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OCA: What Church Leadership Needs to Know



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Three important facts about OCA geography.

Fact 1. Compared to general US population, the members of Orthodox Churches are concentrated in certain geographic areas. 45% of them live in five states
New York (14% of all Orthodox adherents),
California (10%), Illinois (8%), Pennsylvania (7%),
Massachusetts (6%)

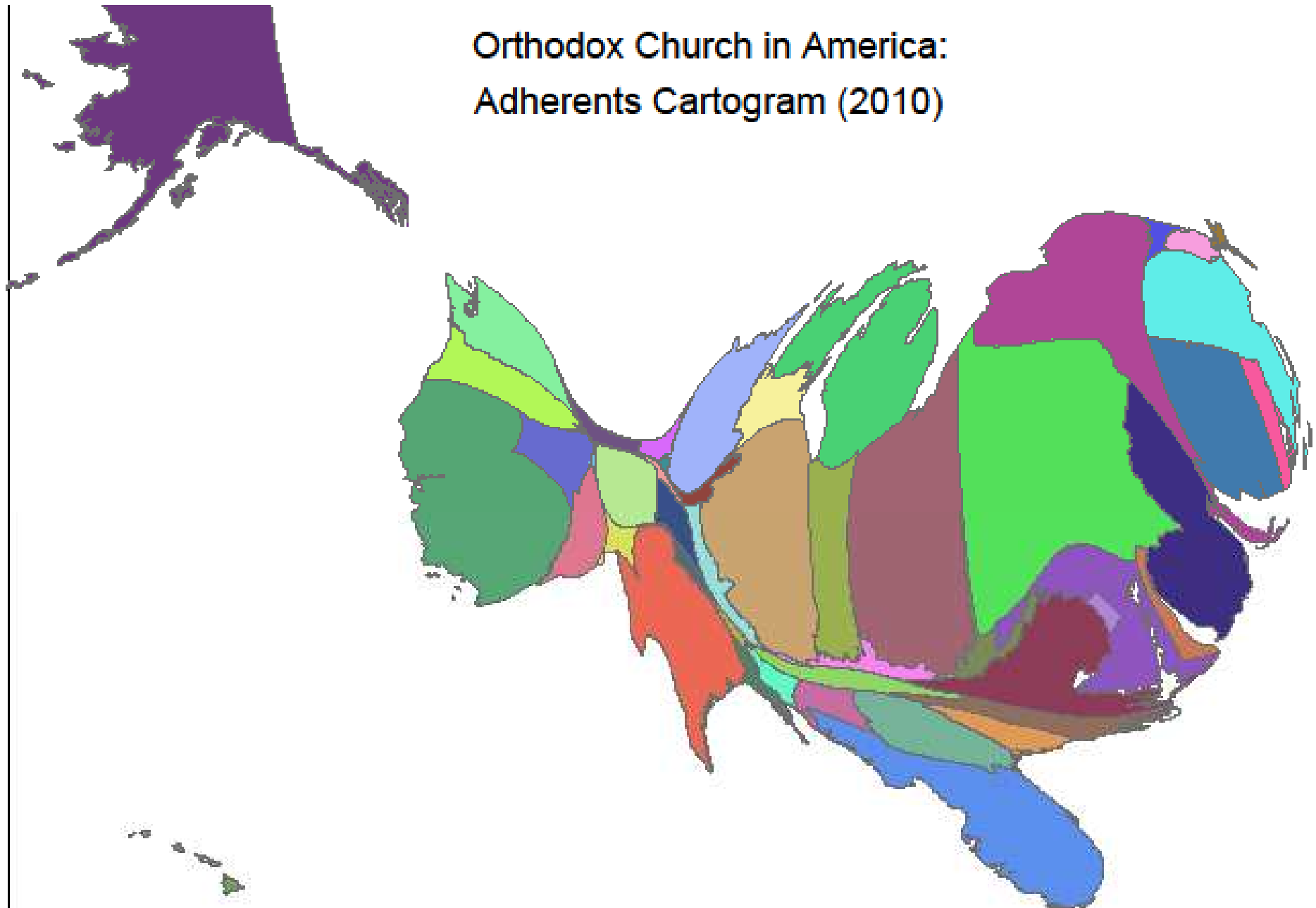
But only 29% of US population live in these five states

But geography of OCA membership is different.

