

Thank you for responding to our request. Please answer each of the following questions to the best of your ability by circling or writing answers. **All responses are confidential.** You have an opportunity to comment on the questions at the end of the survey, so please avoid any extraneous marks.

**1. How would you describe your congregation? Use percentages, which should total 100.**

	Percent
North American Indian/Aboriginal	_____
Asian/Asian American	_____
Black/African American	_____
Hispanic/Latino	_____
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	_____
White/Caucasian/Anglo	_____
Other (specify)	_____
	100%

**2. Is your ministry located in an area that is:**

*Please mark only the best choice.*

- ☐ <sub>1</sub> urban  
☐ <sub>2</sub> suburban  
☐ <sub>3</sub> rural

**3. In what year was your congregation established?**

\_\_\_\_\_ (year)

**4. How many pastors has your congregation had during this time?**

\_\_\_\_\_ *Please write in one number, not a range*

5. Has your pastor gone on a spiritual retreat in the last twelve months?  
*If you currently have more than one pastor, please evaluate the pastor (usually senior) who will complete the companion pastor's survey.*
- ☐<sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐<sub>2</sub> No
6. Does the council encourage your pastor to meet regularly with one or more other Christians for the purpose of deepening his/her relationship with God?
- ☐<sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐<sub>2</sub> No
7. Does the council (or its representatives) reflect with the pastor on the pastor's own goals for spiritual formation and growth and how to sustain these goals?
- ☐<sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐<sub>2</sub> No
8. Does your congregation have vision and mission statements?
- ☐<sub>1</sub> Yes → Please answer Q8a and Q8b as well  
☐<sub>2</sub> No → Please skip to Q9
- 8a. If yes, how often does your pastor's preaching refer to these statements?
- ☐<sub>1</sub> Monthly  
☐<sub>2</sub> Quarterly  
☐<sub>3</sub> Annually  
☐<sub>4</sub> Less than annually
- 8b. How frequently do you, the council, review your church's vision and mission statements?
- ☐<sub>1</sub> bi-annually  
☐<sub>2</sub> annually  
☐<sub>3</sub> every 5 years or more

9. Does the council systematically offer feedback on your pastor's preaching?
- ☐<sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐<sub>2</sub> No
10. Has the council encouraged your pastor to participate in a workshop/seminar on pastoral preaching/teaching in the last 12 months?
- ☐<sub>1</sub> Yes, and s/he attended.  
☐<sub>2</sub> Yes, but s/he did not attend  
☐<sub>3</sub> No
11. Does your church have a pastor/church committee through which support of the pastor is demonstrated?
- ☐<sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐<sub>2</sub> No
12. How frequently does the council discuss with the pastor his/her use of time?
- regularly ☐<sub>1</sub> ☐<sub>2</sub> ☐<sub>3</sub> ☐<sub>4</sub> ☐<sub>5</sub> never
13. Does your church have a budget line for the pastor's continuing education?
- ☐<sub>1</sub> Yes → Please answer Q13a and Q13b as well  
☐<sub>2</sub> No → Please skip to Q14
- 13a. If yes, how much is it?
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ dollars  
*Canadian churches, please use Canadian dollars*
- 13b. Does the pastor use all of the funds available each year?
- ☐<sub>1</sub> Yes  
☐<sub>2</sub> No



**14. How many continuing education events (conferences, lectures, workshops etc) has your pastor attended in the last year?**

None ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ more than 6 ☐ 7

**15. Is your pastor a part of a peer learning group?**

☐ 1 Yes → Please answer Q15a as well  
☐ 2 No  
☐ 3 Don't know } Please skip to Q16

**15a. Does your pastor share experiences/learnings from this group with the council?**

☐ 1 Yes  
☐ 2 No

**16. Is your pastor currently in a mentor/mentee relationship?**

☐ 1 Yes  
☐ 2 No  
☐ 3 Don't know

**17. Are any of the above (continuing education, peer learning group, mentor/mentee relationship) connected with the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program (which is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.) in the CRCNA?**

☐ 1 Yes  
☐ 2 No  
☐ 3 Don't know

Please continue to the next page

**18. Below, please rate the overall effect of the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) project on each area.**  
 SPE has included peer learning groups, continuing education events, mentoring relationships, regional pastor funding, and a pastors' spouses' retreat. You may answer "NA" if you have not been a part of any SPE programs and/or are unaware of their effects.

Rate SPE's effect:		Very positive	Positive	Little or none	Negative	Very negative	NA
a.	on your pastor's role as a pastor and on the pastor's ministry.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 9
b.	on your pastor personally.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 9
c.	on the culture of the CRCNA.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 9

Please continue to the next page

**19. OPTIONAL COMMENT #1:** Your frank comments as a clerk are important to us and will be considered carefully by the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence committee. Is there anything on your mind as a clerk that you would like to communicate to us? Write your thoughts as legibly as possible in the space below. Please do not identify yourself.

*Please continue to the next page*

*Please continue to the next page*

**20. OPTIONAL COMMENT #2:** Are there any questions you believe we should be asking clerks that weren't asked above? Did you find any questions confusing, intrusive, or otherwise troublesome? Your feedback will be helpful in improving future communications.

*Please continue on the inside back cover if you wish*

If you have any questions and/or suggestions concerning the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program, please contact:

Lis Van Harten  
(877) 279-9994, ext. 0805  
vanhartl@crcna.org

Thank you very much for your time. When you have completed the questionnaire, please return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope, or mail it to:

Center for Social Research  
Calvin College  
3201 Burton St. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Questionnaire No. I