Parish Practices Profile

2002

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Pre-Conciliar Commission Project Team

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Get the facts first.
You can distort them later.

-- Mark Twain

Your Presenter

- ## Lifelong Orthodox Christian
  - ### Variety of experiences
    - large, old line parish
    - Founding Member of Mission parish
    - Diocesan, Council, Pre-Conciliar etc.
- ## Consultant: New Product Innovation
- ## Author: Two survey based books
  - ### Similar methodology as this survey.

Experienced… not an expert

Objectives

1. Profile OCA parish life: 2002
   - Inform delegates
   - Contrast your parish with others
   - Baseline for future efforts
- 2. Explore characteristics of growing vs. non-growing parishes

Survey Outline

- Respondent Characteristics
- Worship & Sacraments
- Education
- Structure & Administration
- Social & Other Activities
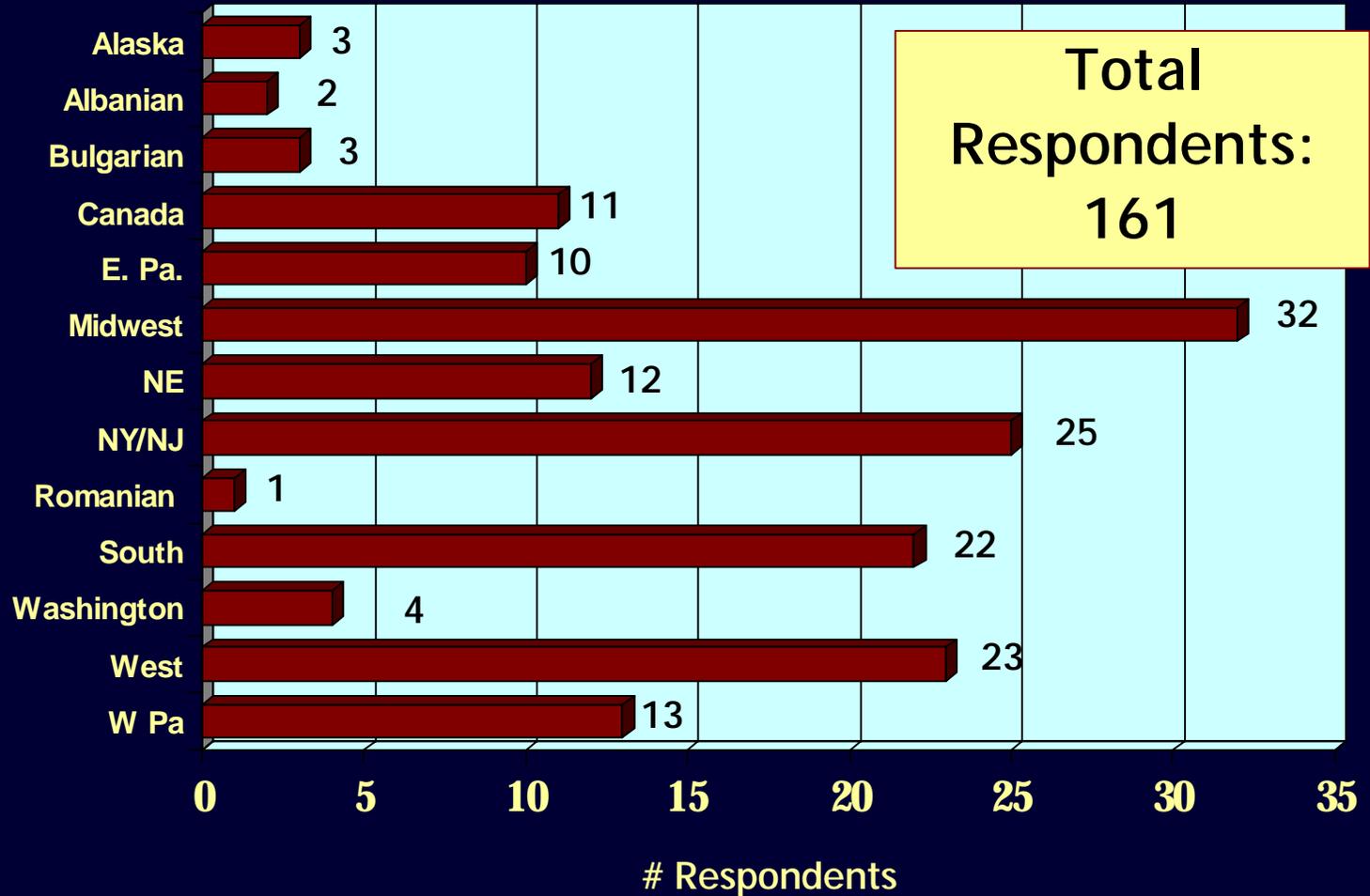- Inter-Orthodox Relationships
- Open Ended Inputs

Note

Unless other wise indicated, the source of all data in this document is the 13th AAC Parish Profile Survey.
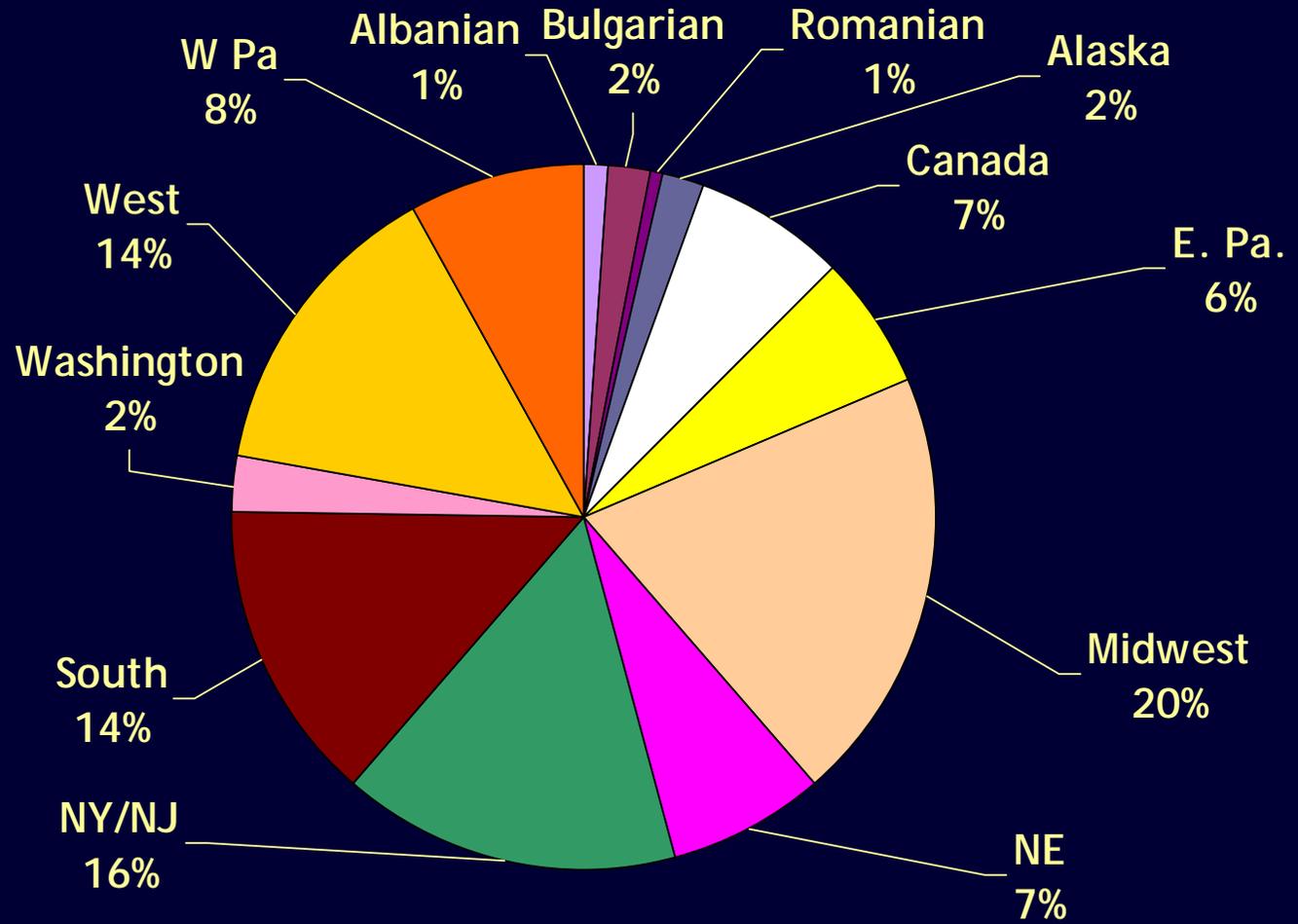
Respondent Characteristics

Diocese
Founding Date
Growth
Size
Parishioner Age
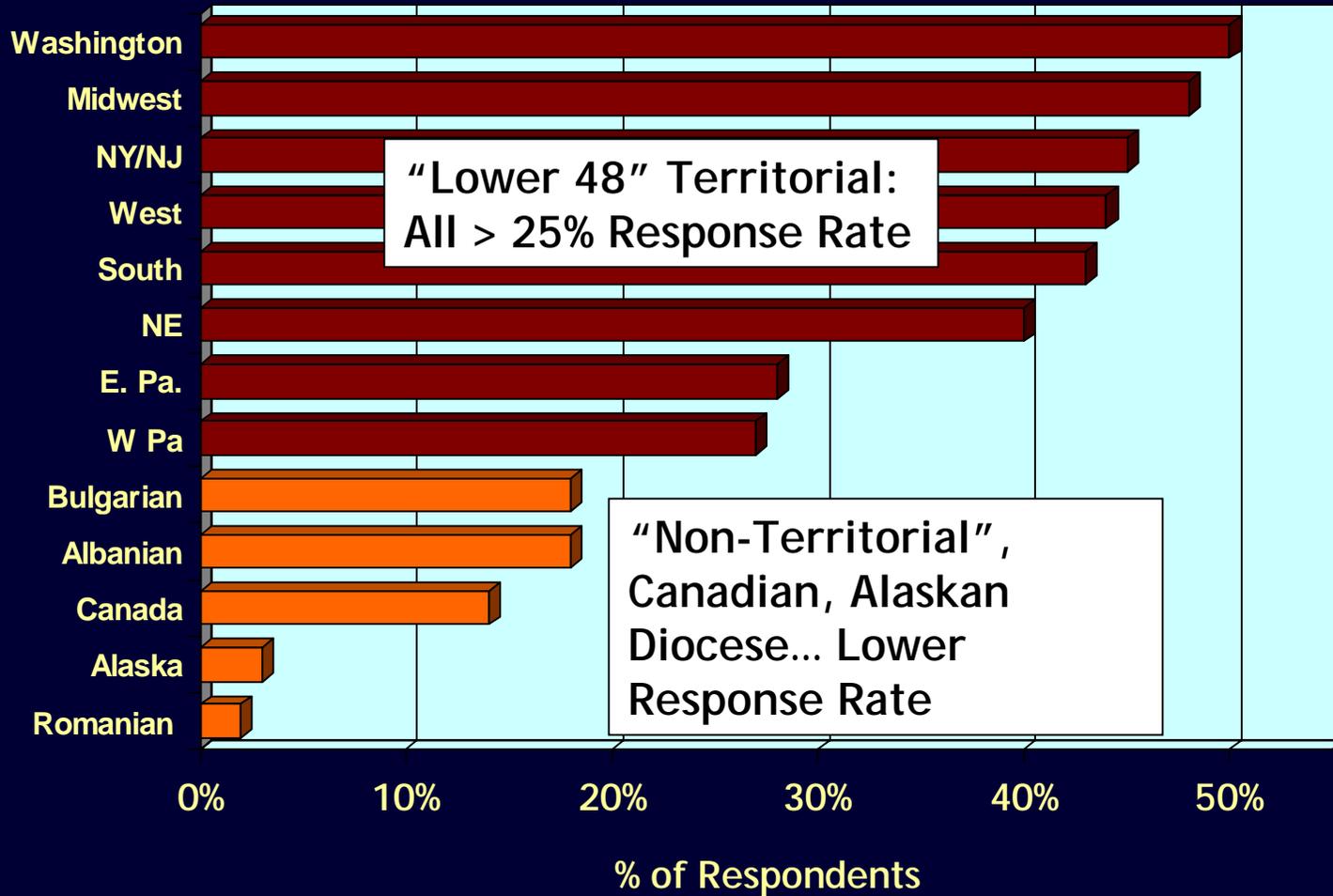Immigrants
Converts
Number of Pastors

Respondents by Diocese

Total Respondents: 161

Diocese	# Respondents
Alaska	3
Albanian	2
Bulgarian	3
Canada	11
E. Pa.	10
Midwest	32
NE	12
NY/NJ	25
Romanian	1
South	22
Washington	4
West	23
W Pa	13

Respondents

Respondents by Diocese

Albanian 1%
Bulgarian 2%
Romanian 1%
Alaska 2%
W Pa 8%
Canada 7%
West 14%
E. Pa. 6%
Washington 2%
Midwest 20%
South 14%
NE 7%
NY/NJ 16%

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Response Rate by Diocese

"Lower 48" Territorial:
All > 25% Response Rate

"Non-Territorial",
Canadian, Alaskan
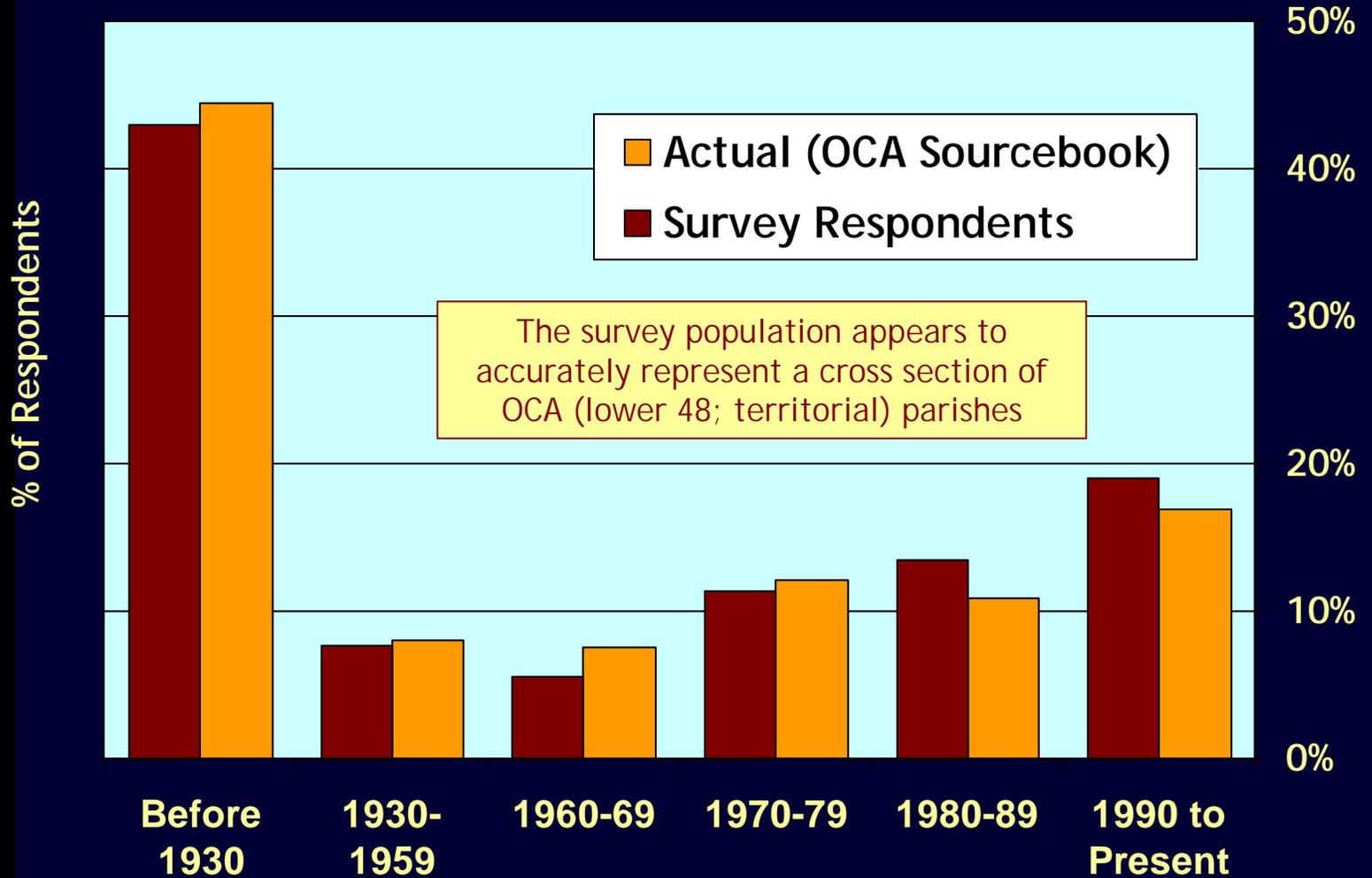Diocese... Lower
Response Rate

% of Respondents
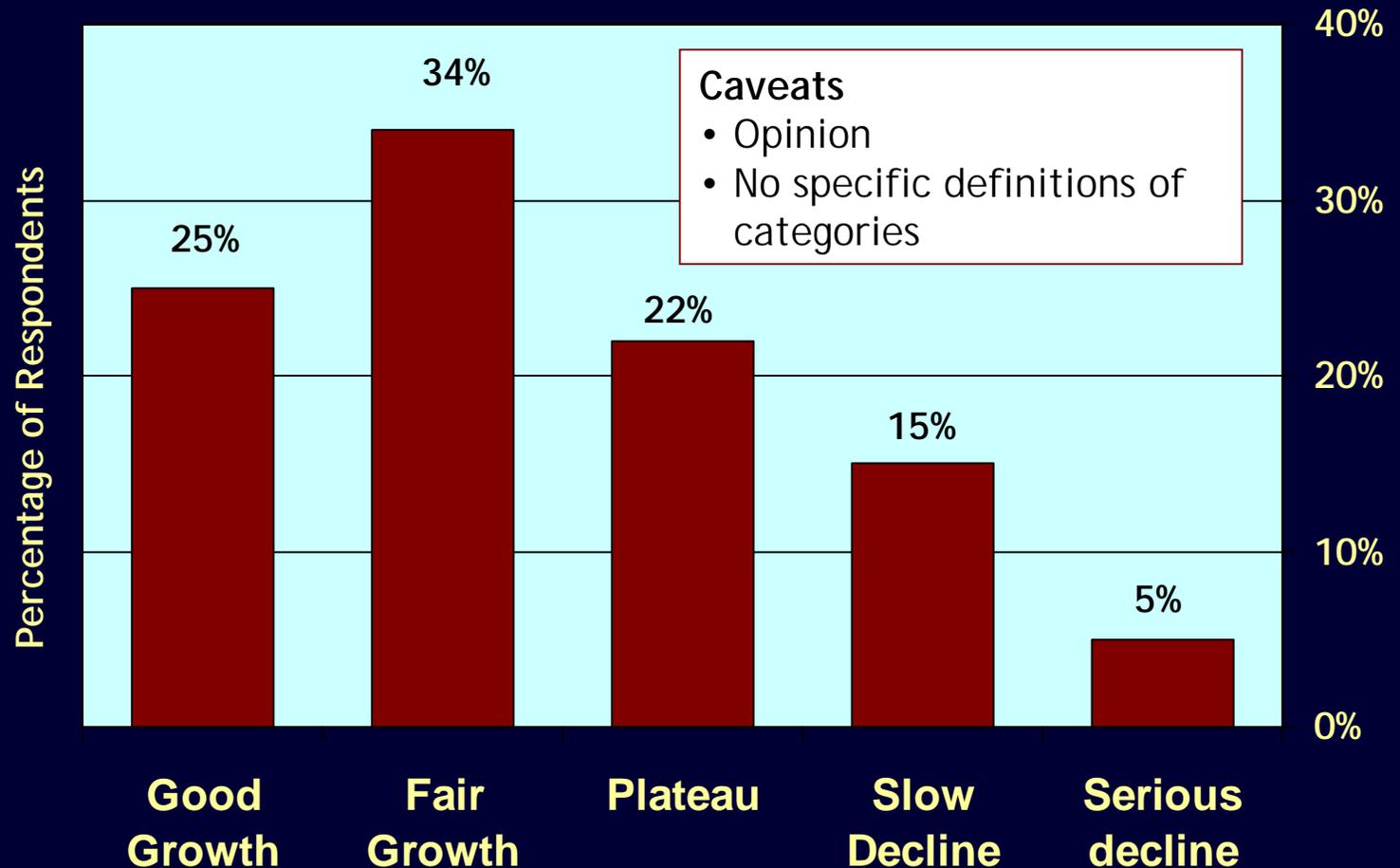
Is the Survey A Representative Sample?