46% of OCA adherents live in five states:

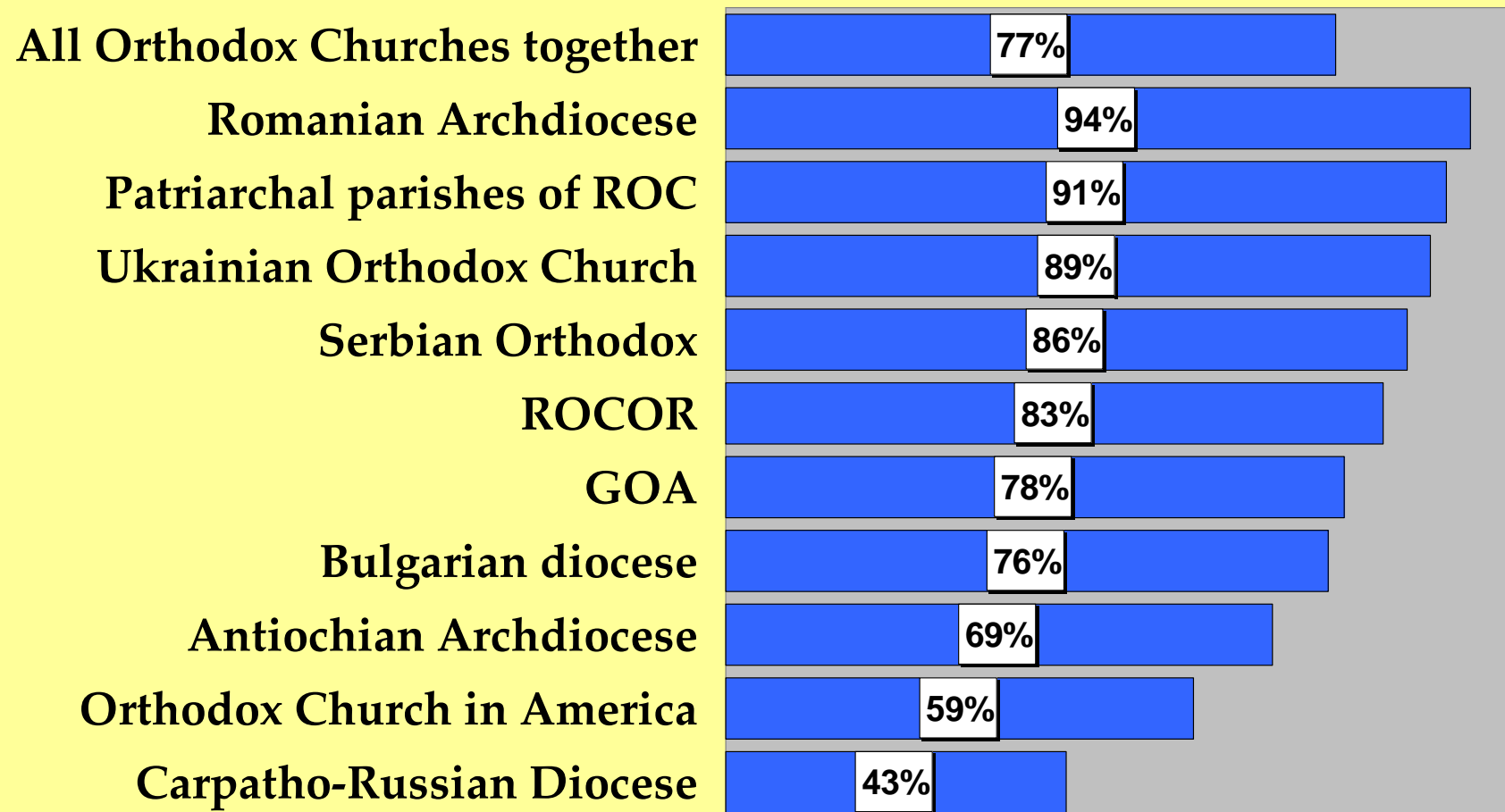
Alaska (14%), Pennsylvania (11%), Ohio (7%),
California (7%), New York (6%).

