



# Pulpit, pew and you

**Dear readers,**

Welcome to the 2010 *Observer* Survey. This year, we are interested in tracking how lay people and ministers perceive issues relating to the practice of ministry.

Whether you sit in the pews or stand in a pulpit, you are invited to participate. Some questions are geared to lay people. Ministers are encouraged to answer these as best they can. As was the case with last year's survey, responses are completely confidential; we don't need to know your name, nor will we make any attempt to link responses to individual congregations.

Please mark your answers clearly. When you're finished, pull out your completed survey and mail it by March 31, 2010, to **Observer Survey, The United Church Observer, 478 Huron St., Toronto ON, M5R 2R3.**

Results will be professionally tabulated. We will report on the survey findings in our July/August issue.

**David Wilson, Editor**

1. Does your congregation currently employ a minister?

Yes  No

2. Are you actively looking for a minister/ministry team?

Yes  No

3. If you were advising a gifted young person, which of the following careers would you recommend for them? Please rate the list below from 1 (not recommended at all) to 5 (highly recommended).

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Teacher          | 1...2...3...4...5 |
| X-ray technician | 1...2...3...4...5 |
| Lawyer           | 1...2...3...4...5 |
| Doctor           | 1...2...3...4...5 |
| Carpenter        | 1...2...3...4...5 |
| Minister         | 1...2...3...4...5 |
| Artist           | 1...2...3...4...5 |

4. In your opinion, is The United Church of Canada doing enough to attract new ministers?

Yes  No  No opinion

5. If no, what would you suggest the United Church do to attract new ministers?

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6. Beyond the call from God, who else is responsible for encouraging lay people to consider becoming ministers? (Please choose all that apply.)

- An individual church member
- The pastoral charge/congregation
- The Presbytery/Conference/District
- The General Council
- Theological schools

7. Please select the ONE response below that best represents your personal feelings. "If I knew a person in my congregation who I believed had a gift for ministry . . .

- . . . I would encourage them with a full knowledge of where to start the process."
- . . . I would suggest they see our own minister to learn how to start the process."
- . . . I would be reluctant to mention it as I know little about these things."
- . . . I wouldn't see it as any of my business; these are private matters of faith."

8. Should new ministers be required to serve wherever the church sends them?

Yes  No  No opinion

9. If yes, how long should that minimum initial placement be?

- Less than 1 year  3 years
- 1 to 2 years  More than 3 years

10. In your opinion, is the salary package (wages plus housing allowance or manse) offered to ministers . . .

- Too low  Too high   
 About right  Don't know

11. What do you think is a fair salary for a full-time minister (wages only)?

\$\_\_\_\_\_ per year.

12. Congregations sometimes charge fees for ministry services for weddings and funerals. In the following scenarios, who should keep that money?

	Congregation	Minister	No charge
The wedding of someone who is a supporting member of the congregation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The wedding of someone who is <b>not</b> a supporting member of the congregation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The funeral of someone who is a supporting member of the congregation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The funeral of someone who is <b>not</b> a supporting member of the congregation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. In your opinion, which of the following best describes the current relationship of your minister to the congregation? (Please choose ONE only.)

- Employee/employer   
 Pastor/flock   
 Spiritual guide/seekers   
 Other (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

14. A minister's workweek varies depending on the arrangement with the congregation. Please indicate whether your minister is full time or part time.

- Full time  Part time  Don't know

15. How many hours a week do you expect your minister to work? \_\_\_\_\_

16. How many hours do you estimate that he/she actually works? \_\_\_\_\_

17. How many days per week do you expect your minister to take off? \_\_\_\_\_

18. How many days per week do you estimate he/she actually takes off? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Are you aware of your minister's schedule of days off?  
 Yes  No

20. If you had a family crisis, would you expect your minister to provide support to you on his/her day off?

- Yes  No  No opinion

21. Are you aware of any concern in your congregation about burnout in connection with your current minister, either now or in the past?

- Yes  No

22. If it were necessary to select a new minister, please describe the ideal minister for your congregation.

Gender	Professional Status
Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Ordained <input type="checkbox"/>
Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Diaconal <input type="checkbox"/>
Doesn't matter <input type="checkbox"/>	Lay <input type="checkbox"/>
Age	Don't know what these terms mean <input type="checkbox"/>
Under 30 <input type="checkbox"/>	Doesn't matter <input type="checkbox"/>
30-45 <input type="checkbox"/>	46-60 <input type="checkbox"/>
46-60 <input type="checkbox"/>	Over 60 <input type="checkbox"/>
Over 60 <input type="checkbox"/>	Doesn't matter <input type="checkbox"/>
Doesn't matter <input type="checkbox"/>	Career Status
Marital Status	First career <input type="checkbox"/>
Single <input type="checkbox"/>	Second career <input type="checkbox"/>
Married <input type="checkbox"/>	Doesn't matter <input type="checkbox"/>
In a partnership <input type="checkbox"/>	Financial Status
Doesn't matter <input type="checkbox"/>	Has a financially supporting partner <input type="checkbox"/>
Education	Does <b>not</b> have a financially supporting partner <input type="checkbox"/>
High school graduate <input type="checkbox"/>	Doesn't matter <input type="checkbox"/>
Community college graduate <input type="checkbox"/>	Theological Outlook
University graduate <input type="checkbox"/>	Liberal <input type="checkbox"/>
Postgraduate <input type="checkbox"/>	Conservative <input type="checkbox"/>
Doesn't matter <input type="checkbox"/>	Doesn't matter <input type="checkbox"/>

23. Still thinking about your "ideal" minister, what other qualities would you expect that person to have?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

24. Would you judge your congregation to be financially healthy?

- Yes  No  Don't know

25. Is your congregation . . .

- Growing  Shrinking   
 Stable  Don't know

26. Which of the following best describes the future of your congregation? (Please choose ONE only.)

- In excellent shape. Will see another 20 years or more.
- Some challenges. Will see another 10 to 15 years with work.
- Moderate difficulties. May survive the next 5 years.
- Serious difficulties. Will not survive as things stand.