- No...
  - "Non-Territorial, Canadian, Alaskan Dioceses
    - 20 of 285 parishes responded (7%)
- Probably Yes...
  - "US Lower 48" Territorial
    - 141 of 348 (41%)
    - Founding dates correlate with actual
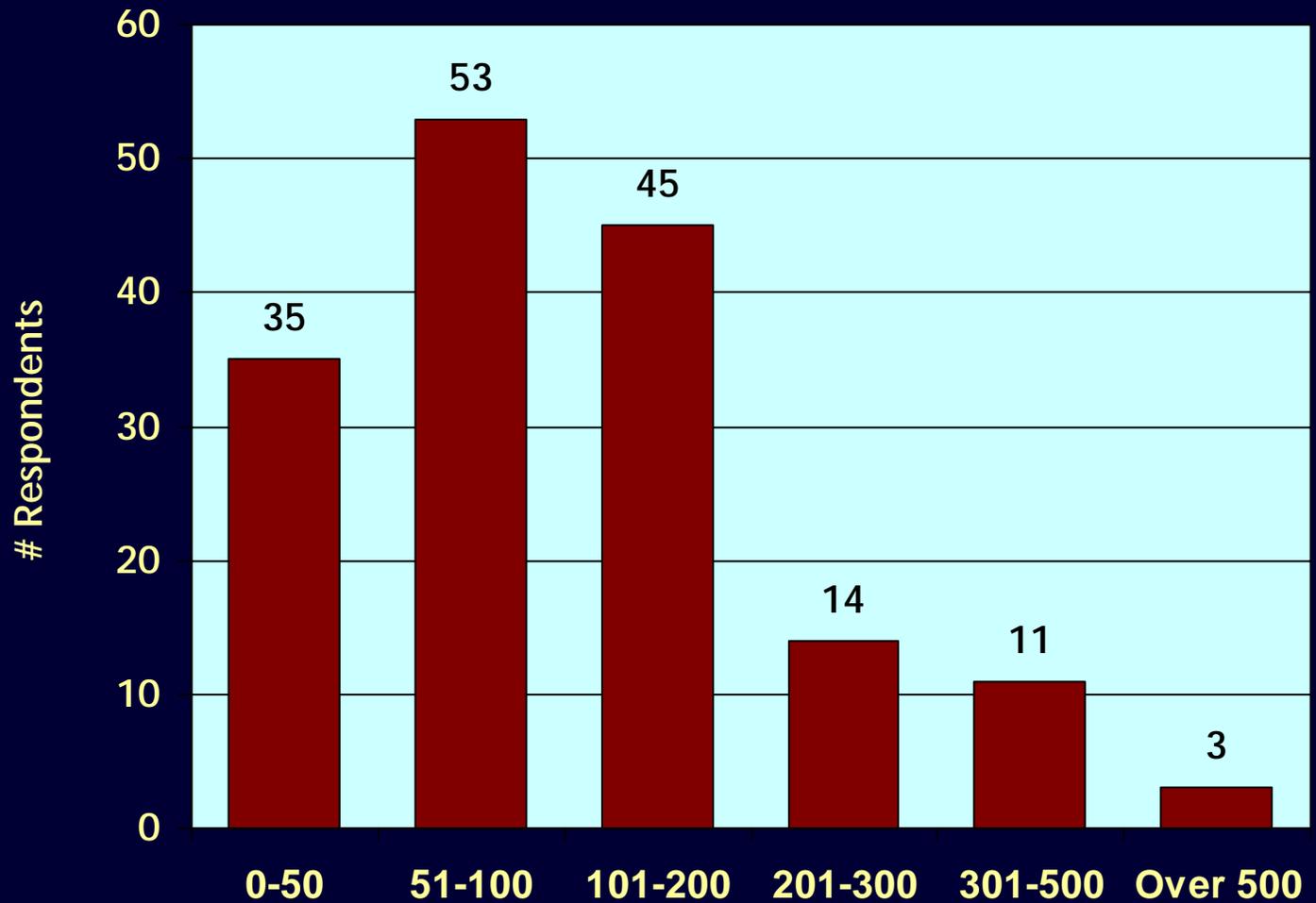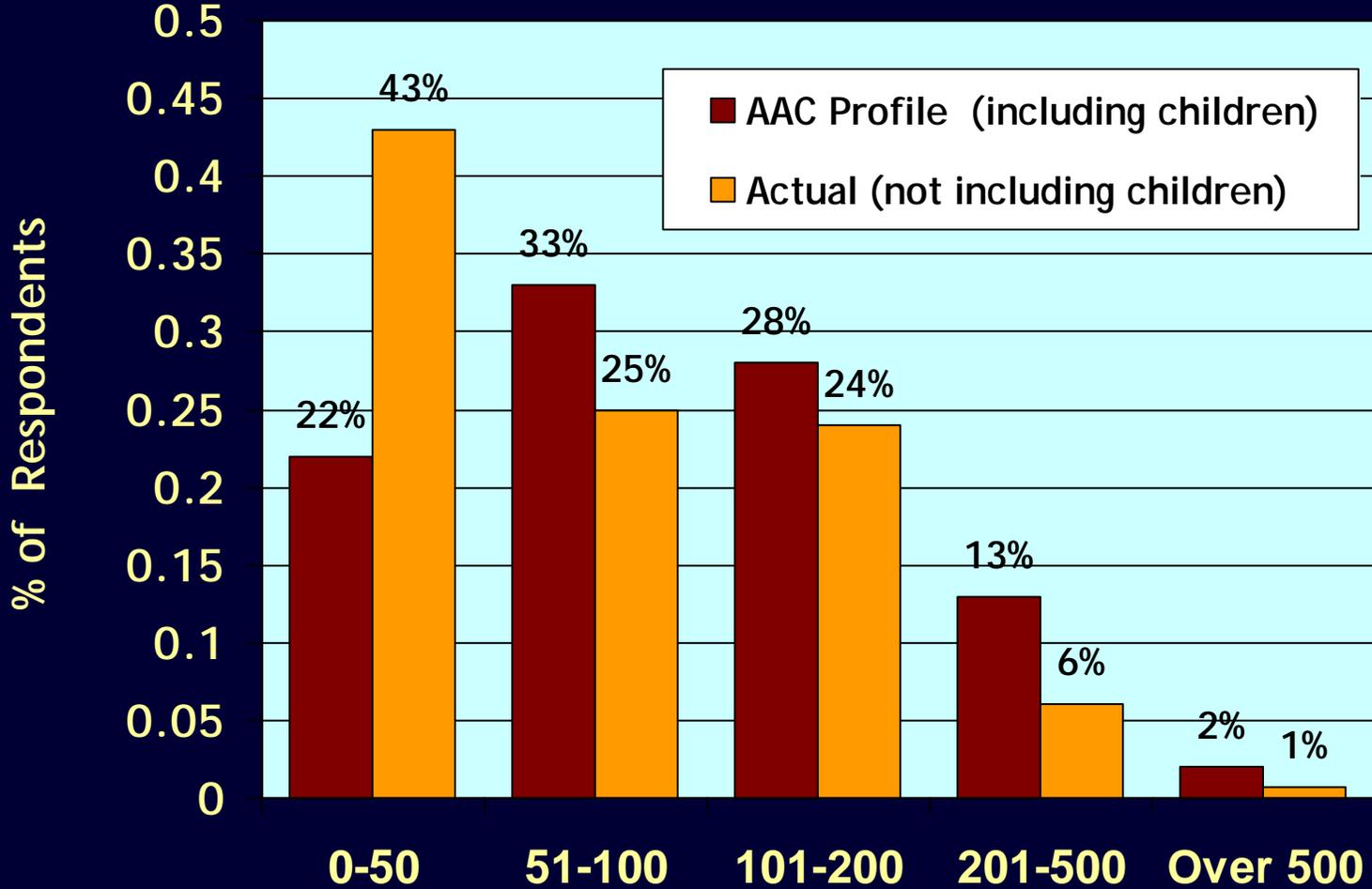
Parish Founding Date
Territorial/US Lower 48

Legend:
- Actual (OCA Sourcebook)
- Survey Respondents

The survey population appears to accurately represent a cross section of OCA (lower 48; territorial) parishes

Categories: Before 1930, 1930-1959, 1960-69, 1970-79, 1980-89, 1990 to Present

Y-axis: % of Respondents (0% to 50%)

Recent Growth: Last Three Years

Percentage of Respondents

- Good Growth: 25%
- Fair Growth: 34%
- Plateau: 22%
- Slow Decline: 15%
- Serious decline: 5%

Caveats
- Opinion
- No specific definitions of categories

Parish Size Including Children

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Parish Size

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Parush Size Including Children

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Growth Vs. Parish Founding Date

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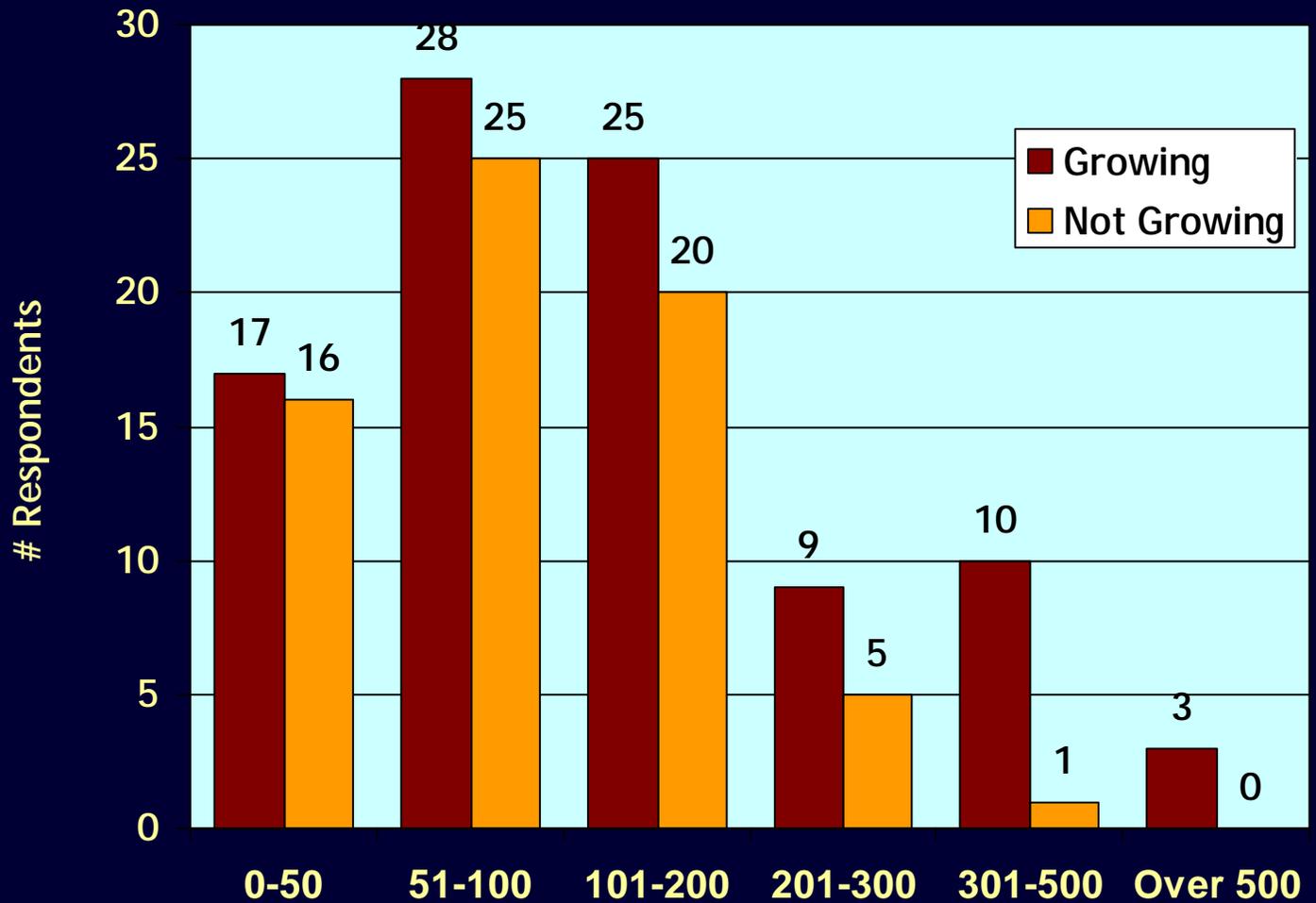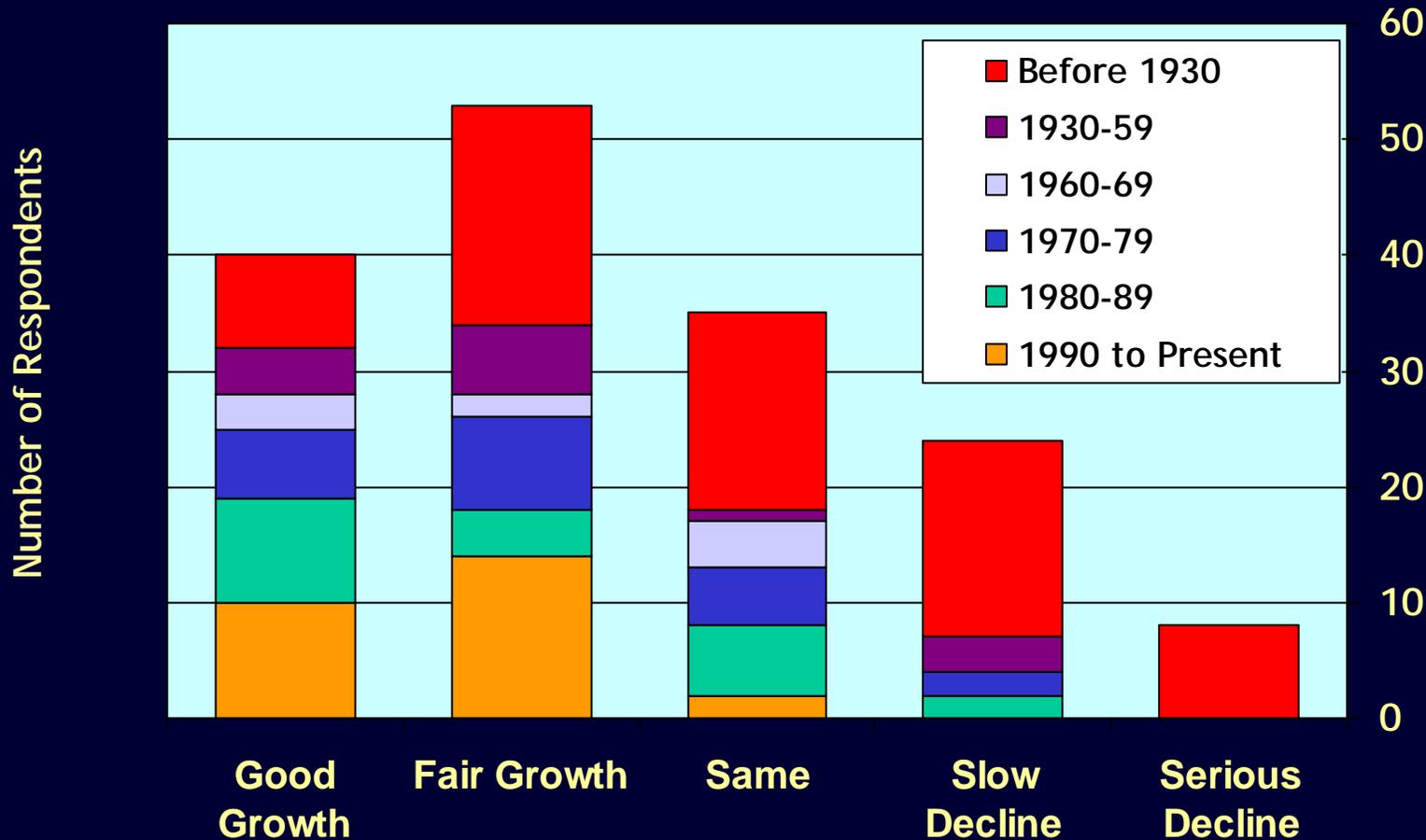
Growth Vs. Parish Founding Date

Parishioner Age Change

% of Respondents

Gotten Older	About the Same	Gotten Younger
27%	37%	36%

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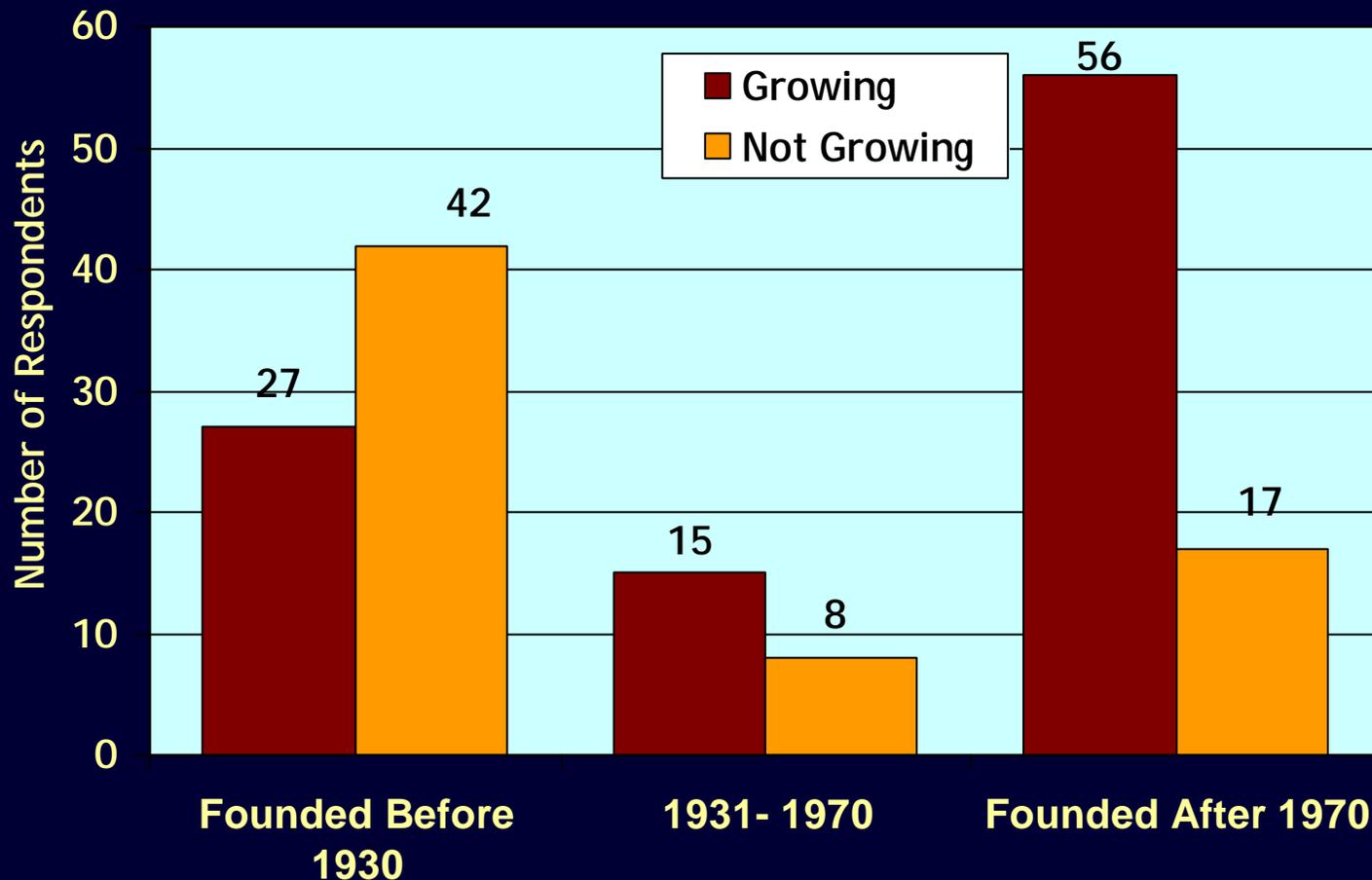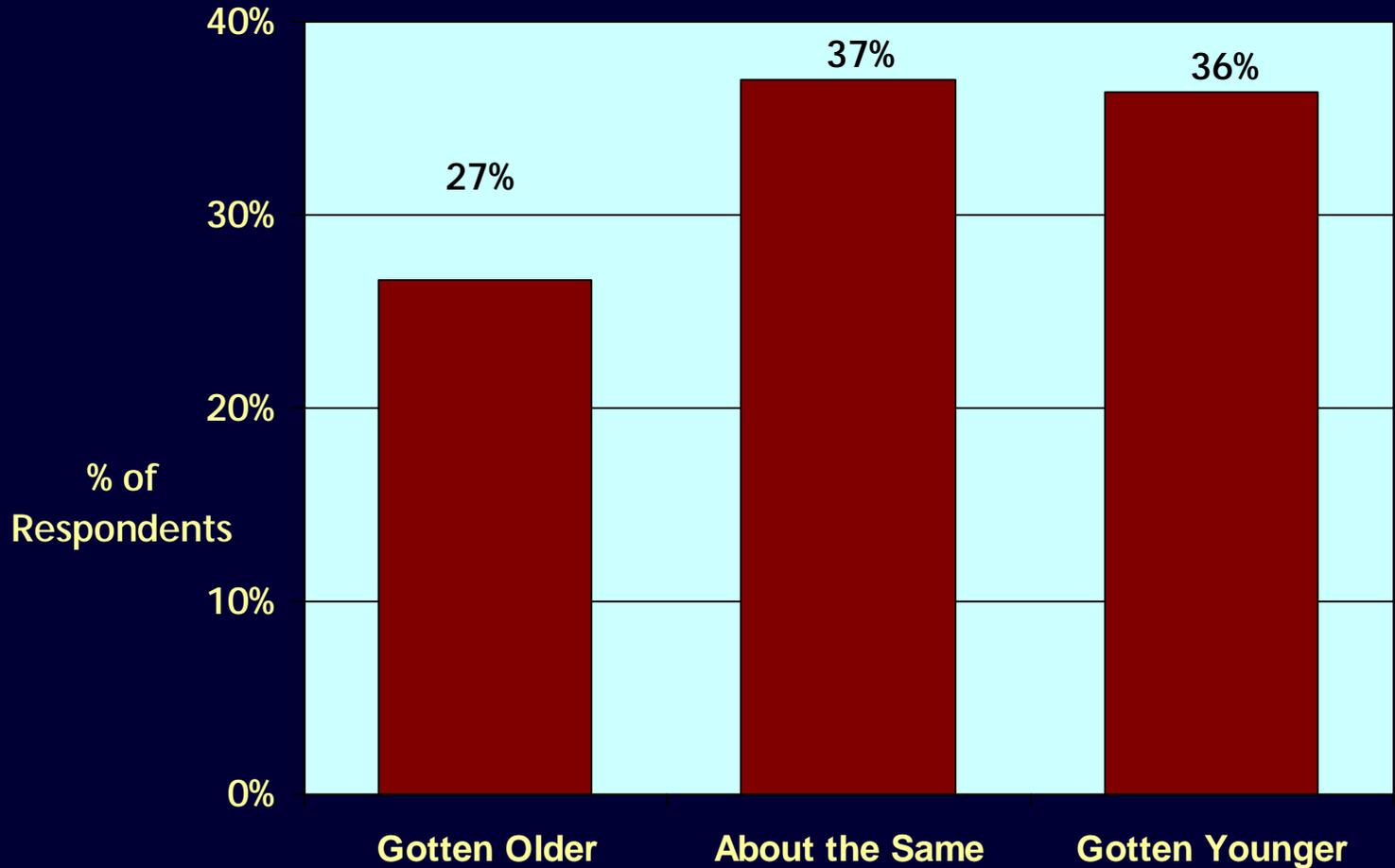
Parishioner Age Change Vs. Growth

% Getting Younger

Good Growth	Fair Growth	Same	Slow/Serious Decline
65%	54%	6%	7%

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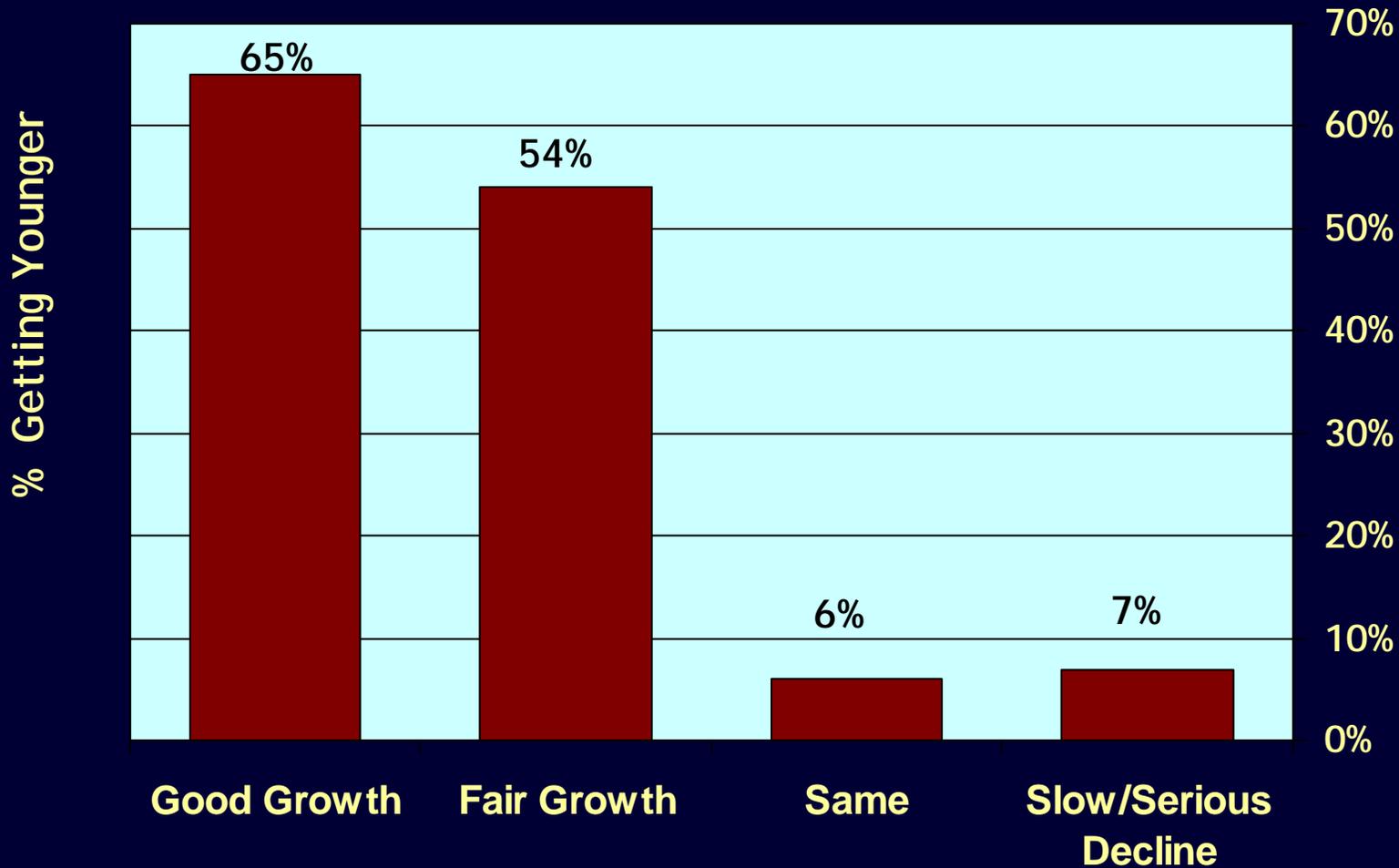
Recent Influx of Immigrants