Orthodox Church in America: Adherents Cartogram (2010)



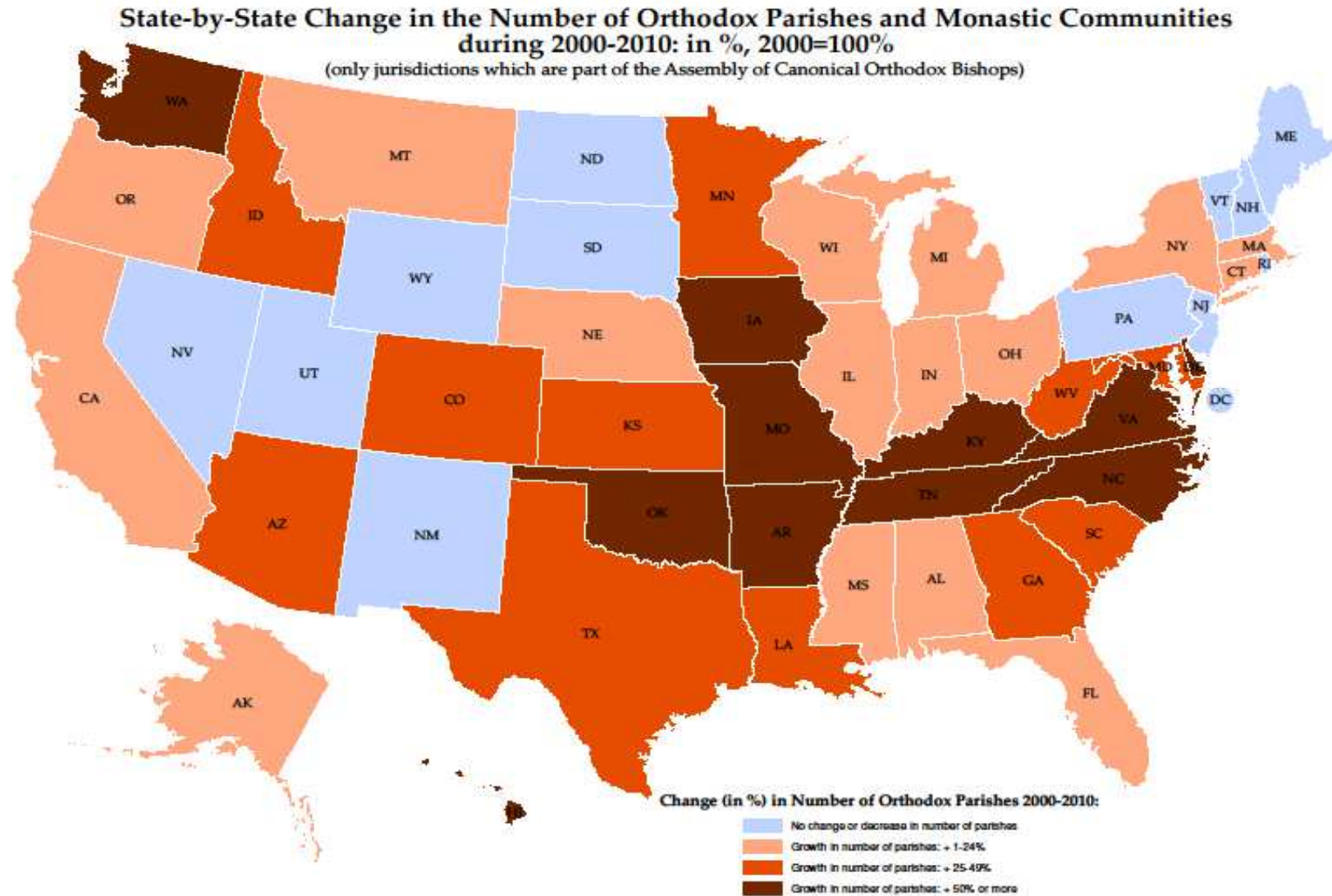
**Fact 2. Members of Orthodox Churches are “urban” people:
77% of them are in Metropolitan areas of 1,000,000+
compared to only 54% among US general population.
But OCA is less “urban” than the other Orthodox Churches**

**% of Church members living in Metropolitan areas of
more than 1,000,000 population**



Fact 3. During 2000-2010: + 15% growth in total number of Orthodox parishes and monasteries in USA.