27. Who is most responsible for securing the future well-being of your church? Please rank the list below from 1 (most responsible) to 3 (least responsible):

- The congregation \_\_\_\_\_
- The minister \_\_\_\_\_
- The denomination \_\_\_\_\_  
(i.e., Presbytery, Conference, District, General Council)

28. Please rate your minister's ability to relate to people of different age groups on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being very weak and 5 being excellent). Please circle the appropriate number in each case or "don't know."

- |                    |                   |            |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Infants/toddlers   | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |
| Children 2-12      | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |
| Youth 13-18        | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |
| Young adults 18-24 | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |
| Adults             | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |
| Seniors            | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |
| Very old/dying     | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |

29. Would you say that your current minister is more comfortable with one gender or another:

- Men       Women       No difference

30. In your own words, how would you describe good preaching?

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31. Considering the last four sermons preached in your church, would you say the majority were:

- |           |                          |      |                          |
|-----------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|
| Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> | Okay | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Good      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> |

32. In your opinion, how often would it be acceptable for your minister to use a prepared sermon downloaded from the Internet?

- |              |                          |        |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|
| All the time | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Occasionally | <input type="checkbox"/> | Never  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

33. Of the two primary responsibilities of a minister, which do you view as most important?

- Preaching is the most important thing.
- Providing one-on-one pastoral care to the congregation is the most important thing.

34. In which of the following circumstances would you expect your minister to pay you a visit? (Please choose all that apply.)

- You're housebound either through old age or illness
- You're in the hospital facing cancer
- You're in the hospital for bunion surgery
- Your marriage is in crisis
- You're depressed
- You're lonely
- You're in the mood for a friendly chat

35. In your opinion, is the minister responsible for making the church better known in your community?

- Yes       No       No opinion

36. If yes, please rate your minister on each of the factors listed below using a 5-point scale (1 being not at all effective and 5 being very effective).

- |  |                   |            |
|--|-------------------|------------|
| Getting our church mentioned in the media                      | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |
| Communicating through new media (websites, blogging)           | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |
| Undertaking interfaith activities with other places of worship | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |
| Representing the church at community events                    | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |
| Being a member of service clubs and local boards               | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |
| Doing chaplaincy work at a university or hospital              | 1...2...3...4...5 | Don't know |

37. To what extent should your minister be politically involved? He/she should . . .

- |  | Yes                      | No                       | No opinion               |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Preach about political issues                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Endorse a candidate for political office             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Take part in political rallies or protests           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Offer sanctuary in the church to political refugees  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Promote the United Church's stance on current issues | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

38. Do you expect your minister's family to attend Sunday worship services regularly?

- Yes       No

39. Do you expect your minister's family to be involved in the church beyond attending church worship services?

Yes  No

40. Which of the following best expresses your opinion? (Please choose ONE only.) "When it comes to moral standards, my minister . . .

. . . should live by a higher moral code than the rest of the community."

. . . should live by the same moral code as the rest of the community."

. . . is human. I have no exceptional moral expectations of my minister."

41. Please choose all that apply. "It would make me uncomfortable to see my minister . . .

. . . at the liquor store."

. . . in a bathing suit."

. . . at a bar."

. . . dancing."

. . . being affectionate with his/her spouse/partner."

Other (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

42. In our congregation, the minister MUST know how to:

Yes No

Operate the photocopier

Send e-mails, use the Internet

Format the bulletin

Use proper grammar and spelling

Operate a snow blower/ lawn mower

Work PowerPoint/AV projector

Fix the microphone at the pulpit

Understand a balance sheet

43. For Sunday and other worship services, the minister should wear . . .

Traditional robe and stole

Clerical collar with suit or dress suit

Just a suit or dress

Casual wear

Doesn't matter

44. For all other activities (visiting, attending meetings, etc.) the minister should wear . . .

Traditional robe and stole

Clerical collar with suit or dress suit

Just a suit or dress

Casual wear

Doesn't matter

## A little about you

45. Are you:

Male  Female

46. Into which of the following age brackets do you fall? Please check the appropriate range.

12-17  50-64

18-24  65-74

25-34  75+

35-49

47. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?

Some high school or less

Completed high school

Some college or university

College diploma

University undergraduate degree

Post-graduate degree

48. Which of the following best describes the extent of your current involvement in any United Church congregation?

I am a minister currently serving a pastoral charge (ordained, diaconal, lay)

I work as a staff associate or another paid position in the church

I am a member or adherent of a congregation

I am unable/choose not to be involved at this time

49. What are the first three digits of your postal code? (for classification purposes only) \_\_\_\_\_

We are contemplating a series of focus groups on this and other topics of vital importance to our readers. Were such a group to be hosted in your community, would you be interested in attending this hour-long session? If so, please add your name, address, e-mail address and/or telephone number in the space provided below and mail it back to us along with your survey. You do not have to fill this in for your answers above to be included in the survey, and you have our continued assurance that even if you do provide us with your information, it will not be linked to the survey results.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/town \_\_\_\_\_

Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your co-operation. Please mail your completed survey by March 31, 2010, to:

Reader Survey, The United Church Observer,  
478 Huron St., Toronto, ON M5R 2R3

To print a PDF of this survey, go to [www.ucobserver.org](http://www.ucobserver.org)