Yes
34%

No
66%

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Influx of Immigrants

50%

37%

22%

Respondents

60%

50%

40%

30%

20%

10%

0%

Good Growth   **Fair Growth**   **Non Growing**

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Percentage of Converts

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Percentage of Converts

All Pre-1930 Parishes Which Are in Serious Decline also Indicate < 10% converts

Legend:
- Before 1930
- After 1930

Y-axis: % of Respondents (0% to 60%)

X-axis categories and values:
- 0-10%: Before 1930 = 52%, After 1930 = 13%
- 11-20%: Before 1930 = 25%, After 1930 = 10%
- 21-30%: Before 1930 = 9%, After 1930 = 13%
- 31-40%: Before 1930 = 1%, After 1930 = 18%
- 41-50%: Before 1930 = 4%, After 1930 = 15%
- Over 50%: Before 1930 = 1%, After 1930 = 31%

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Percentage of Converts Vs. Growth

% of Respondents Growing

Growth and Presence of Converts Strongly Related

- 0-10%: 35%
- 11-20%: 46%
- 21-30%: 66%
- 31-40%: 57%
- 41-50%: 71%
- Over 50%: 80%

% of Converts

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Immigrants & Converts

% of Respondents Growing

- (n=17) 82% — Immigration + >40% Converts
- (n=30) 73% — No Immigration + >40% Converts
- (n=38) 68% — Immigration; <40% Converts
- (n=77) 40% — No Immigration; < 40% Converts

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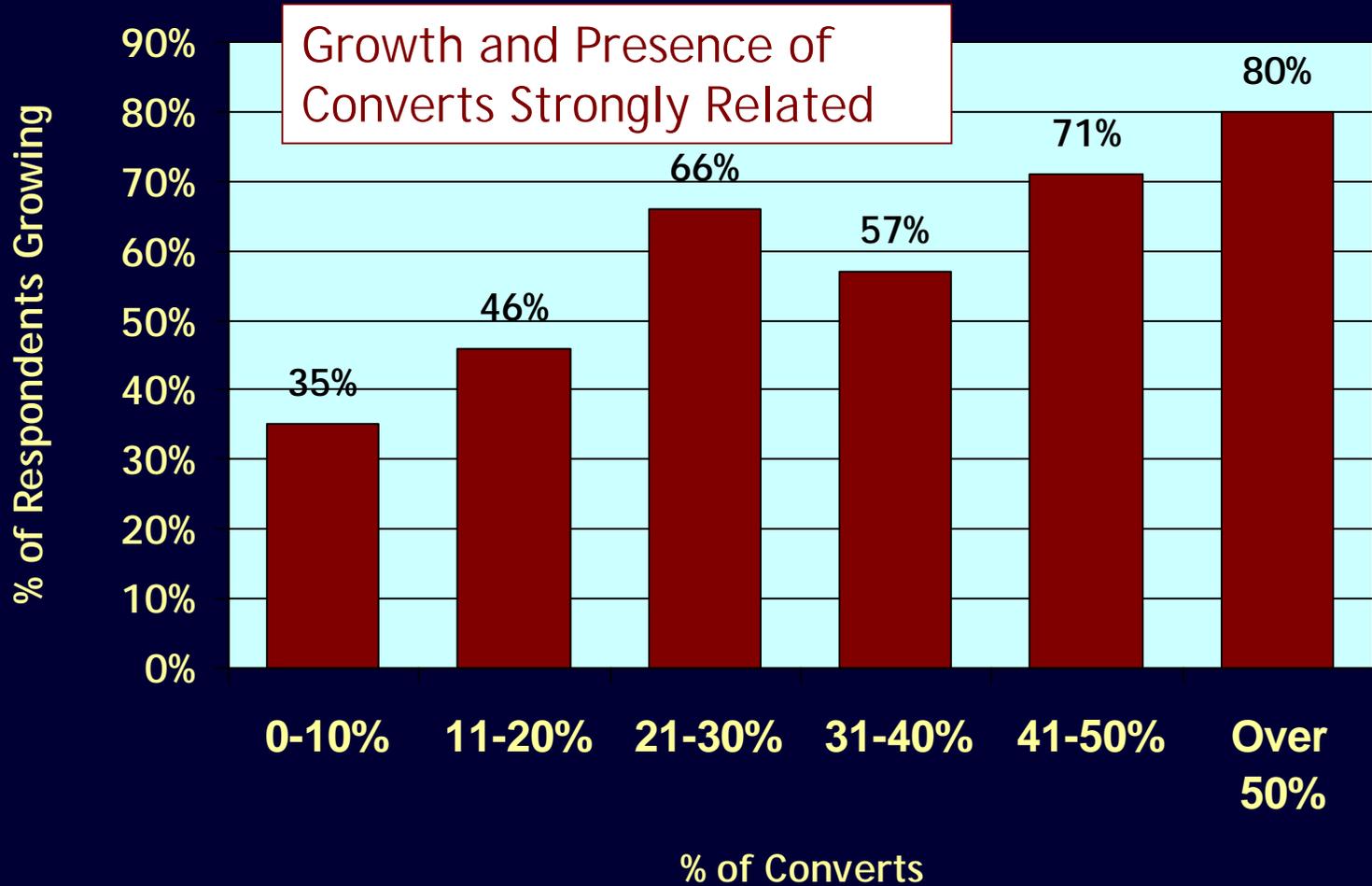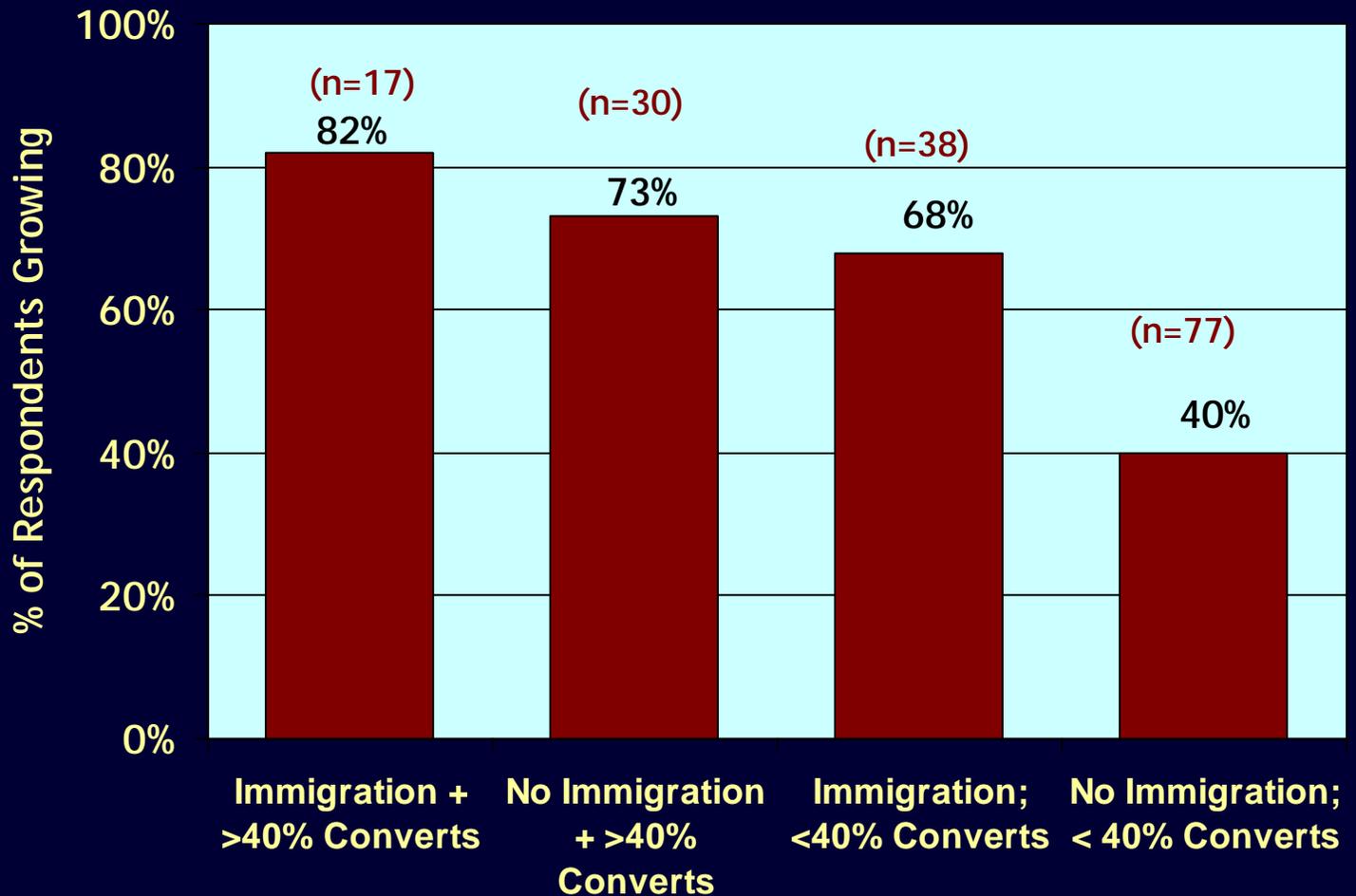
Immigrants & Converts

Immigrants?

	Yes	No
40% or Greater Converts	82% Growing	73 % Growing
<40% Converts	68% Growing	40% Growing

Number of Pastors: Last Ten Years

One 47%

Two 27%

Three 18%

Four 4%

Over Four 4%

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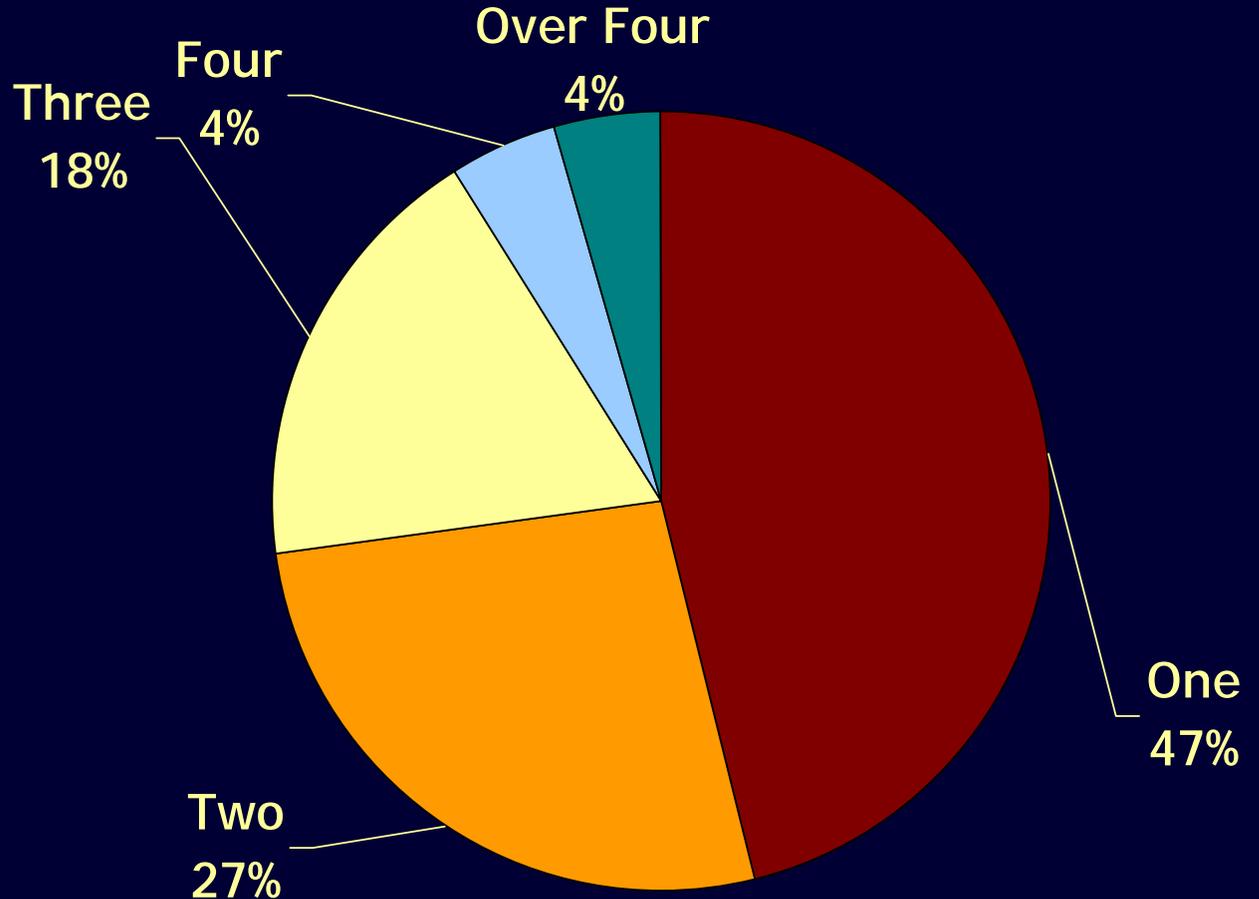
Number of Pastors Vs. Growth

% With Same Priest Last Ten Yeas

Good Growth: 63%
Fair Growth: 43%
No Growth: 39%

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Number of Pastors Vs. Growth

% Growing

Bar chart showing % Growing by number of pastors:
- One: 65%
- Two: 57%
- Three: 52%
- Four: 38%
- Over Four: 14%

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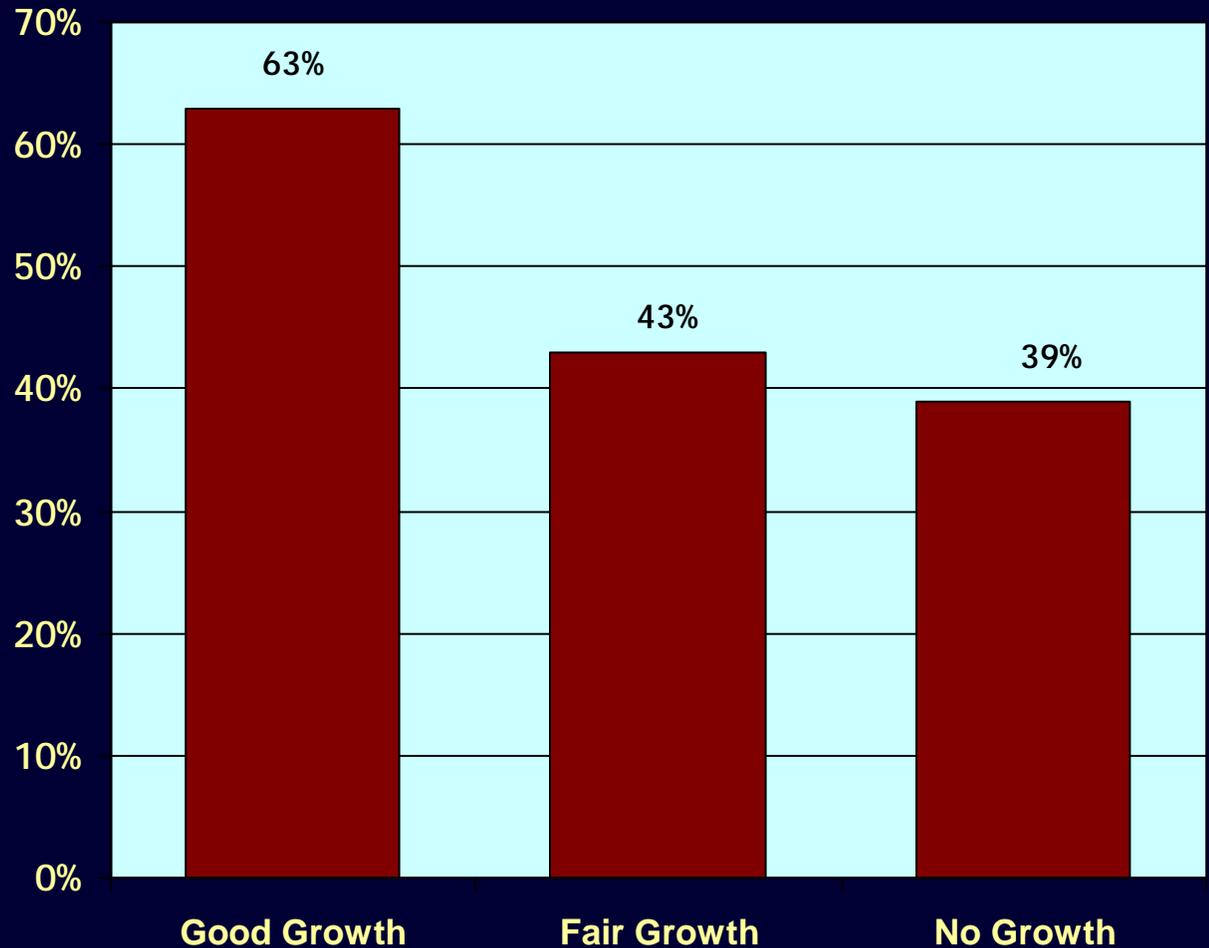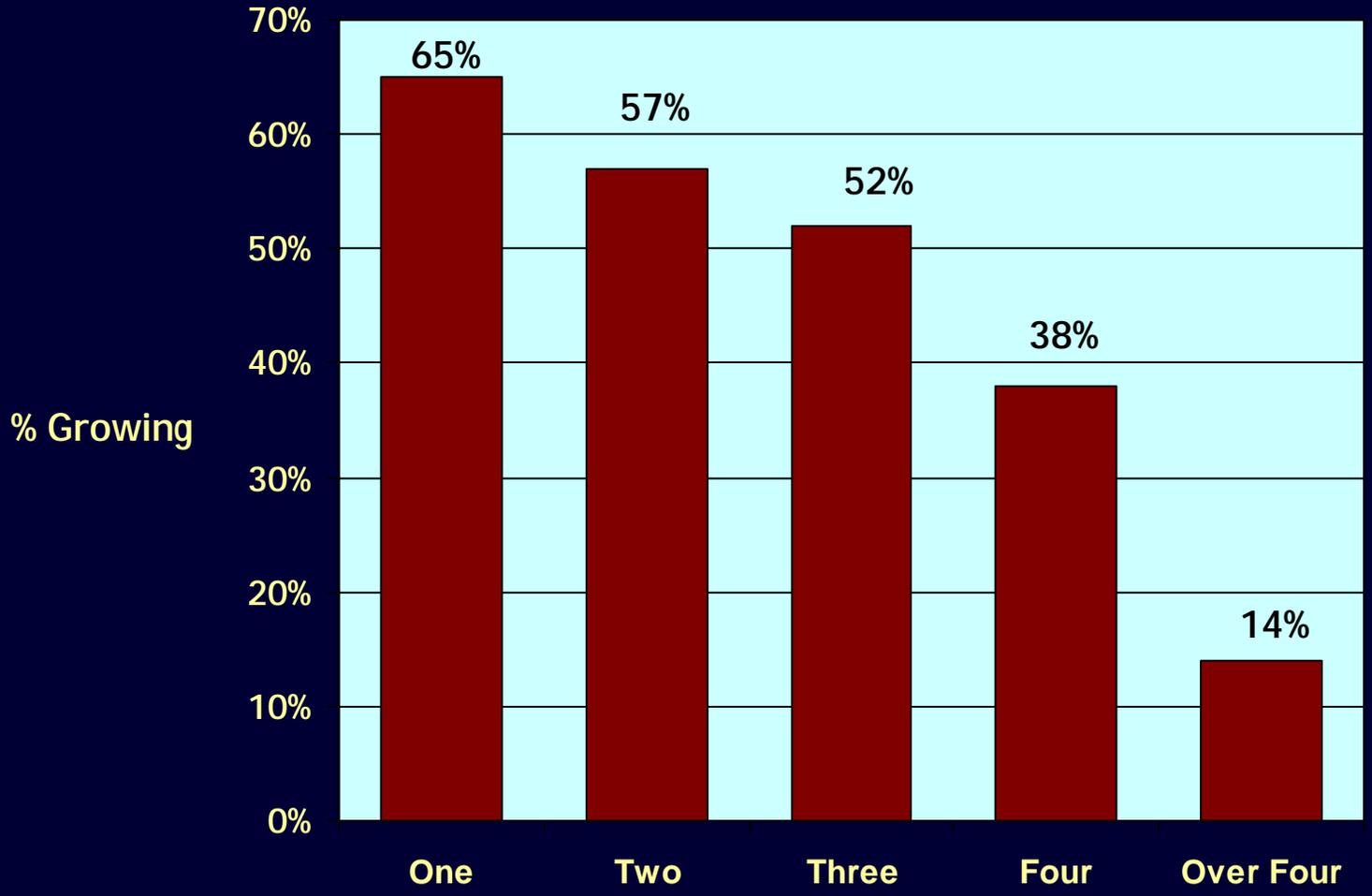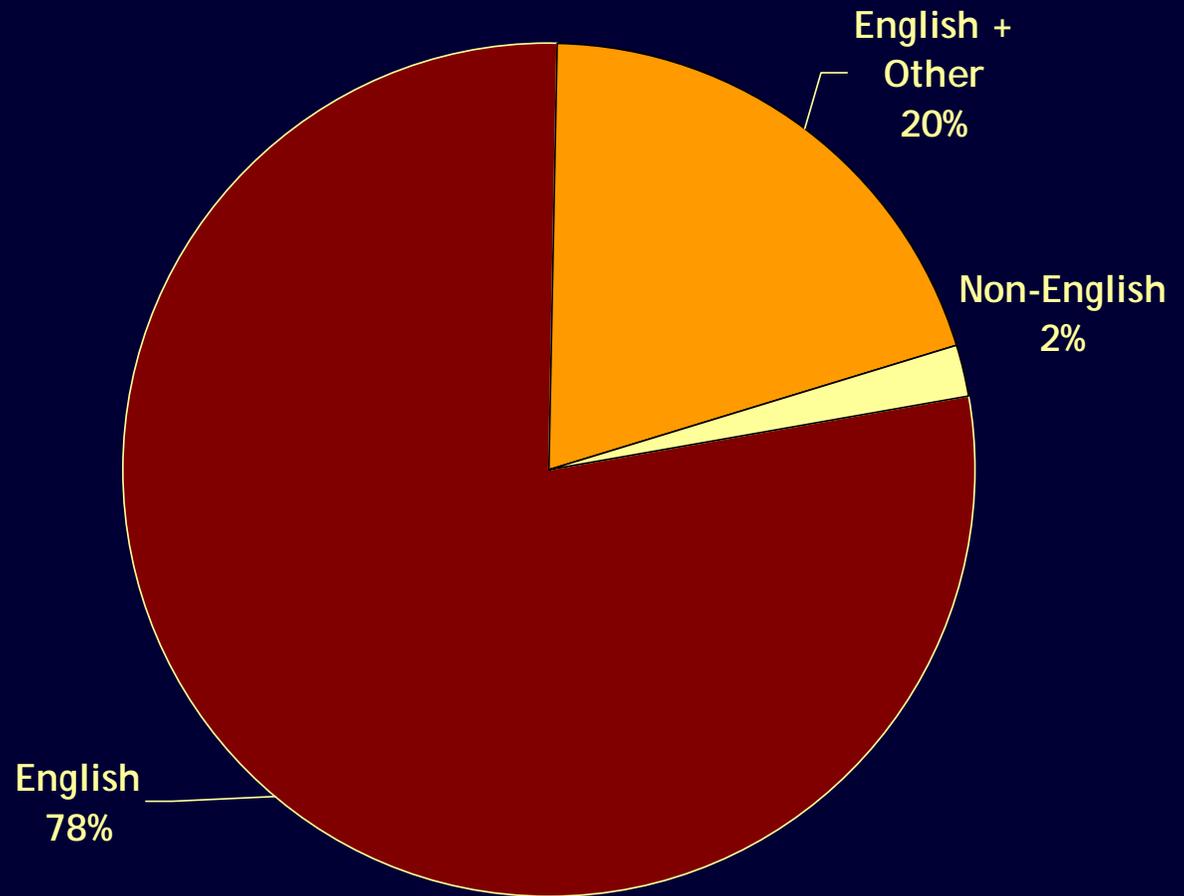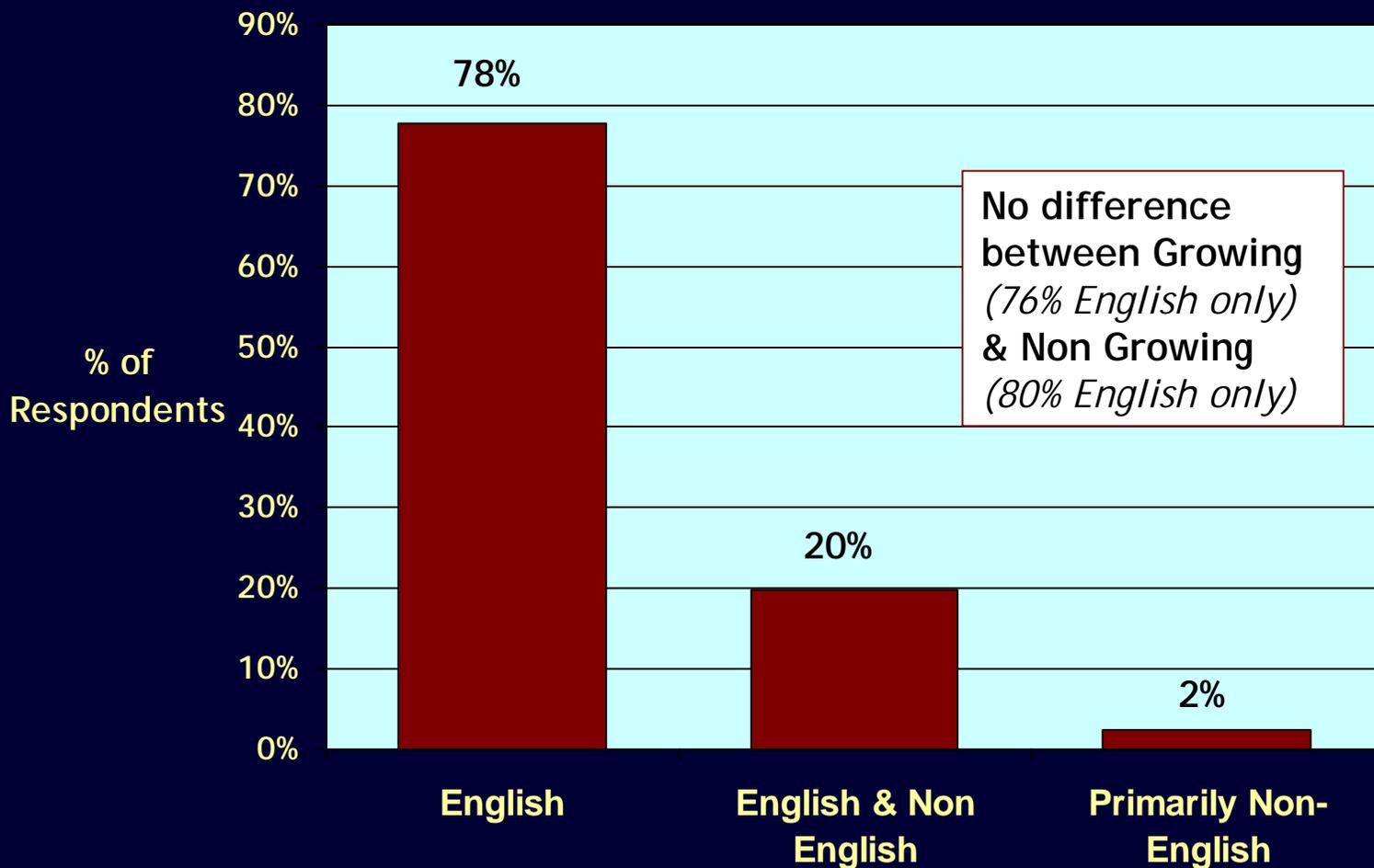
Worship and Sacraments