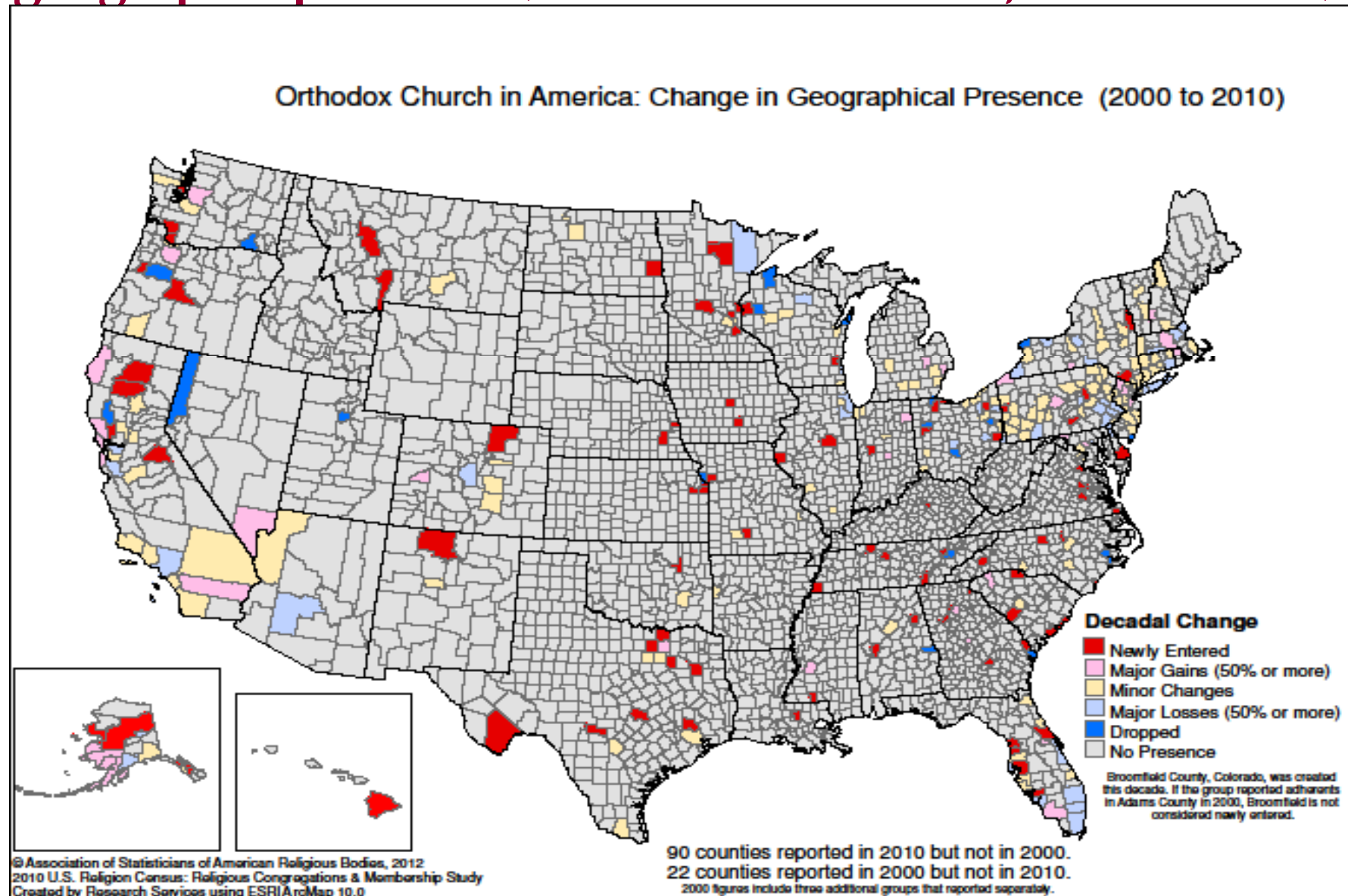
OCA: only +4% net-increase (from 549 to 571 parishes)



SOURCE OF DATA: 2010 US National Orthodox Census
2010 Religious Congregations Membership Study
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US nationwide, during 2000-2010, the total number of parishes and monastic communities that belong to the various Assembly's jurisdictions increased from 1,689 to 1,936: +15% growth.