Language

Service Frequency

Participation

Communion

Confession

Music

Language of Services

English + Other 20%

Non-English 2%

English 78%

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Language of Services

% of Respondents

90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

78%

20%

2%

English

English & Non English

Primarily Non-English

No difference between Growing *(76% English only)* & Non Growing *(80% English only)*

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Number of Services Per Week

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Number of Services Per Week

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Participation in Services

% of Respondents

Divine Liturgy

- 0-20%: 1%
- 21-40%: 1%
- 40-60%: 28%
- 61-80%: 48%
- Over 80%: 22%

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Participation in Services

% of Respondents

Legend:
- ■ Divine Liturgy on Typical Sunday
- ■ Vespers or Vigil on Typical Saturday Night

Range	Divine Liturgy on Typical Sunday	Vespers or Vigil on Typical Saturday Night
0-20%	1%	59%
21-40%	1%	28%
40-60%	28%	9%
61-80%	48%	3%
Over 80%	22%	1%

Participation in Services

% of Respondents

Legend:
- ■ Divine Liturgy
- ■ Vespers or Vigil
- ■ Non Sunday Feast day
- ■ Something other than Sunday

Categories: 0-20%, 21-40%, 40-60%, 61-80%, Over 80%

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Participation in Services vs. Growth
Divine Liturgy

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Participation in Services vs. Growth
Divine Liturgy & Vespers

Chart legend:
- Divine Liturgy > 60%
- Vespers > 40%

Growth Category	Divine Liturgy > 60%	Vespers > 40%
Good Growth	82%	30%
Fair Growth	74%	13%
Plateau	60%	3%
Slight Decline	63%	8%
Serious Decline	14%	0%

Y-axis: % of Respondents

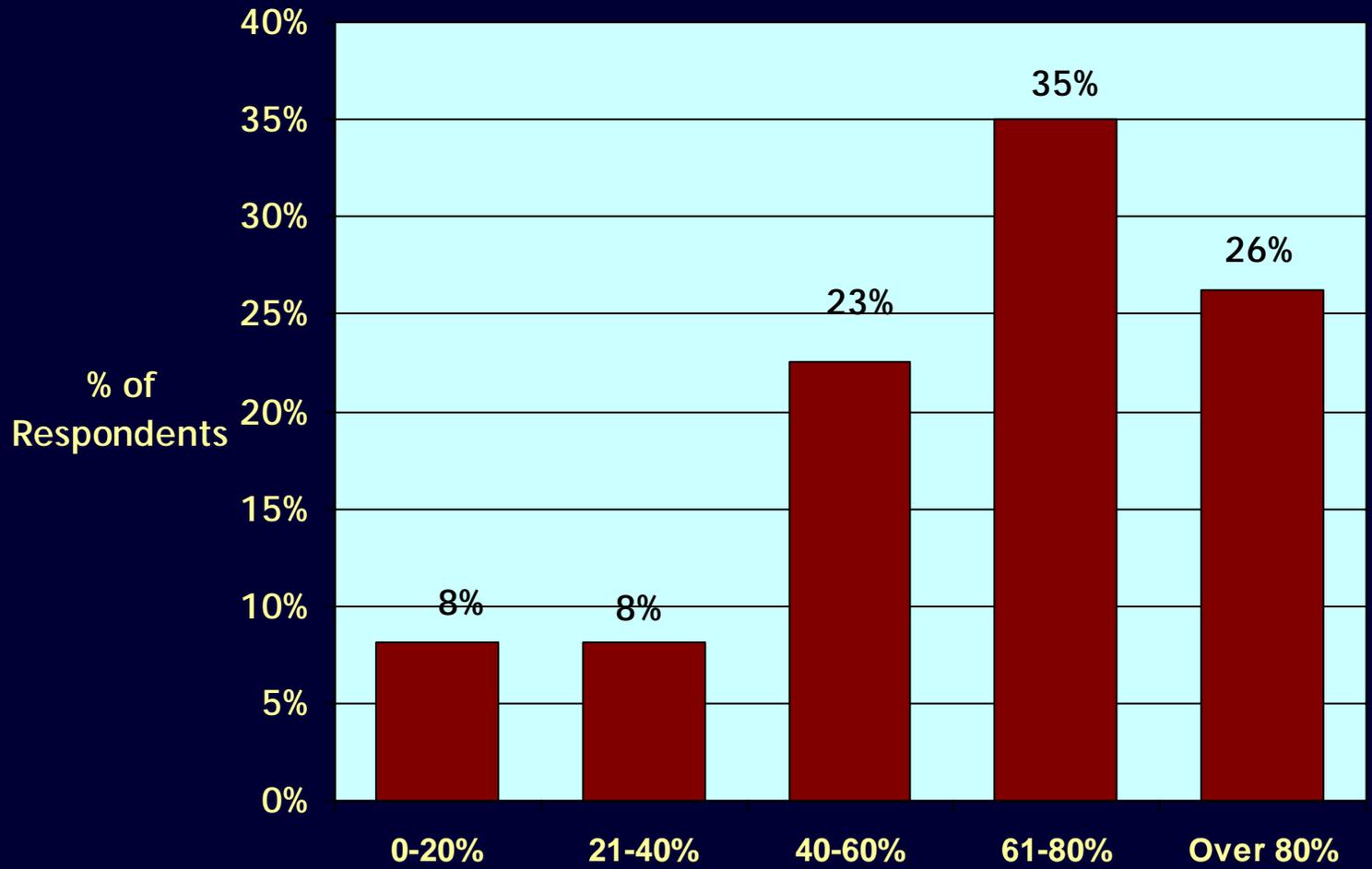13th AAC Parish Profile

Use Caution When Interpreting Data

- There are a number of charts in this document that indicate a data relationship between an attribute (e.g.# of services) and another attribute (e.g. growth).
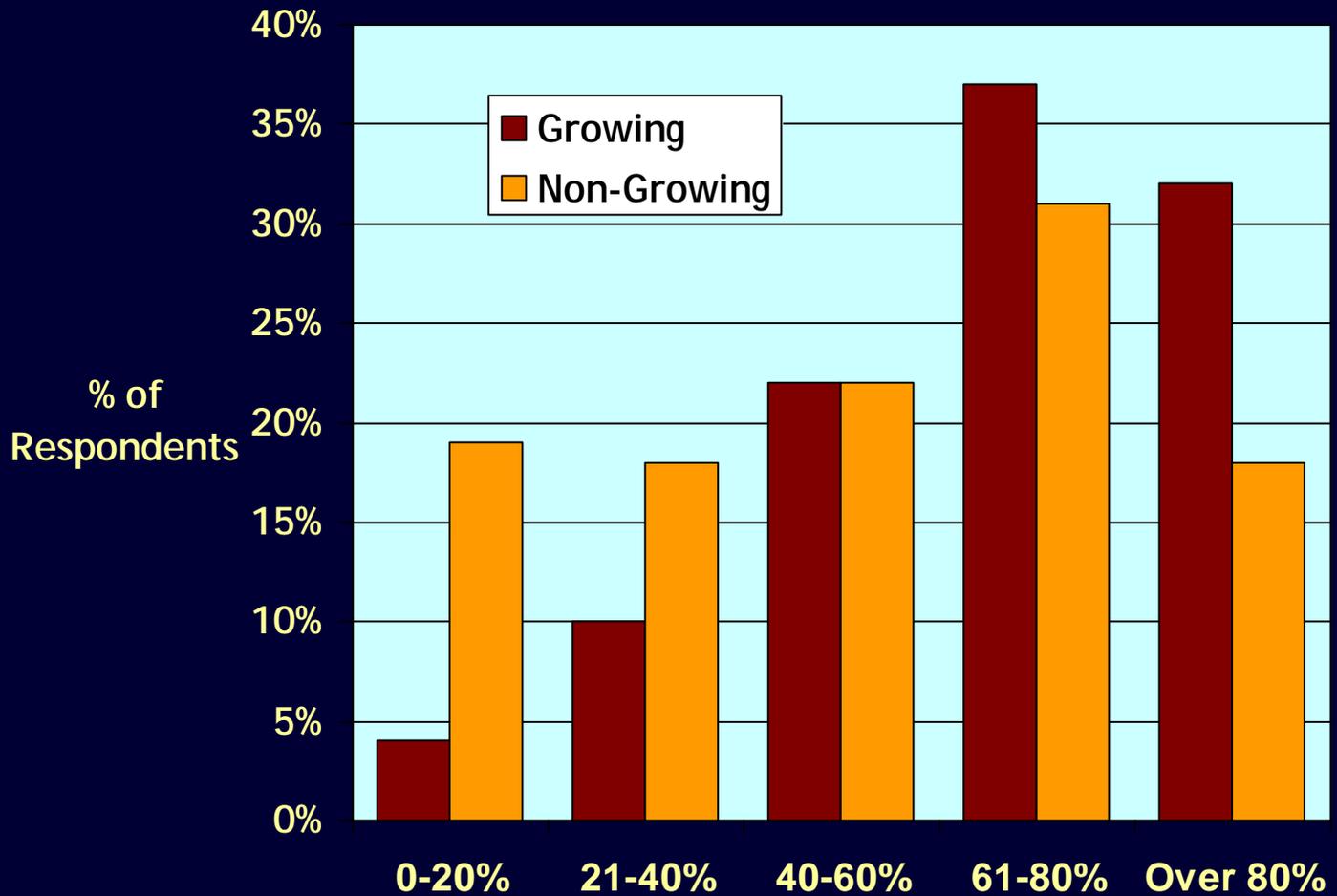
Do not infer cause and effect.

- For example…
  - The previous data implies that holding more services causes parishes to grow.
  - This may be true but the opposite may be true as well. (Growing parishes hold more services)
  - There is a relationship but not necessarily causality. Further study would be necessary to draw clear conclusions.

"The thinker makes a great mistake when he asks after cause and effect. They both together make up the indivisible phenomena." -- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Receive Communion at Each Liturgy

% of Respondents

	0-20%	21-40%	40-60%	61-80%	Over 80%
	8%	8%	23%	35%	26%

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Receive Communion At Each Liturgy Vs. Growth

% of Respondents

Legend: Growing, Non-Growing

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Confession More Than Once a Year

% of Respondents

Category	%
0-20%	11%
21-40%	16%
40-60%	24%
61-80%	25%
Over 80%	25%

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Confession More Than Once a Year

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Liturgical Music

More than one answer allowed

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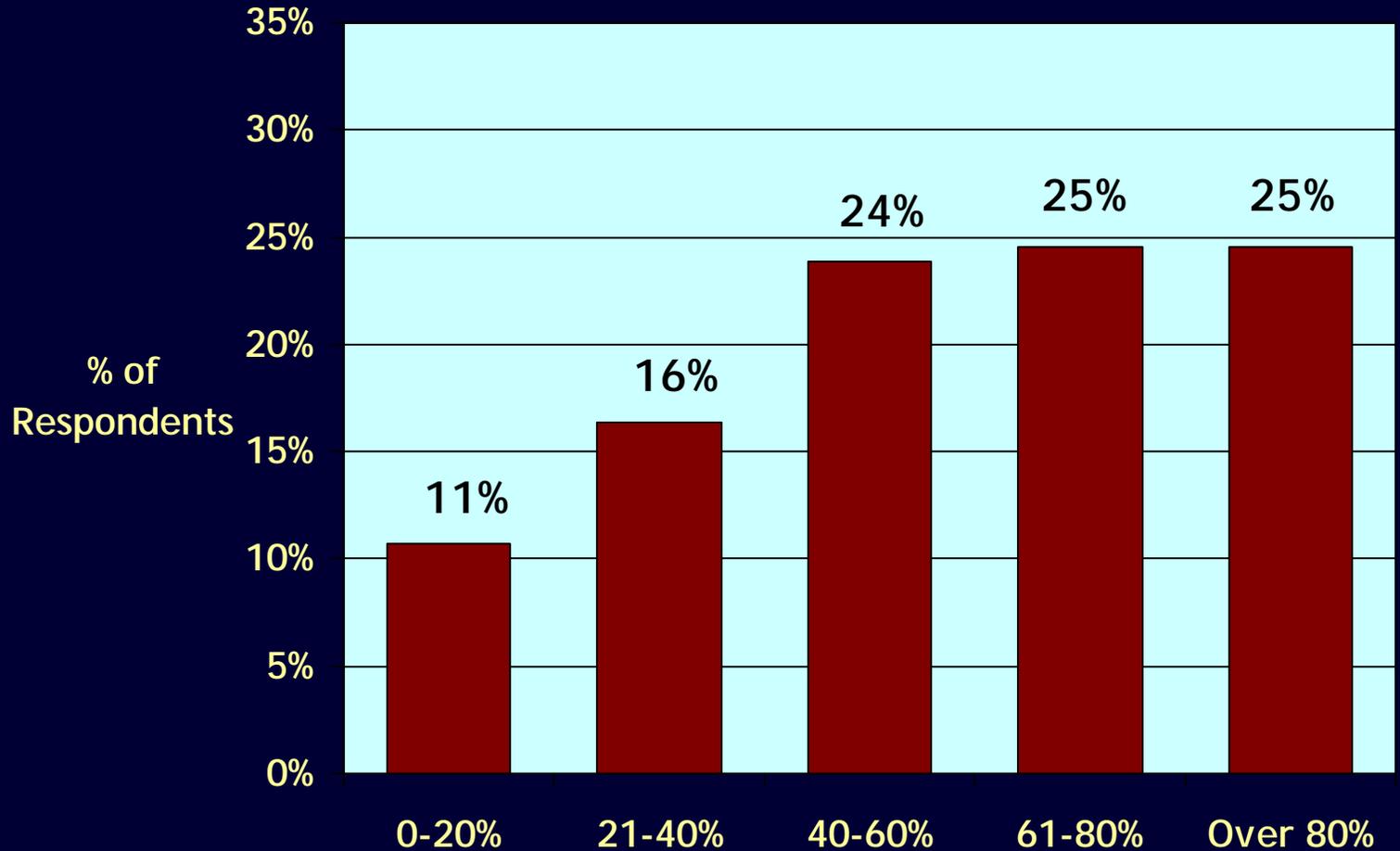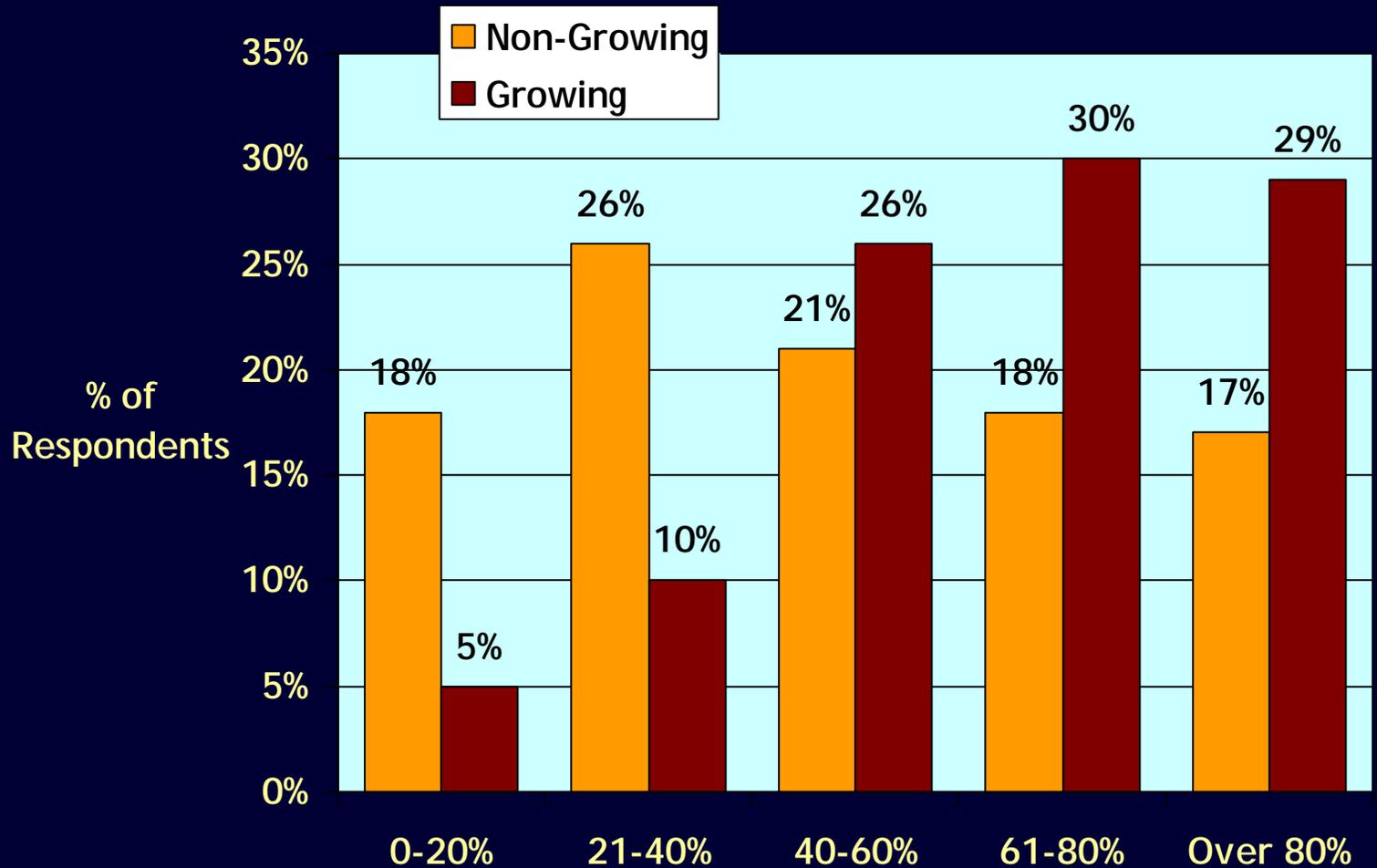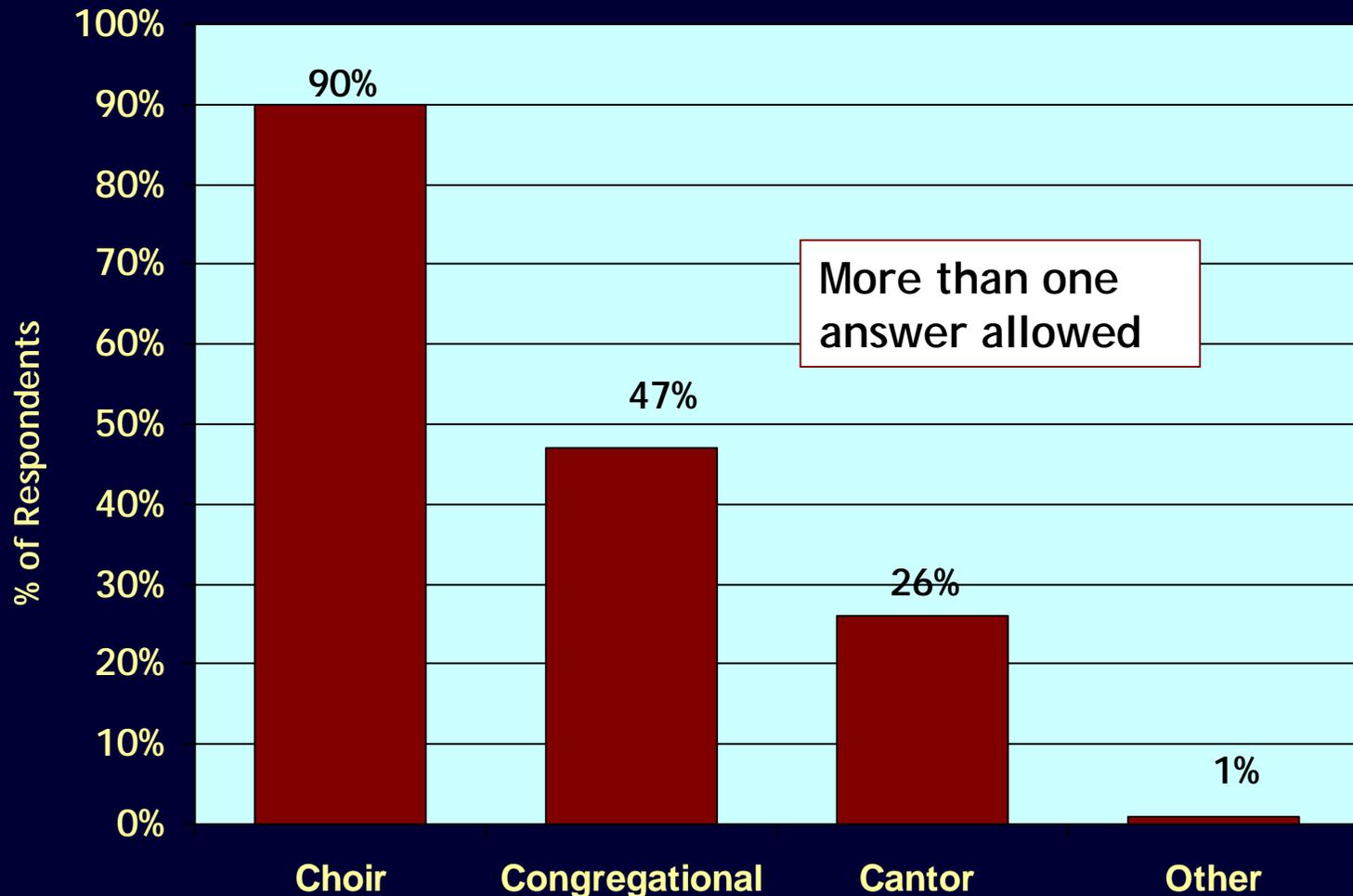
Education

Participation in Adult Education

% of Respondents

- 59% — 0-20%
- 30% — 21-40%
- 7% — 40-60%
- 4% — 61-80%
- 1% — Over 80%

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48
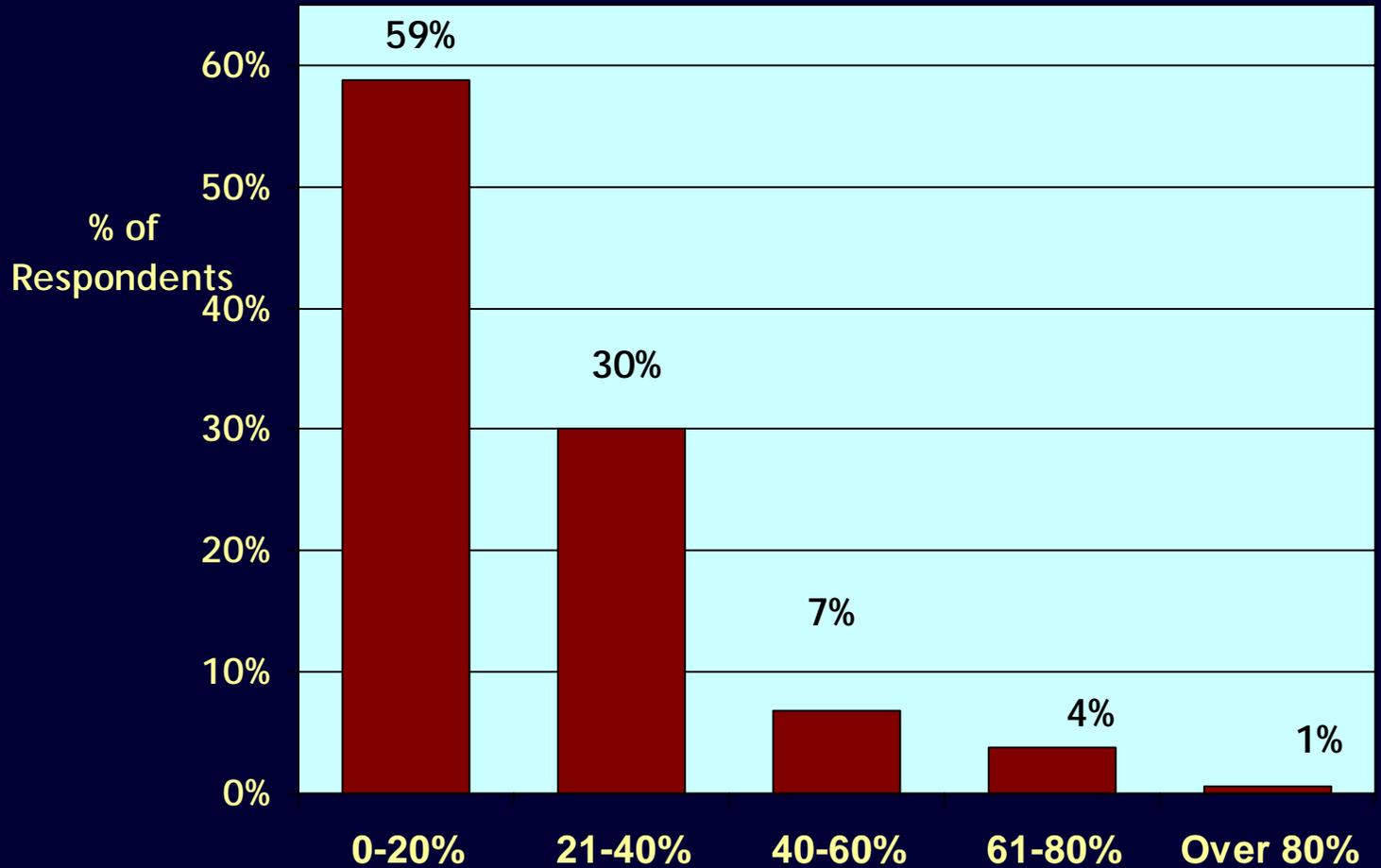
Participation in Adult Education Vs. Growth

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49
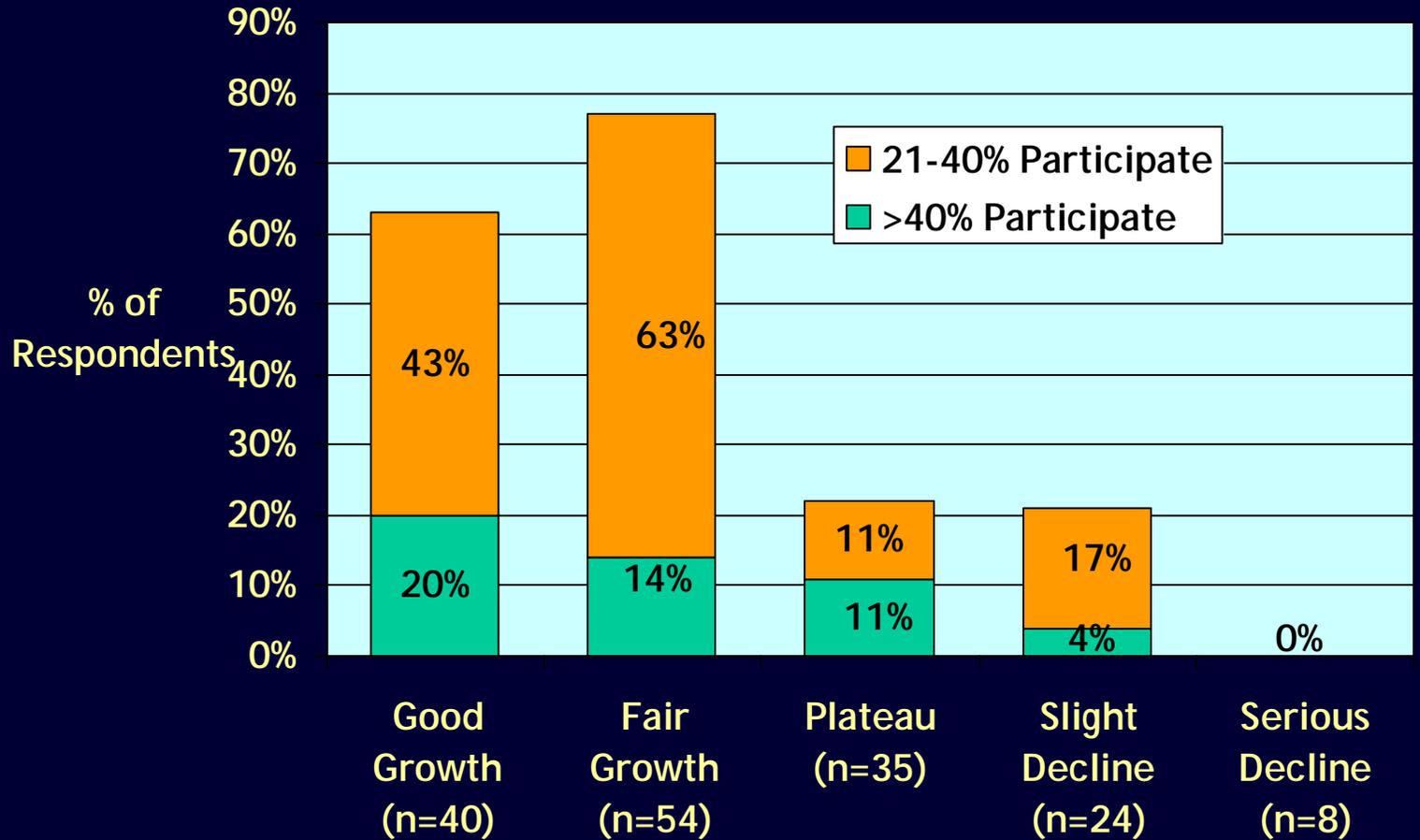
Parish Practices:
Education and Ministries

Practice	%
Youth Church School	80%
Adult Ed	78%
Shut in Ministry	56%
Bible Study	51%
Prayer Ministry	34%
Adult Retreats	30%
Soup Kitchen	30%
Vacation Church School	22%
Adopt a Parish	22%
Prison Ministry	9%

% of Respondents Using This Practice

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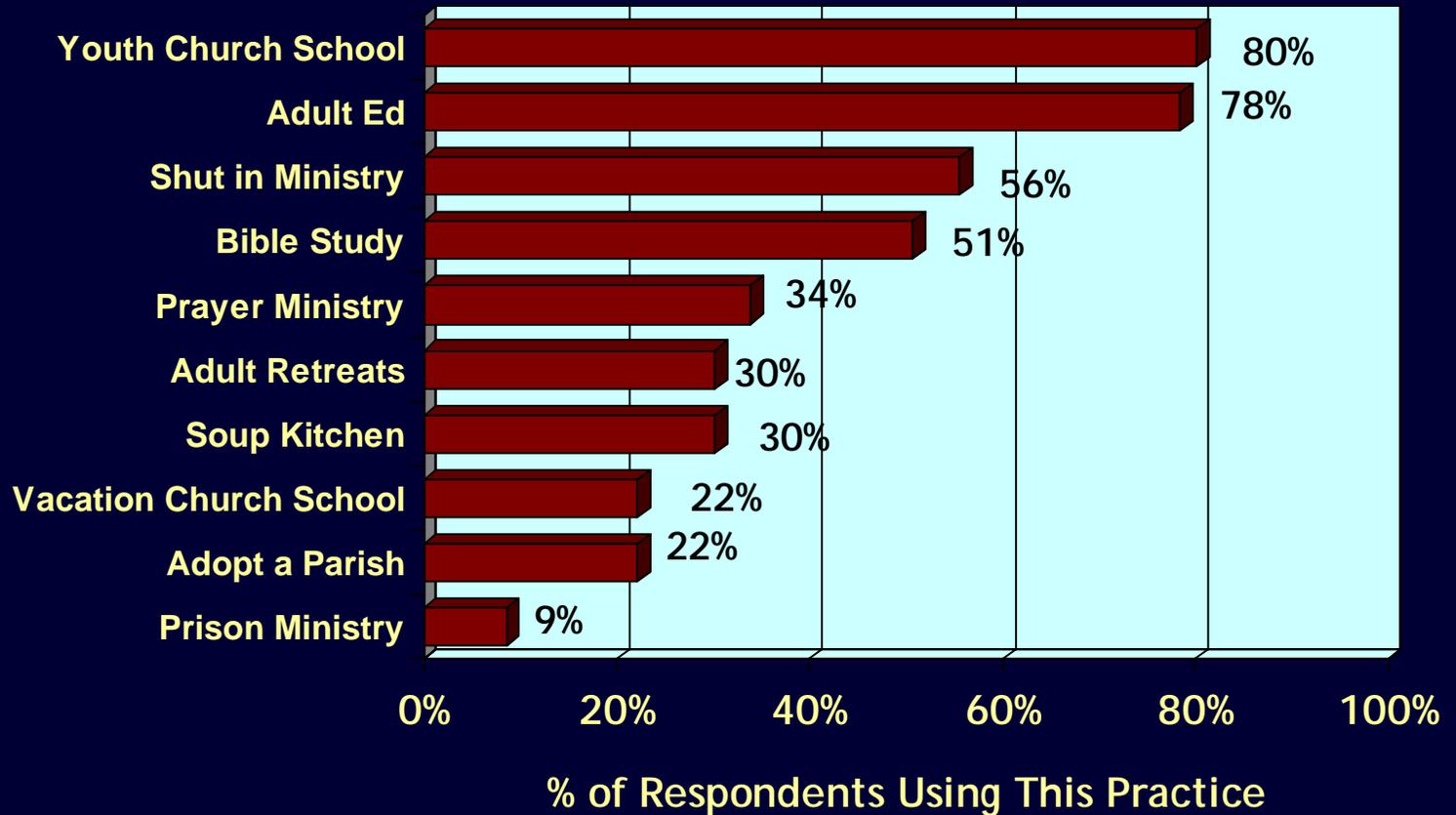
Greatest Challenges:
Parish Education Program

- Committed and qualified teachers
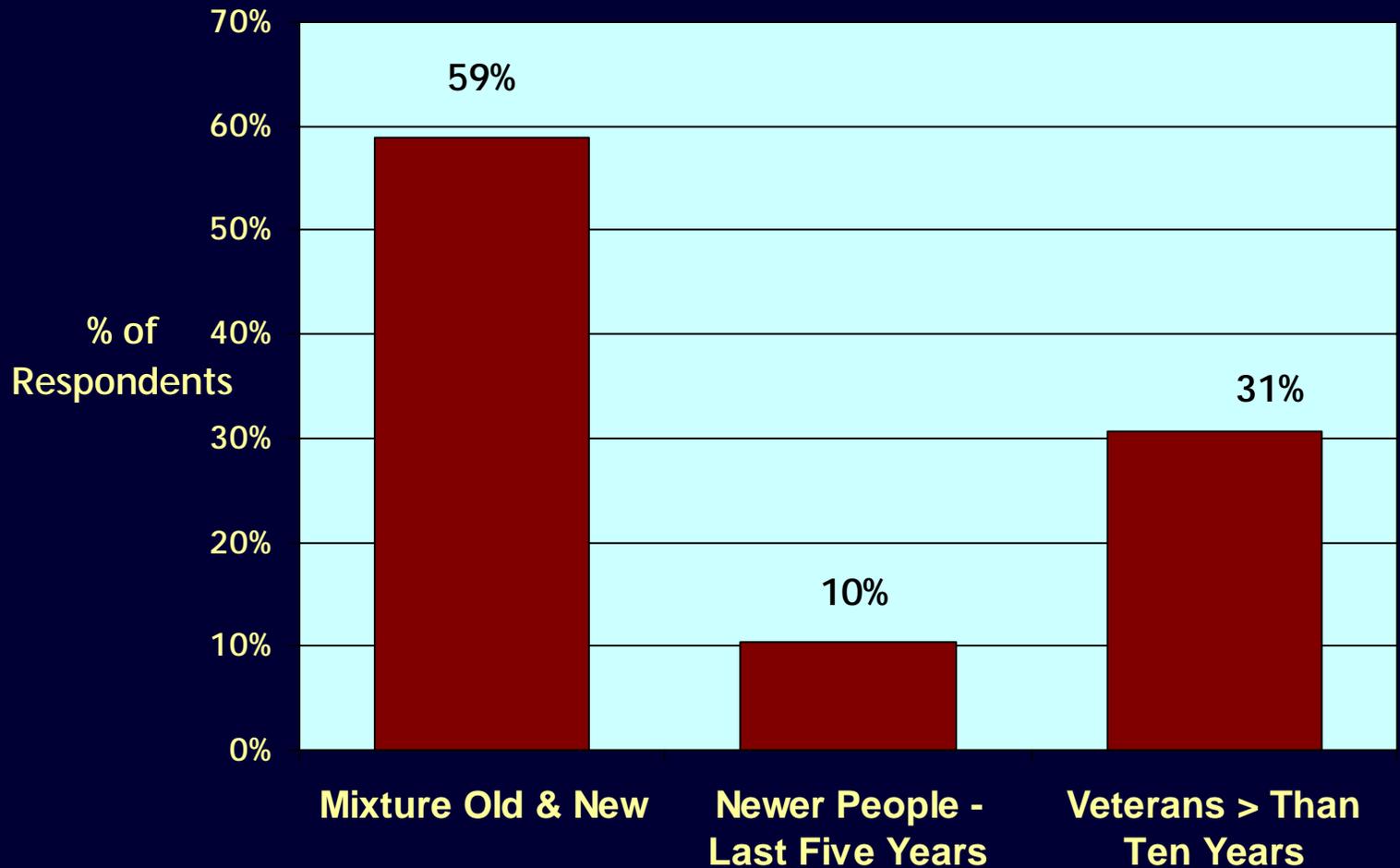- Facilities
- Attendance, commitment, apathy
- Motivation
- Timing/scheduling
- Competition with secular family events

Structure & Administration

Parish Council Make-Up

% of Respondents

- 59% — Mixture Old & New
- 10% — Newer People - Last Five Years
- 31% — Veterans > Than Ten Years

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Main Focus of Parish Council Time

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54
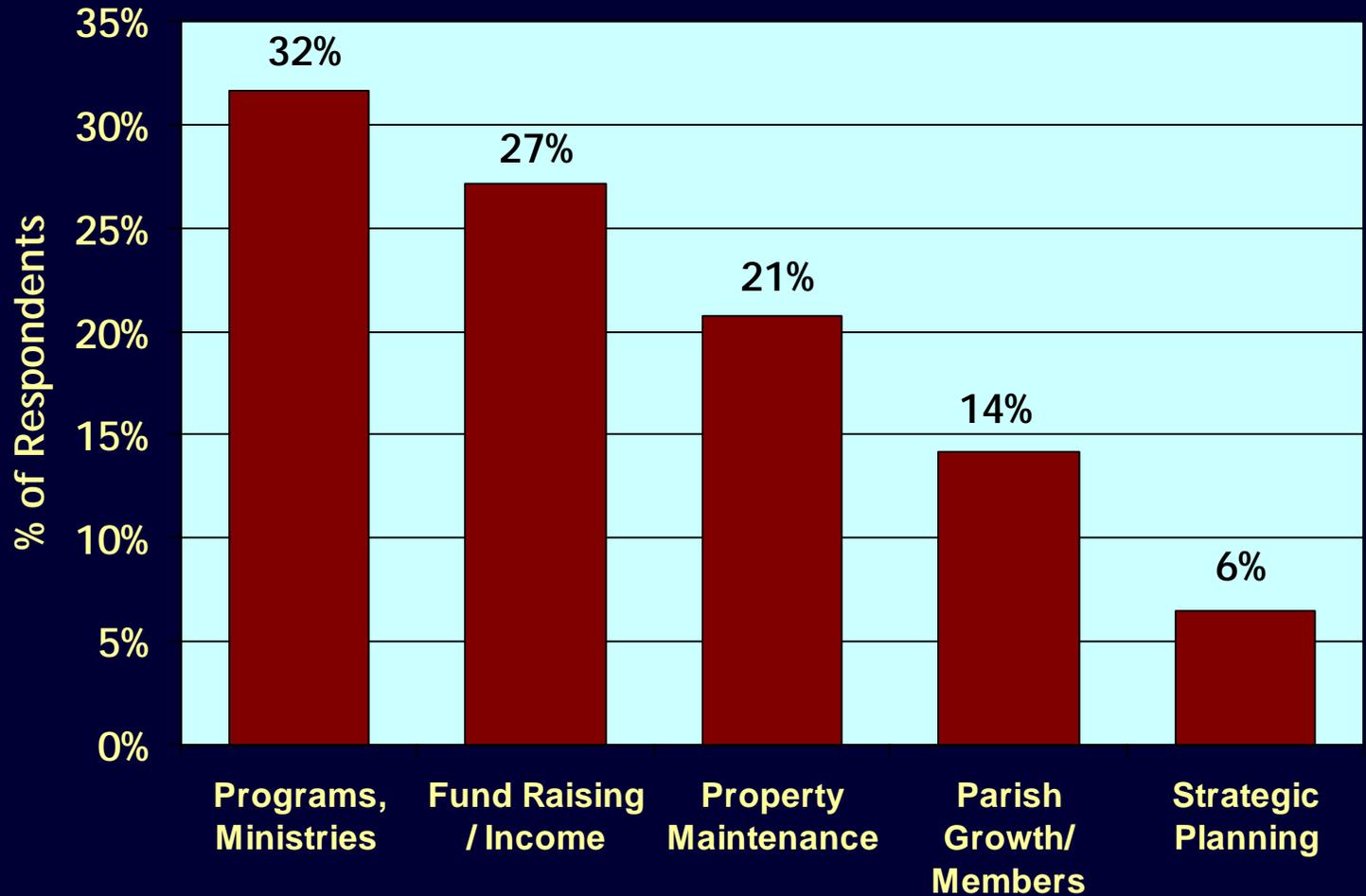
Main Focus of Parish Council Time

Annual Budget

No
22%

Yes
78%

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Parish Practices:
Stewardship

% Using This Practice

Bar chart showing:
- Pledge Form: 49%
- Stewardship Committee: 35%
- All Member Canvas: 12%

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Parish Practices:
Stewardship

% Using This Practice

Legend:
- **Pledge Form** (dark red)
- **Stewardship Committee** (orange)
- **All Member Canvas** (green)

Categories: Good Growth, Fair Growth, Plateau, Slow Decline, Serious Decline

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58
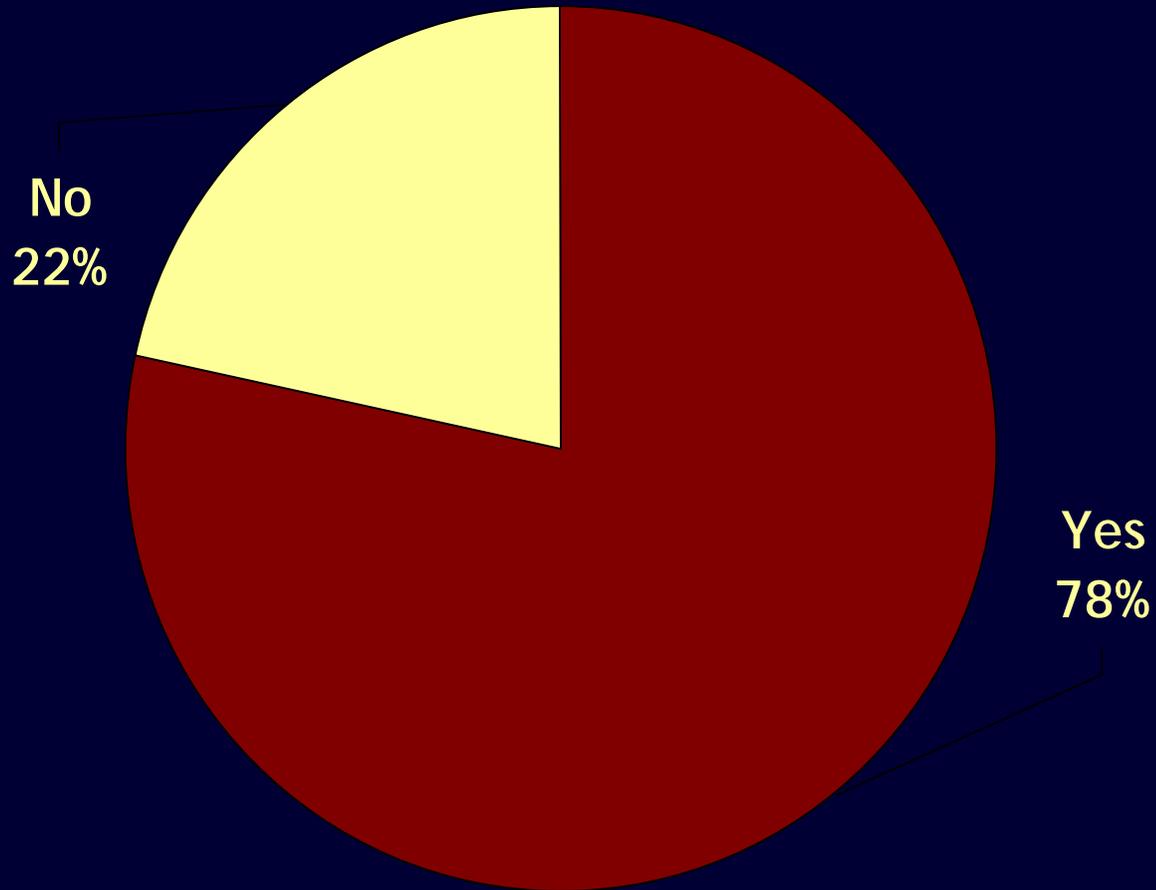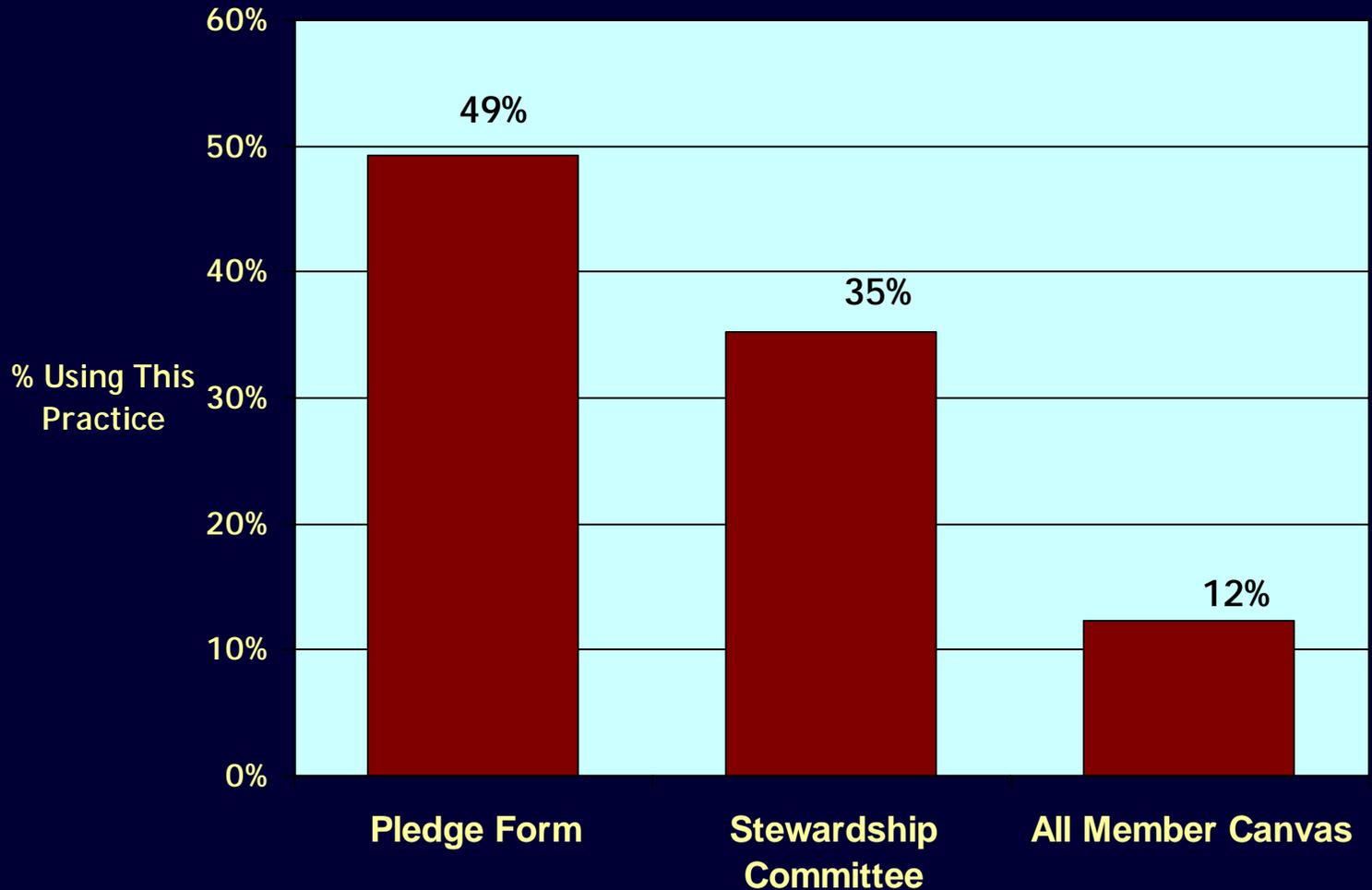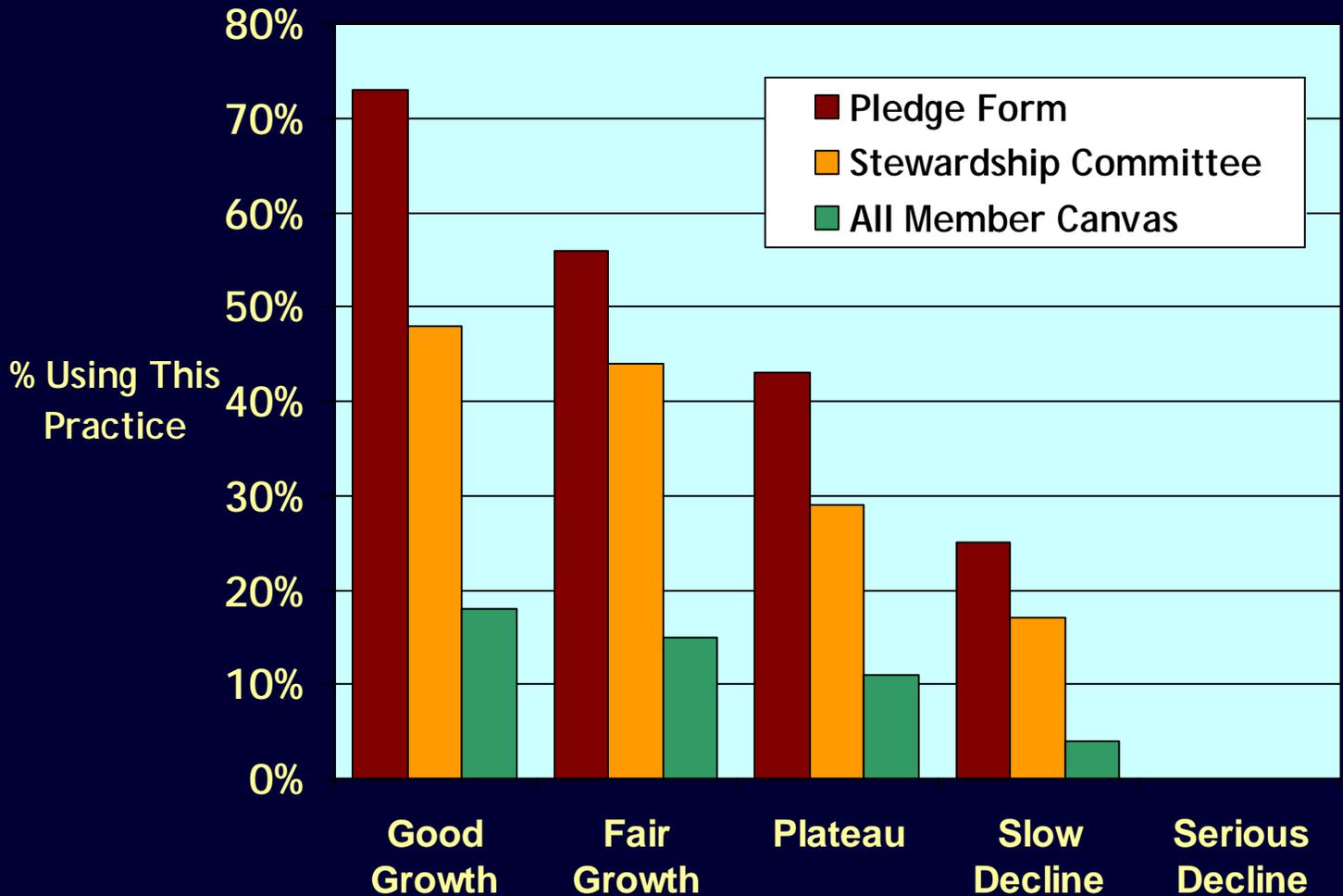
Parish Practices:
Pledge Form Vs. Founding Date

Chart: % Using This Practice — Pledge Form

Founding Date	Pledge Form
1990 to Present	79%
1980-89	71%
1970-79	71%
1960-69	67%
1930-1959	50%
Before 1930	22%

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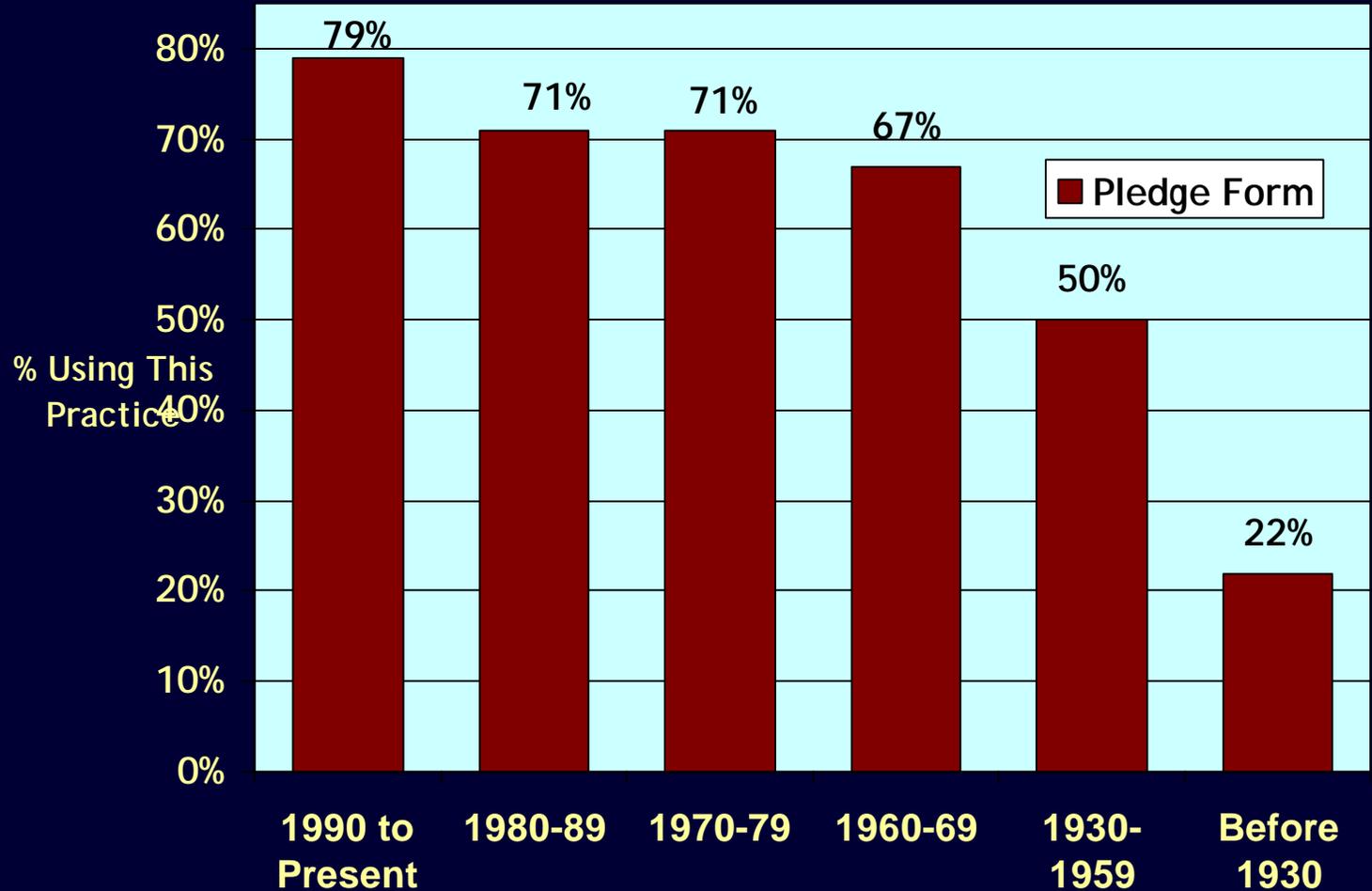
Parish Practices:
Pre 1930 Founding

% Using This Practice

40%

33%

30%

■ Pledge Form

20%

17%

10%

0%

Growing   **Not Growing**

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60
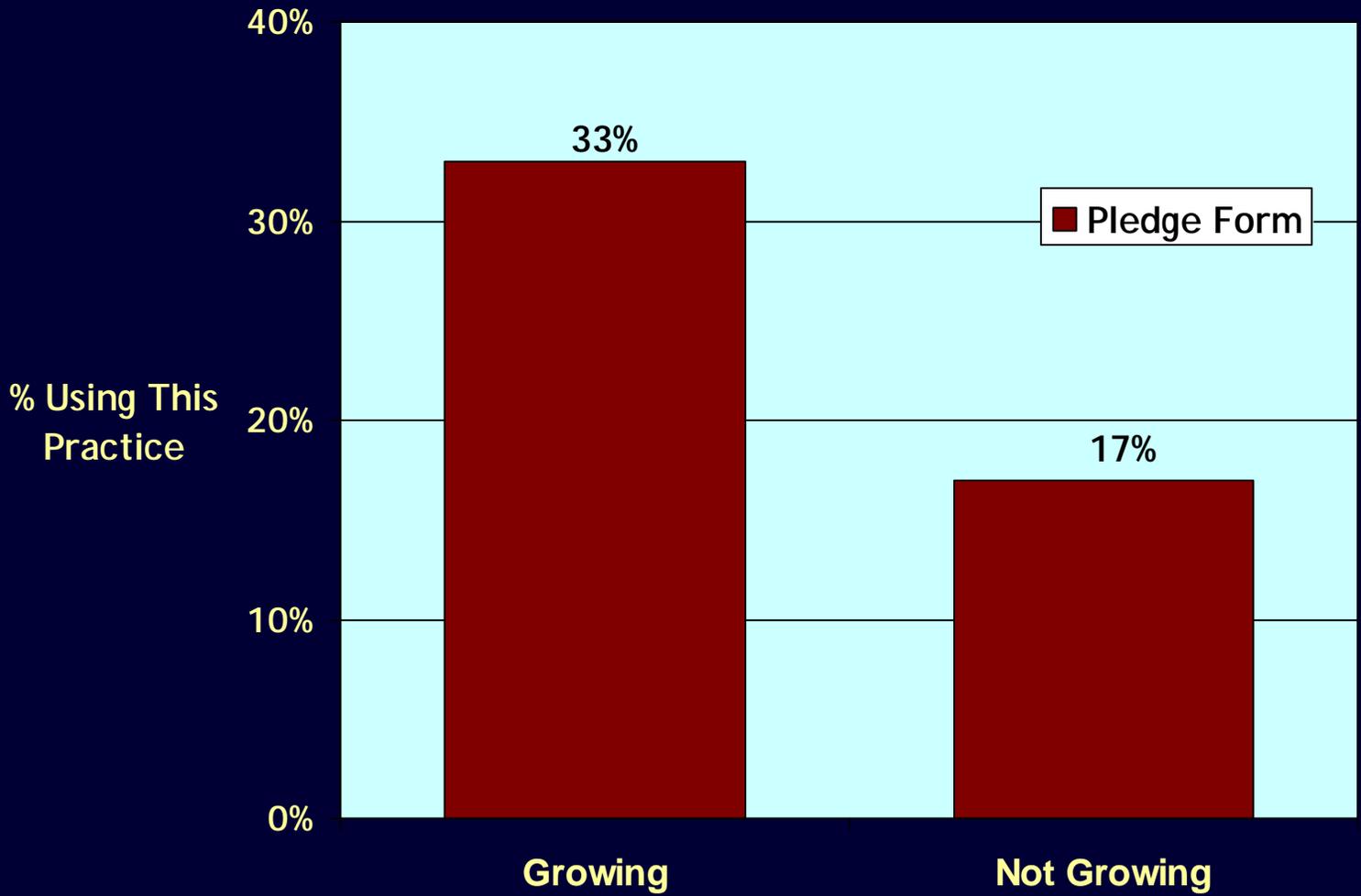
Facilities:
% of Respondents Dealing with ...

76% Dealing with at Least One of These Issues.

30% Dealing with Two or More.

% of Respondents

	59%	40%	30%	22%
	Major Renovation	Iconography	Planning Building	Purchasing Property

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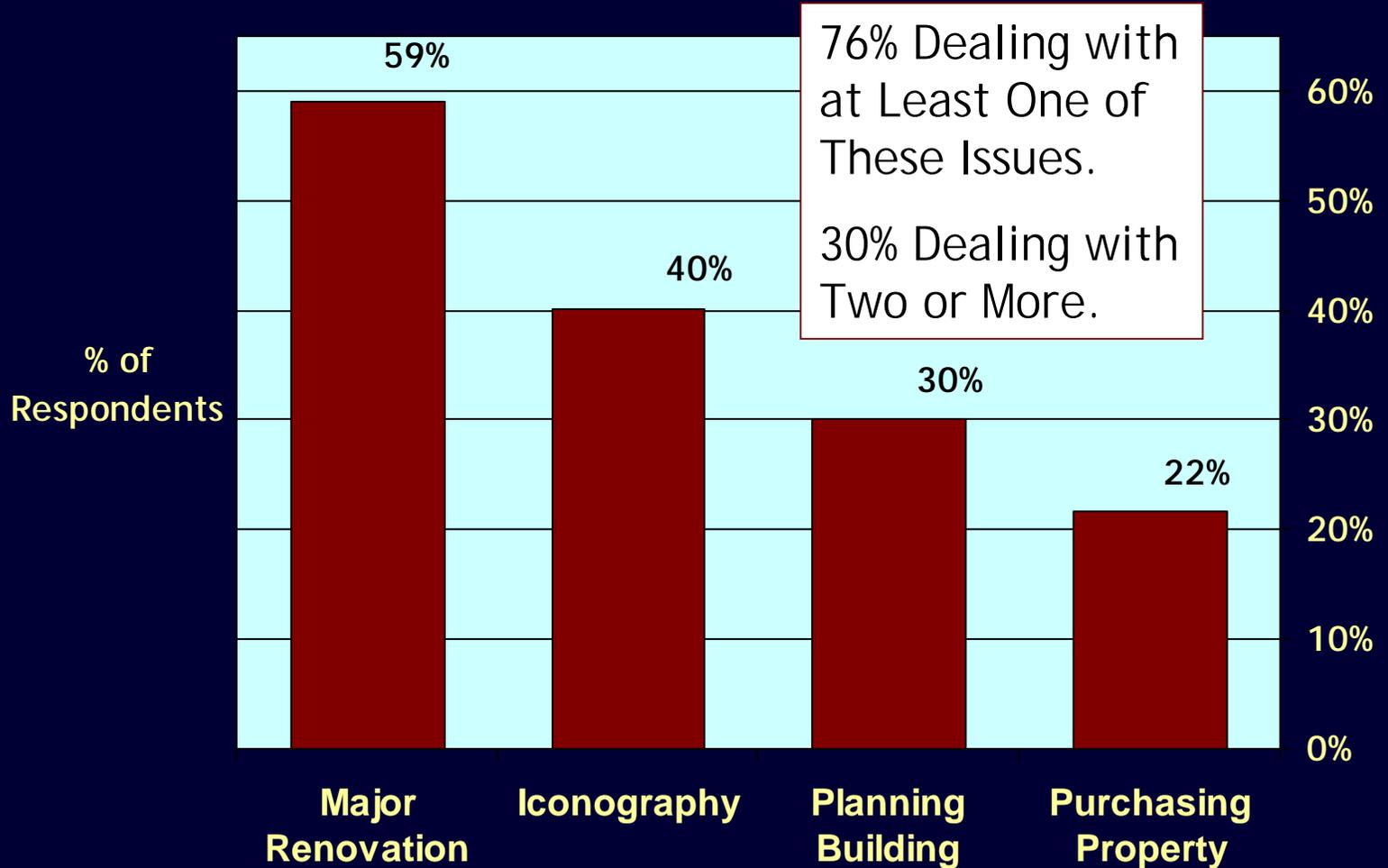
Parish Practices:
Communication

Bar chart: % of Respondents Using This Practice

- Sunday Bulletin — 90%
- Monthly Calendar — 90%
- Press Releases — 72%
- Web Site — 62%
- Brochure — 60%
- Visitor Welcome Pack — 56%
- Newspaper Listing — 56%
- Radio Program — 5%
- TV Program — 3%

x-axis: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

% of Respondents Using This Practice
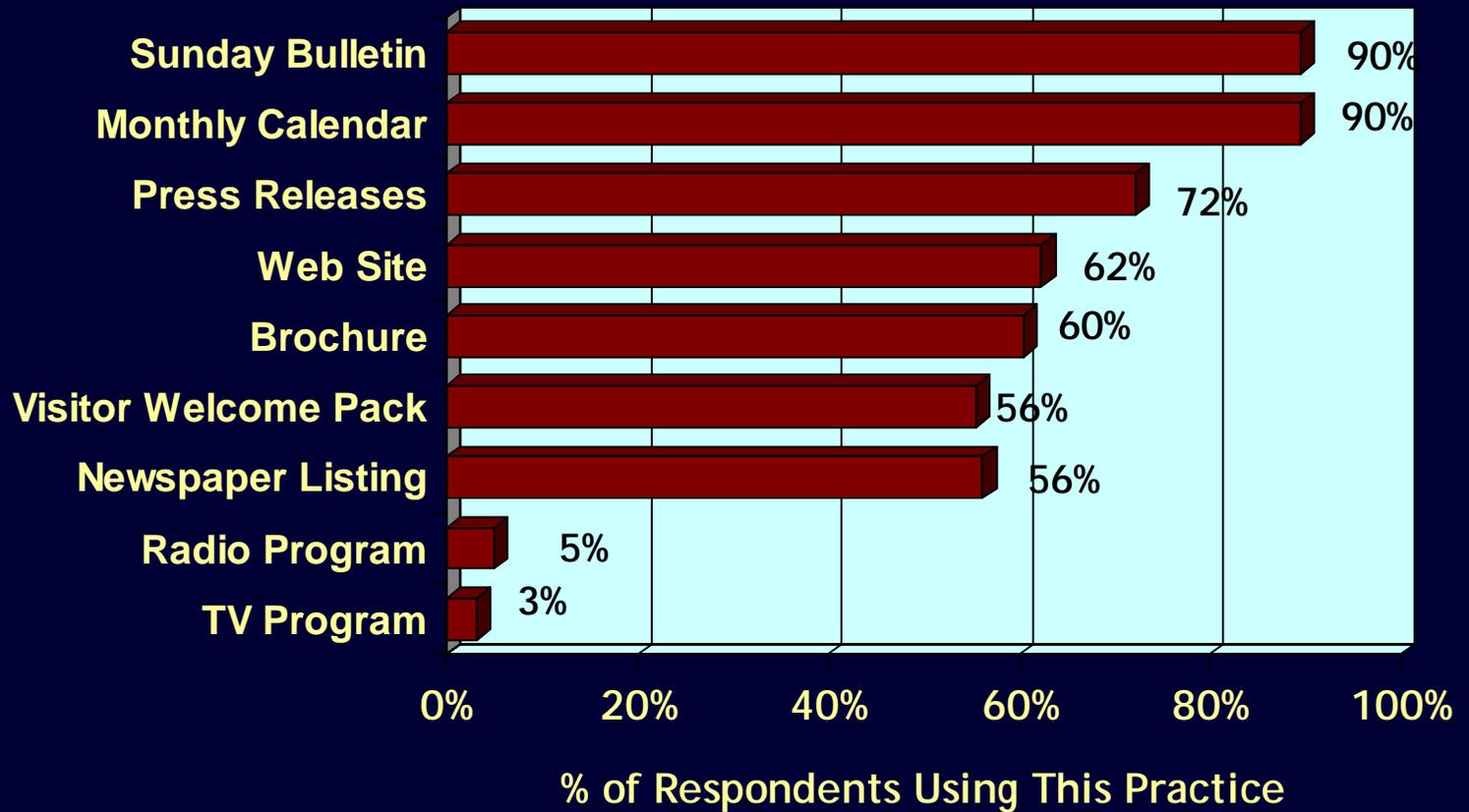
Greatest Challenges:
Structure & Administration

- Acquiring a vision of life as a vibrant Orthodox Parish rather than a recycle of previous experiences or an amalgamation of the various backgrounds represented; Getting out of the old paradigm. Overcoming old attitudes about why they exist. Getting them into forward thinking vision.

- Fuller participation of all members in church education and other ministries.

- Leadership training.

- Getting more young people involved.

- Ridding ourselves of the "Club "mentality

- "Coming up with a vision statement"; 'Getting everyone "on the same page."

- Integrating a Stewardship Program

- The Assessment: How to pay it without it being perceived, by some, as being a tax on the people and by others as a drain on the parish budget

- "To stay focused on God"
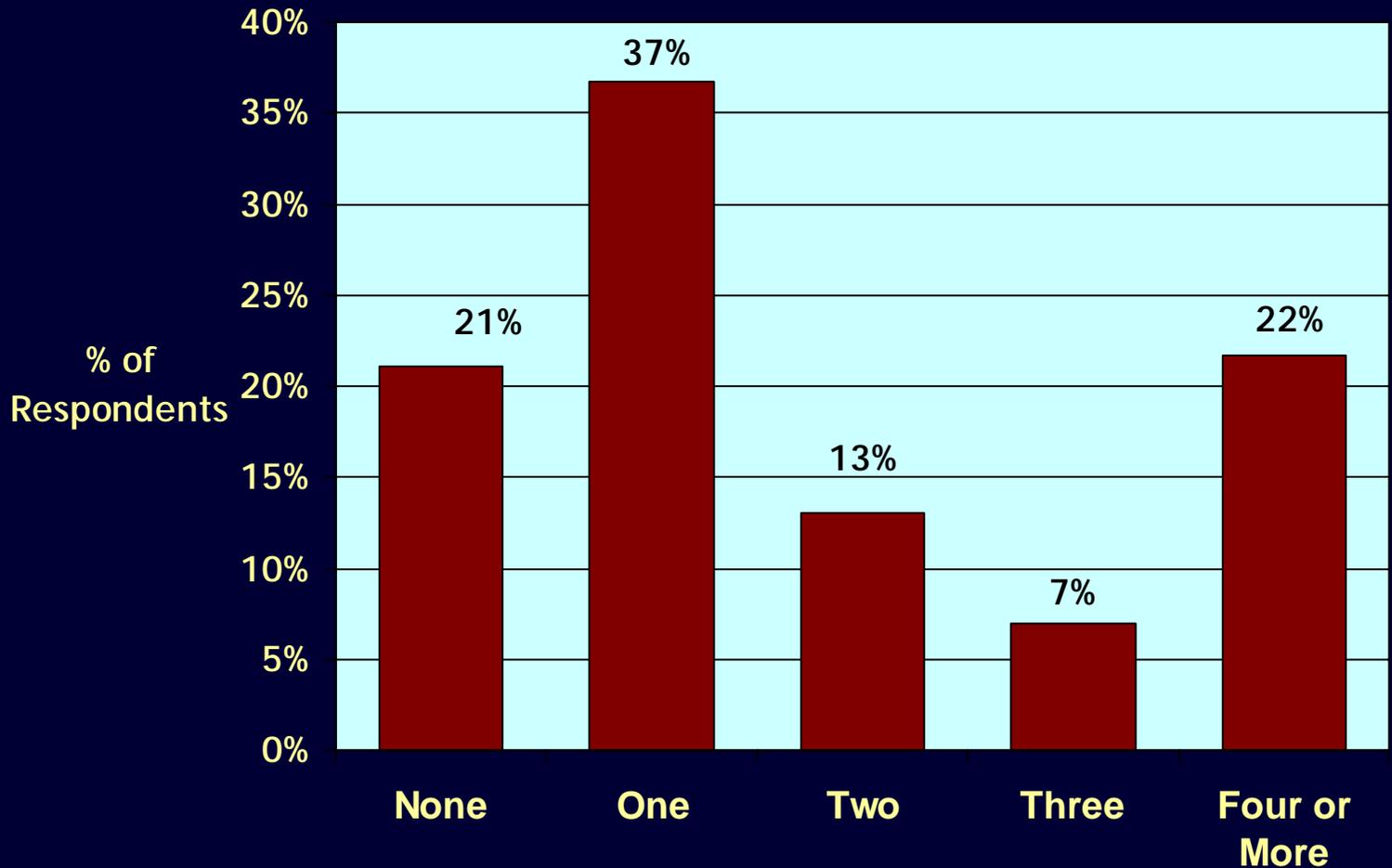
Greatest Challenges: Structure & Administration

- "Instead of being a "fire department" which responds to parish needs, how to become the leadership team which both envisions the parish and helps incarnate that vision; move from an "ad hoc" approach to a more strategic approach to administration of the parish"

- "Overcoming bad habits and fears associated with growth that requires greater sacrifice of money and time."

- "Lack of time."

- "Merging new members into the mindset of an older community."

- "Old "Metropolia" paradigm: priest as "employee".

- "Our parish council is restricted to maintenance of the church fabric by design. [Ministry leaders are accountable directly to priest and appointed by him.] Our typical meetings are less than one hour. Strategic planning issues are handled by a broader group. Leadership training is provided and expected of all ministry heads."

Greatest Challenges: Structure & Administration

- Parishes in Serious Decline... *some excerpts*...
  - "Income, keeping the people in the church; most that graduate high school and college move to other parts of the country to find work and settle down."
  - "No meetings. No interest."
  - "Too large. It consists of twenty-five people and the "president" is in charge of everything but the Liturgy and teaching."
  - "Finances"
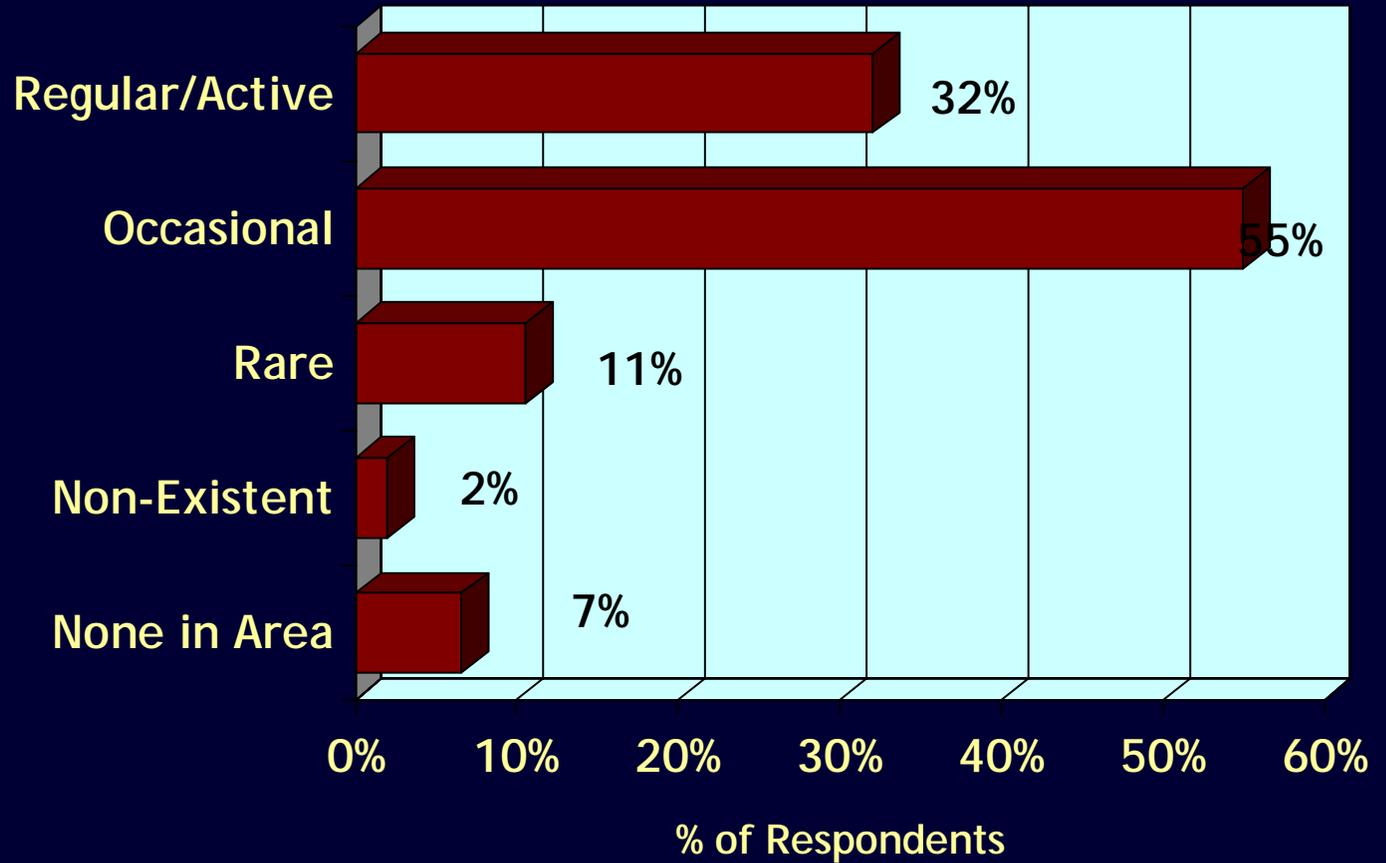 - "Dealing with the problem of declining of membership"

Social & Other Activities

Number of Family Centered Events Per Month*

* Not Including Liturgy

13th AAC Parish Profile

Inter-Orthodox Relations

Frequency of Inter-Orthodox Parish Relationships

Regular/Active — 32%

Occasional — 55%

Rare — 11%

Non-Existent — 2%

None in Area — 7%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%

% of Respondents

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Quality of Inter-Orthodox Parish Relationships

Warm/Helpful — 47%
Polite — 41%
Distant — 6%
Unfriendly — 0%
None in Area — 6%

% of Respondents

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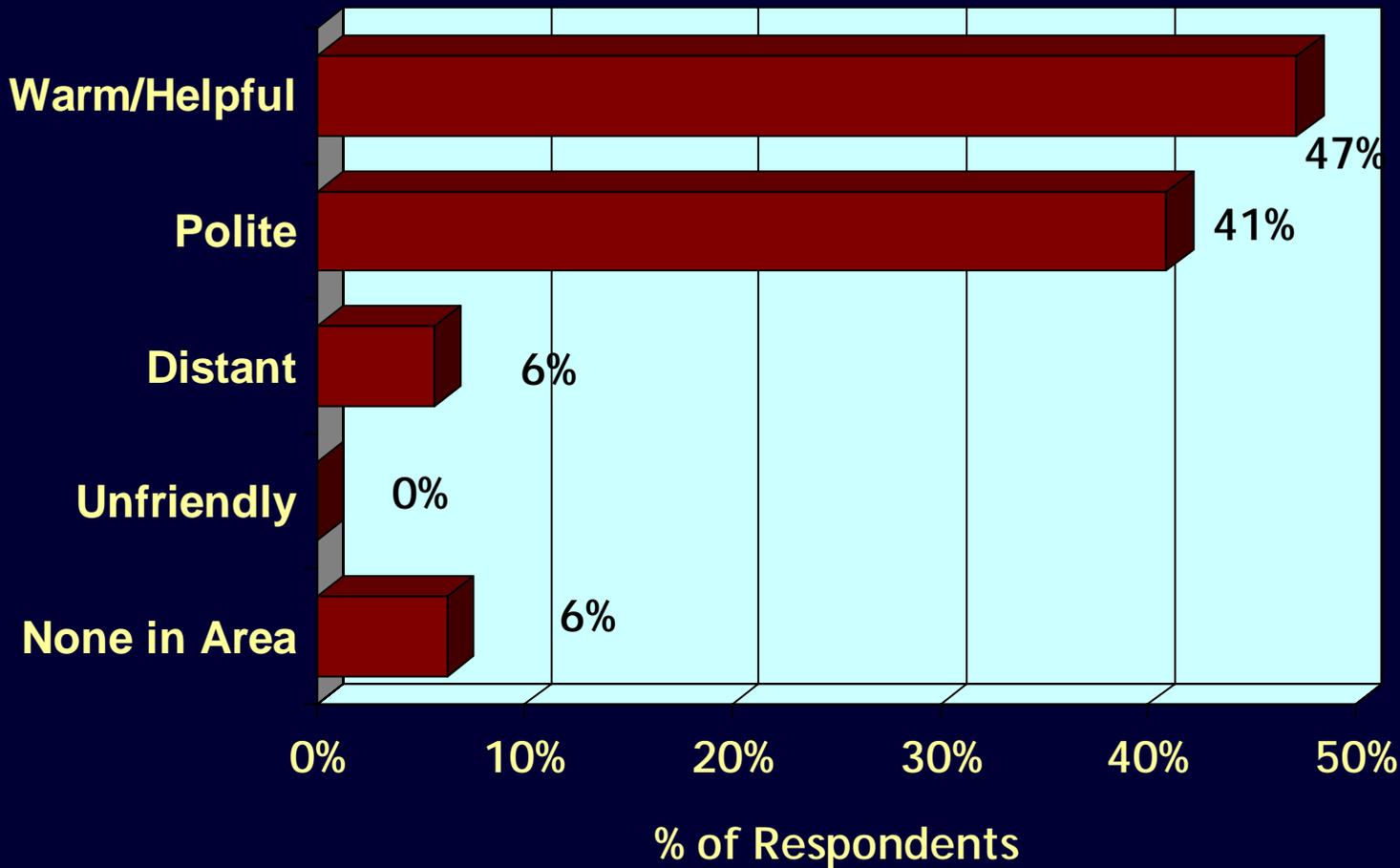
Change in Inter-Orthodox Parish Relationships: Last Three Years

Improving — 39%
Same — 50%
Even More Distant — 5%
None in Area — 6%

% of Respondents

71

13th AAC Parish Profile
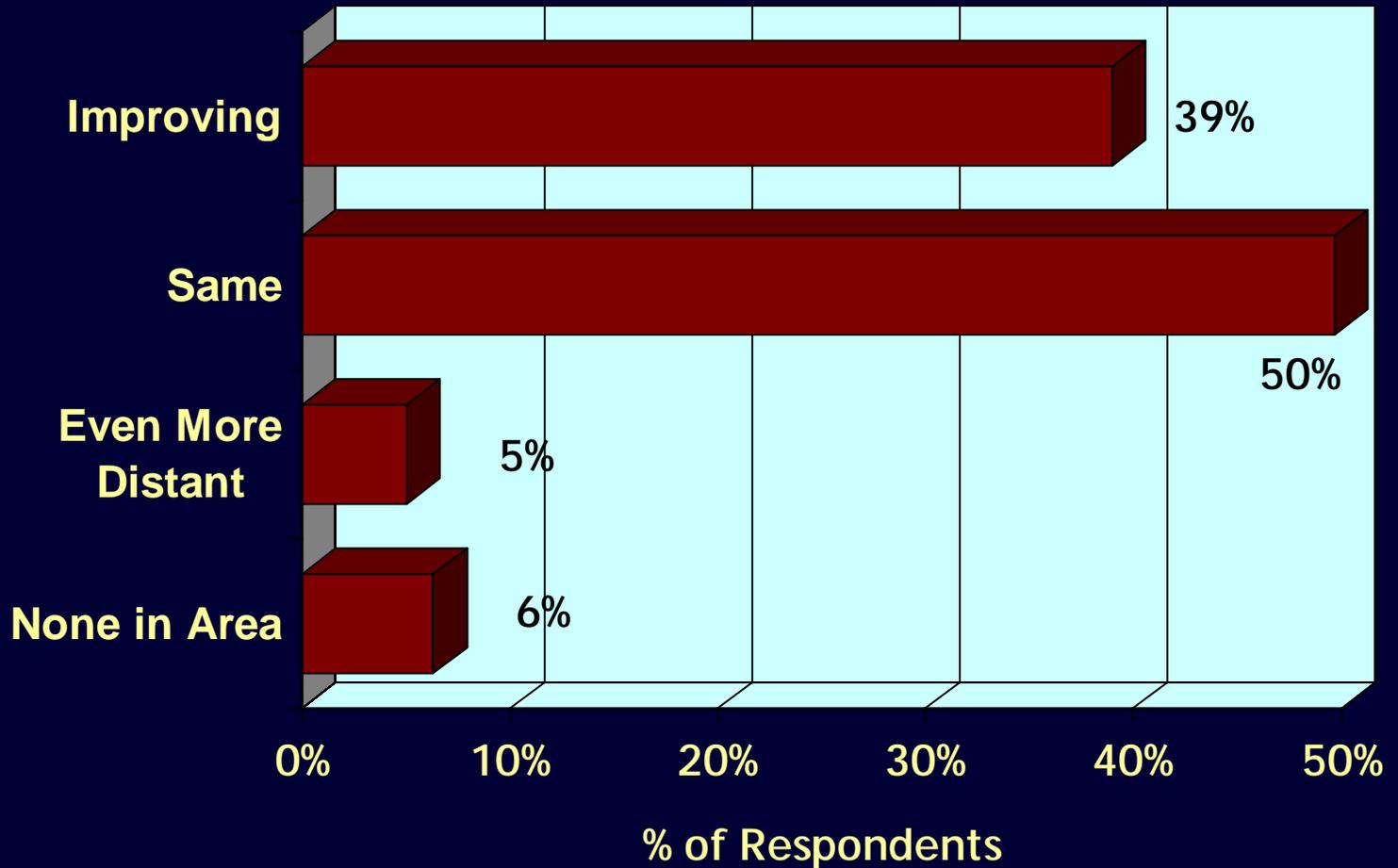
Greatest Strengths

- Growing
  - Worship
  - Welcoming
  - Work
  - We bond well by including all generations
  - Stewardship
  - "Well catechized"

"I would say that love is our greatest asset"

Greatest Strengths

- Not Growing
  - "Surviving"
  - "Fundraising"
  - "Perogies and Easter rolls"
  - "Dinners: Cabbage Roll Dinner, BBQ Chicken Dinner 2. Ladies Altar Society "
  - "Keep the Church open and running"

"Starring in Slavonic "

Areas Needing Improvement

- General/All
  - Non-Sunday participation
  - Funds
  - Stewardship
  - Visibility
  - Facilities
  - Outreach
  - Program centric
  - Family activities; Youth group
  - Being friendly to guests
  - Visibility
  - Choir

Areas Needing Improvement

- Not Growing
  - Education
  - No concept of reaching out
  - Apathy
  - Being labeled "Russian"
  - "Clicky"
  - Accepting new members from different backgrounds
  - Parochialism & Congregationalism
  - Vision... looking in same direction
  - Family feuds

Recent Changes

- New Building (11)
- Other facilities related (10)
- Parish council related (8)
- New priest (6)
- Choir or choir director (6)
- More social/family activities (3)
- Additional services (3)
- Youth related (3)
- Stewardship actions (2)
- Sisterhood (2)
- Missionary support (2)

- Photo directory
- Newcomer orientation package
- Office assistant
- Monthly whole parish activities
- Lay Ministry team Growth team
- Long term plan
- Outreach budget
- Advertising
- More English
- Regular communion
- Newsletter

Stumbling Blocks to Growth

- "Lack of a master plan for new facilities"
- "Suitable financing mechanisms for building"
- "Busyness of our society"
- "Today's materialism."
- "Lingering elements of personal or tribal hostility. Still a tendency to dismiss others, even unmet, as "not one of us.""
- "A cowardly fear of outsiders which could be overcome only by a return to fear and love of God."
- "No concept of anything happening outside of their little world."
- "Commitment to evangelism."
- "Our lack of effective "bridge people" who act evangelistically for our congregation"
- "Tensions from a past split within the parish"
- "They're satisfied with things as they are."
- "(Community) Awareness of our presence"

What Changes Needed...

- "Clarify, articulate & doggedly pursue a God-given mission."

- "Apostolic awareness, the zeal to go out and "preach the good news" of Orthodoxy to society.   We seem to be quite comfortable with the status quo"

- "Re-activate lay ministries."

- "This is how we've always done it".

- "Keeping a balance with the needs of the cradle Orthodox and the converts."

- "Have the priest (me) learn more, pray more and be more pastoral"

- "Become a parish that is not just a Sunday liturgy church."
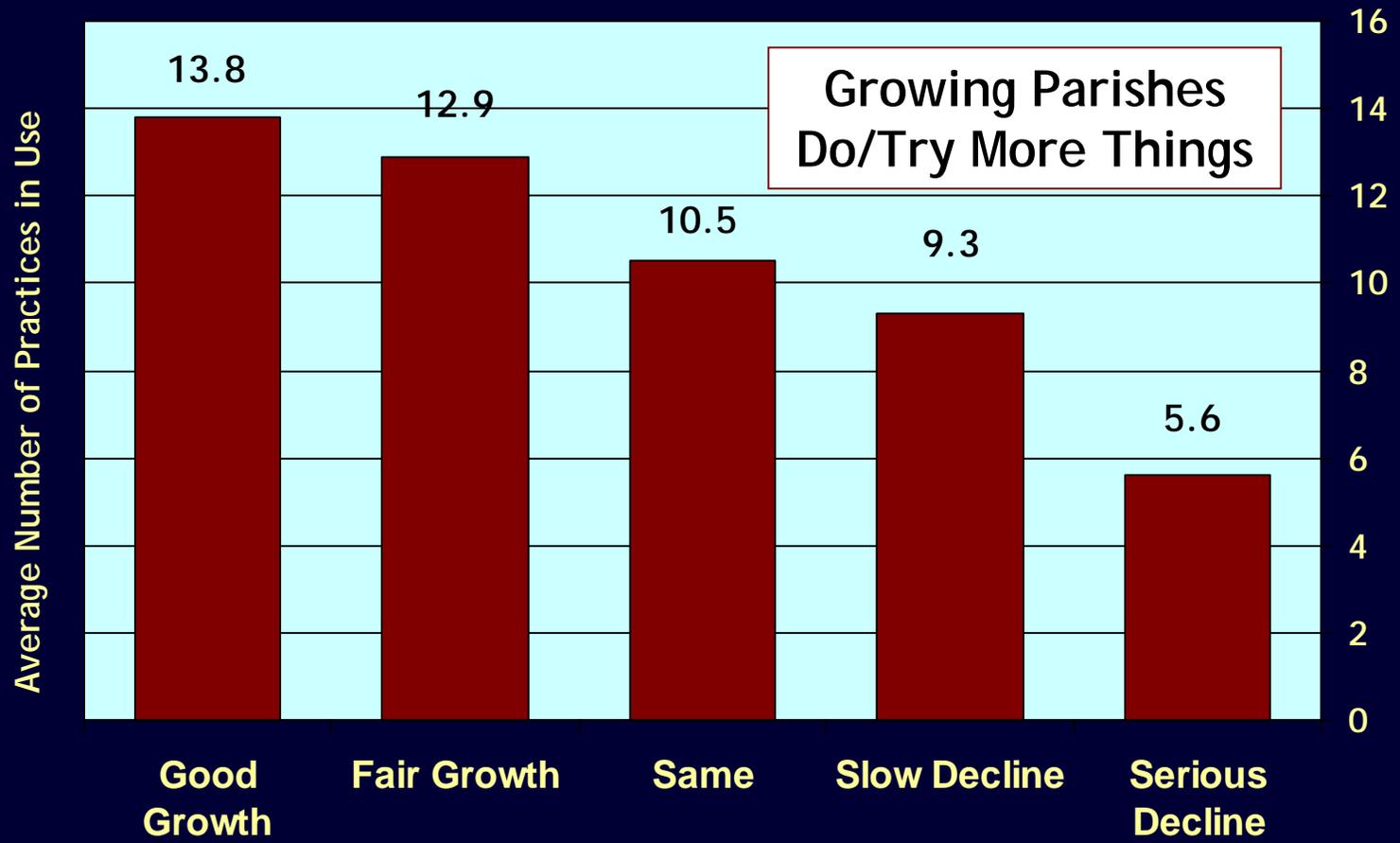
What Changes Needed...

My favorite...

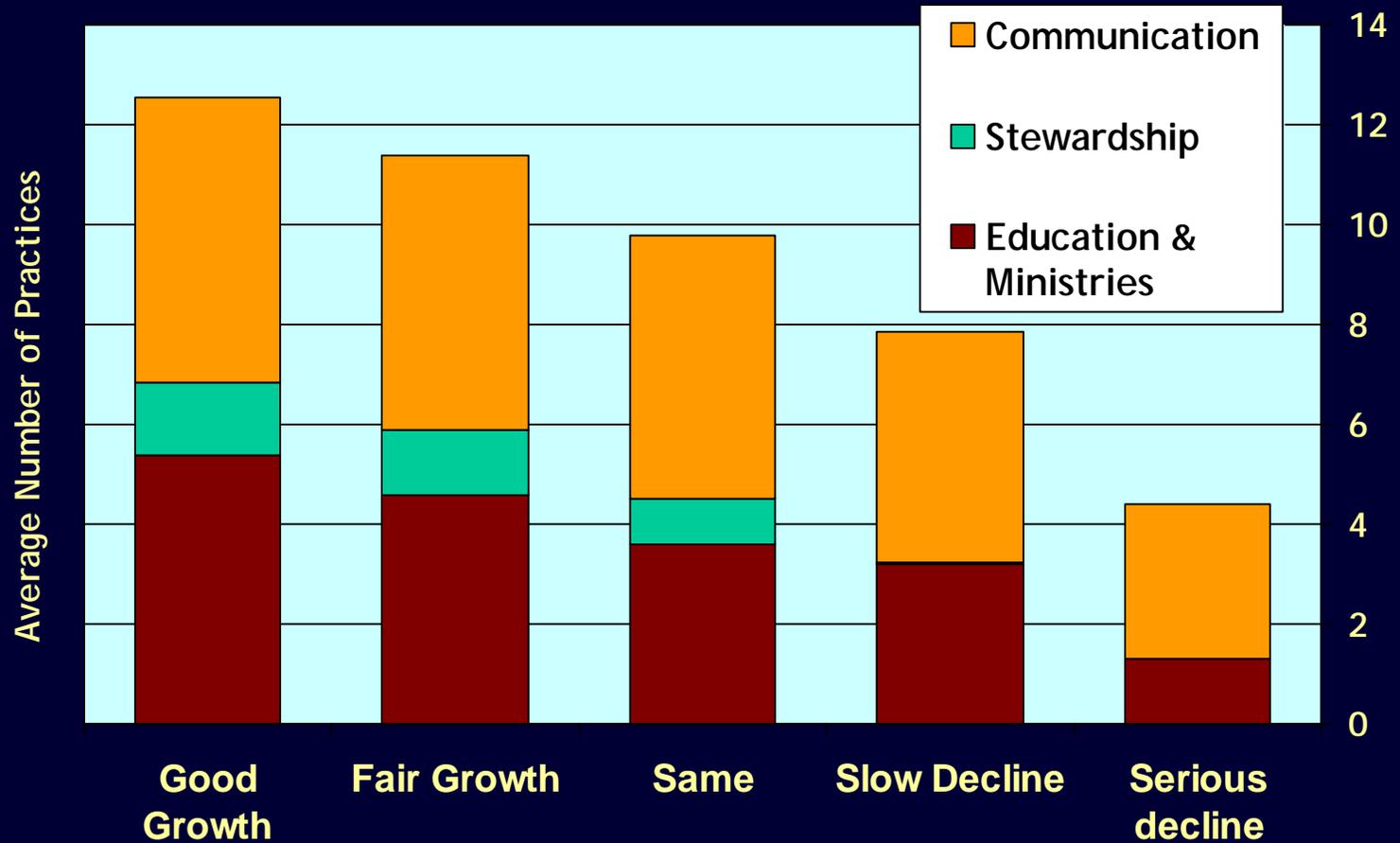"Get parishioners to move closer to the church."

Further Analysis

Core Practices of Growing Parishes

- > 70% of Growing parishes…
  - Adult Ed.
  - Youth Church School
  - Bulletin
  - Calendar
  - Brochure
  - Press releases
  - Web Site

Growth vs. Number of Practices

Growing Parishes Do/Try More Things
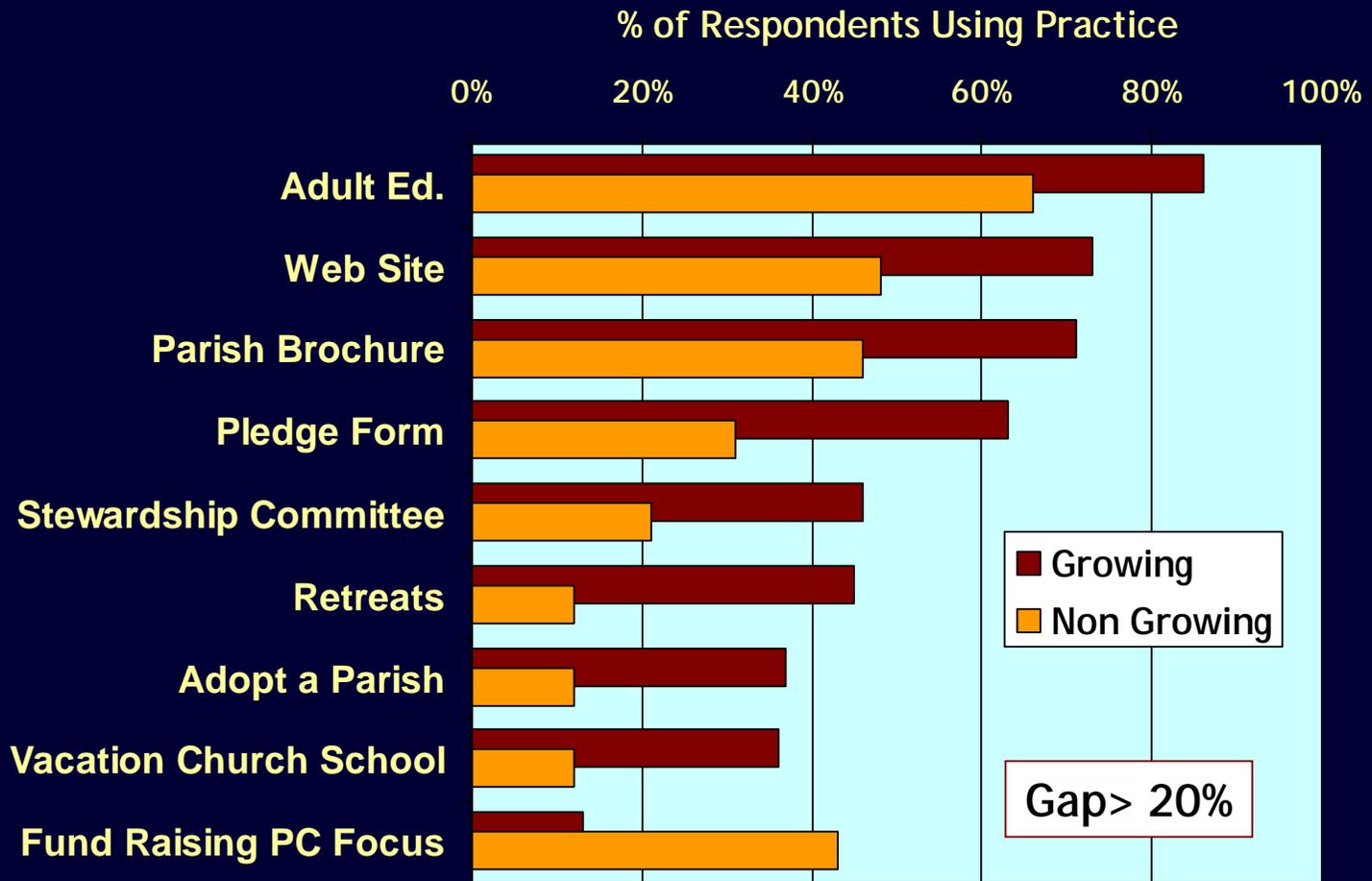
Average Number of Practices in Use

Good Growth	Fair Growth	Same	Slow Decline	Serious Decline
13.8	12.9	10.5	9.3	5.6

13th AAC Parish Profile

Growth vs. Number of Practices

Practices in Greater Use
Growing vs. Non Growing

% of Respondents Using Practice

Chart axis: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Categories (top to bottom):
- Adult Ed.
- Web Site
- Parish Brochure
- Pledge Form
- Stewardship Committee
- Retreats
- Adopt a Parish
- Vacation Church School
- Fund Raising PC Focus

Legend:
- Growing
- Non Growing

Gap> 20%

13th AAC Parish Profile

Other Characteristics of Growing Parishes

- More frequent communion
- More services per week
- More consistent participation in services
- Parish Council Focus
  - Ministries; Strategic Planning; Growth
- Stability of pastoral assignment
- Apply more practices

# Facts

- Growers outnumber decliners 3:1
- Four out of five: English only
  - <2% No English
- Parishes are small
  - If your parish is> 100... you're above average!
- 25% converts typical
- One third experiencing material influx of immigrants
- Over half changed pastors in ten years
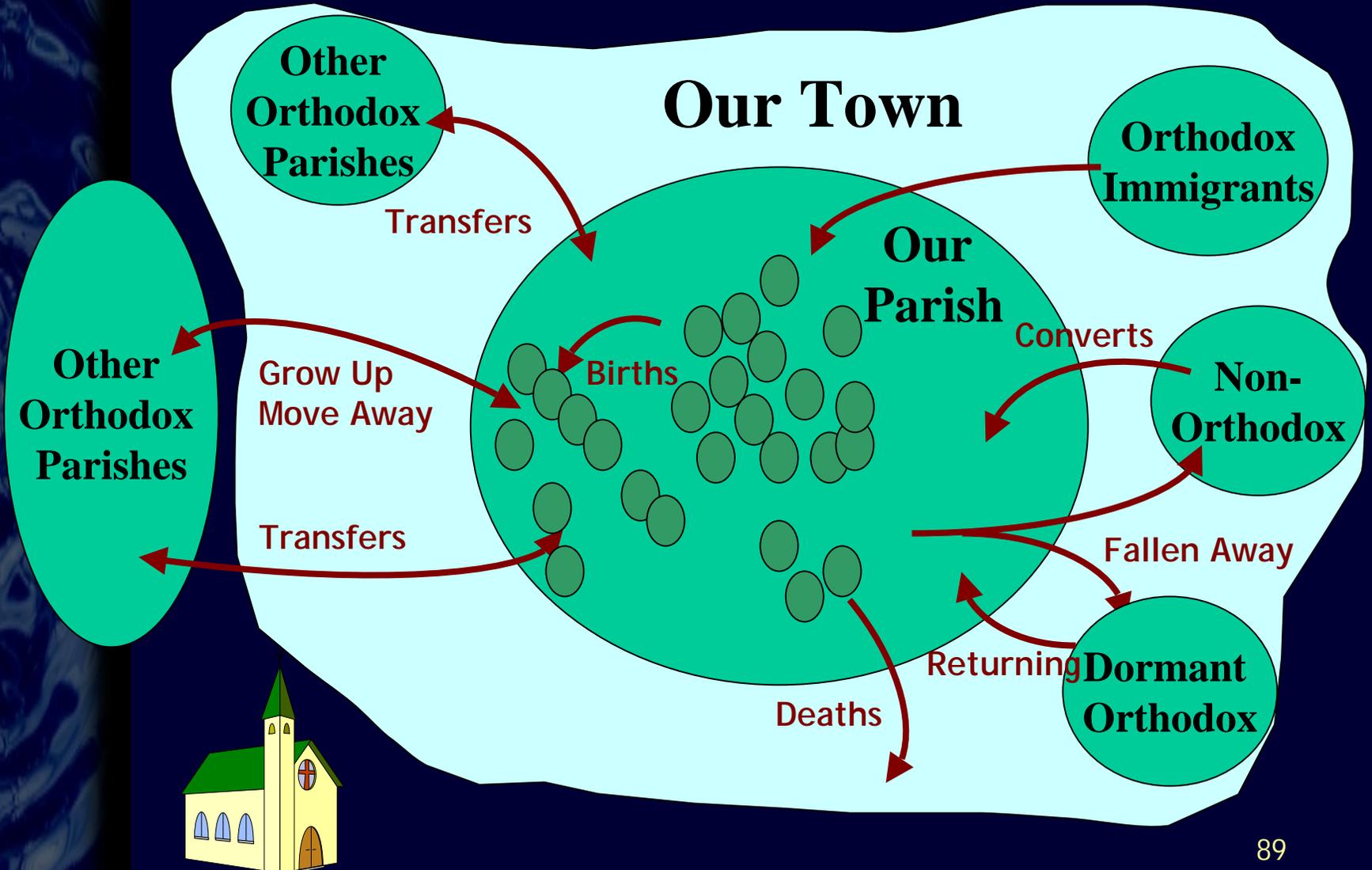- 76% dealing with 1 or more facilities issues

At Greatest Risk…

- Founded before 1930
- No influx of Orthodox immigrants
- Small proportion of converts

However…
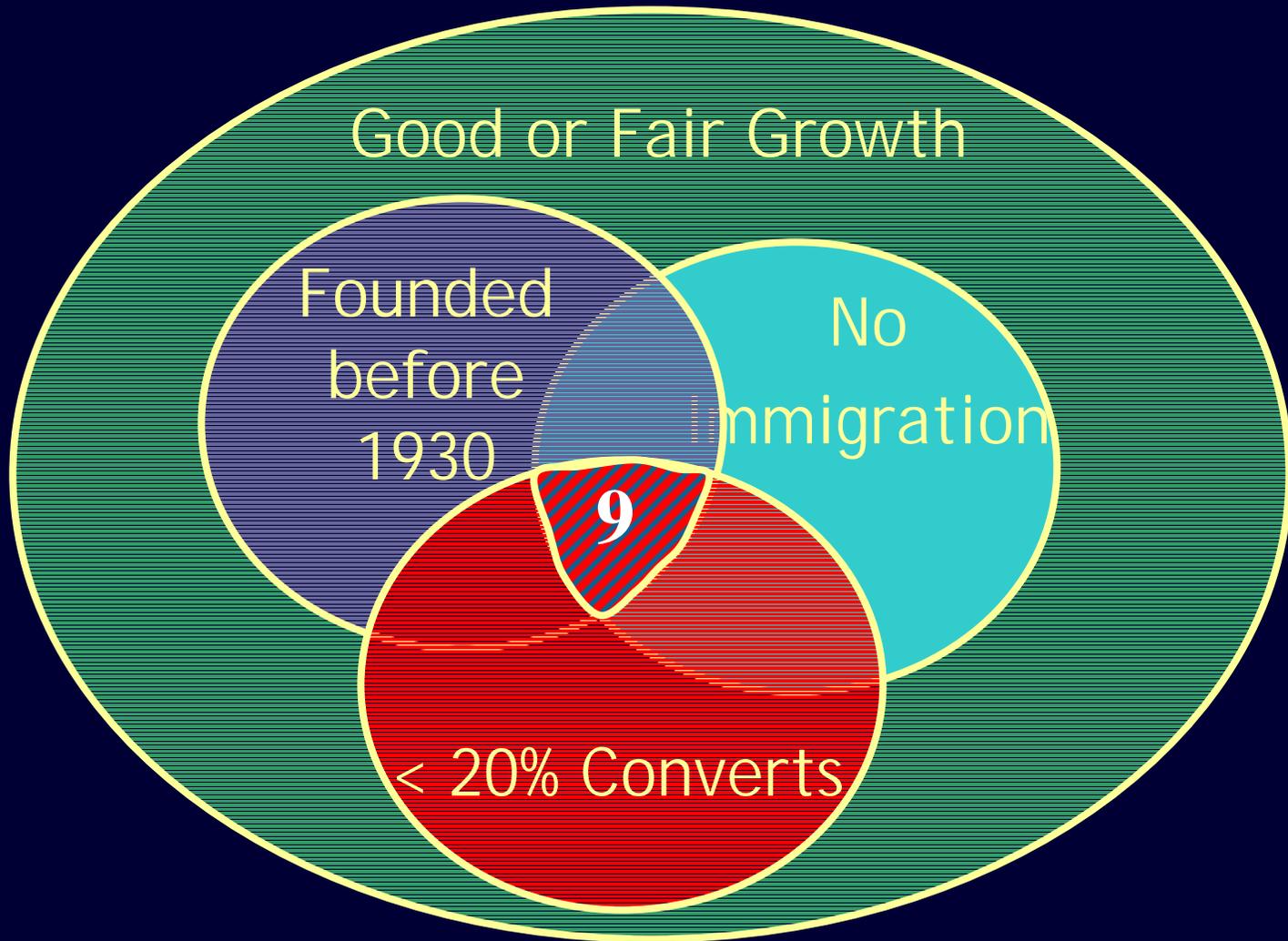
Growth Model

Conclusions

- The data (seems) to show (to me at least) that:
  - Any parish can grow.
    - There is a parish like yours that has grown.
  - Many ingredients to choose from.
    - Almost every (positive) practice shows a relationship with growth.
  - No silver bullet
    - No clear formula... if you do these things you will grow.
- A consistent philosophy/model of what your parish wants to be is probably the most important concept.
- This is Hard

Key Points

- Growing parishes outnumber declining parishes

- Practices traditionally thought of as good demonstrate a relationship to growth.

- Growing parishes apply more practices

- There is a parish like yours that says it is growing.

- More today 2:30 PM Wedgewood

Discussion Questions

Question 1

- Describe a model of parish that is "Living a Life in Christ".
  - Use what you've learned
    - in this session (or ignore it if you wish)
    - In other sessions of the Council
    - Your own experiences.
- Can you describe a different, yet equally valid model of a successful parish community? What legitimate conditions would influence the differences? (Ie. geographic, demographic, economic, educational, cultural, financial)
- In what ways is <u>your</u> parish different from this/these model(s)?

Question 2

- What is the most significant aspect of these data?

- What can we do with this information within our own parish? How can we use it?

Question 3

- You have been asked to visit ten Orthodox parishes to assess which seemed to be most effectively and consistently "Living a Life in Christ".
  - What criteria would you use to make your evaluation?
  - What four or five broad qualitative questions would you ask?
  - What specific, numerically based "measure" questions would you ask – if any?
  - What observations would you make? (What would you look for in what situations.)