During 2000-2010, OCA became much more geographically widespread. It “entered” 90 new counties while “dropped” its parishes from 22 counties. That is, +28% growth in geographic presence (240 counties in 2000, 308 - in 2010)



Eight important facts from the FACT 2010 study:

- **Faith Communities Today (FACT) 2010 national survey is major study of American religious congregations accomplished by FACT partnership:**

www.faithcommunitiestoday.org

- **11,000+ randomly selected religious congregations representing 32 of the country's largest denominations and faith traditions completed standard questionnaires**
- **FACT 2010 surveys were sent to all GOA, OCA, AOCA parishes. 370 parishes completed questionnaires – 30% return. Including: 123 OCA, 160 GOA 85 AOCA parishes.**
- **For various subject-oriented reports from FACT 2010 study look at: <http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/fact-2010>**

Fact 1 Compared to Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, membership of Orthodox Churches is different in several ways:

- **Members of Orthodox churches are better educated: Orthodox parishes have higher % of persons with college degree than Catholic and Protestant congregations**
- **Compared to Roman-Catholics and Protestants, members of Orthodox churches spend significantly longer time commuting to their churches**
- **Orthodox parishes are less “female” than Roman Catholic parishes or Protestant congregations**

“Of your total regular participants estimate the percent who are...”

Average % of various categories of members:

Category of members	Orth. Chur.	Rom. Cath.	Mnl. Prot.	Evng. Prot.
College graduates	53	40	43	31
Living within 15 minutes of parish’s church building	46	73	75	55
Female	54	57	61	57
New to congregation / parish in the past 5 years	23	18	19	30

Demography of GOA, OCA, AOCA members is also quite different

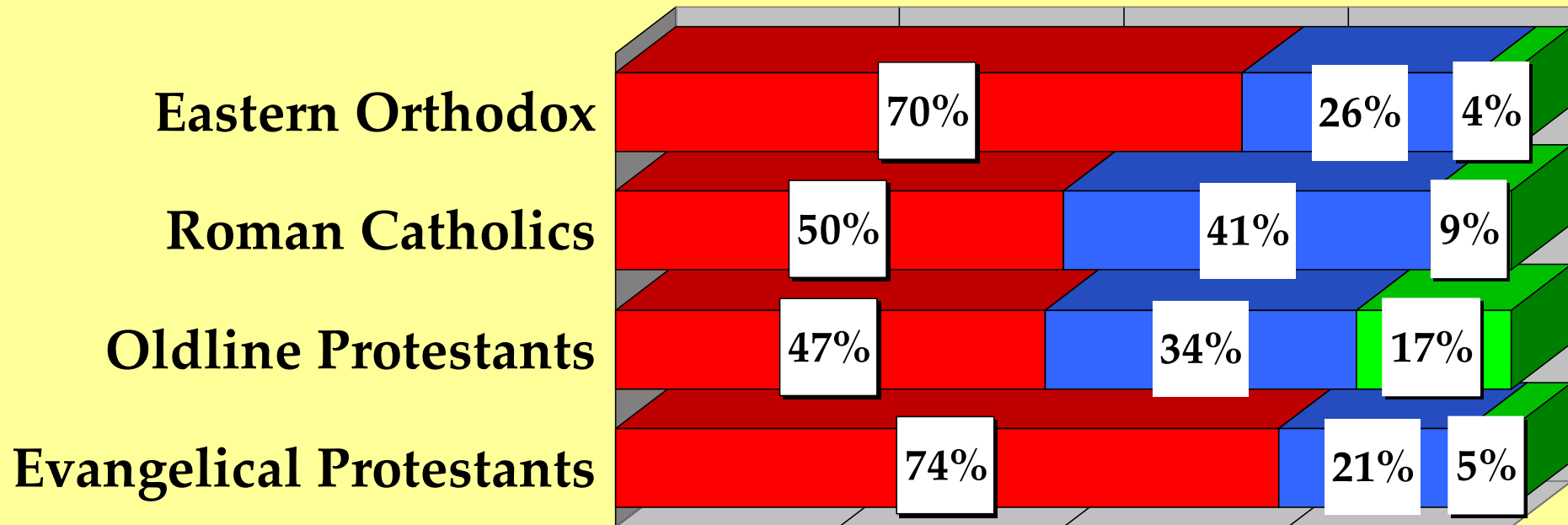
Average % of various categories of members for GOA, OCA, AOCA parishes nationwide

Category of parishioners	OCA	GOA	AOCA
College graduates	49	54	57
Living within 15 minutes of parish's church building	34	53	47
Children, youth and young adults (age 0-34)	28	28	36
New to parish in the past 5 years	27	15	30
Converts to Orthodoxy	48	26	50

Fact 2 Theologically Orthodox parishes are much more conservative than Roman Catholic or Oldline Protestant congregations

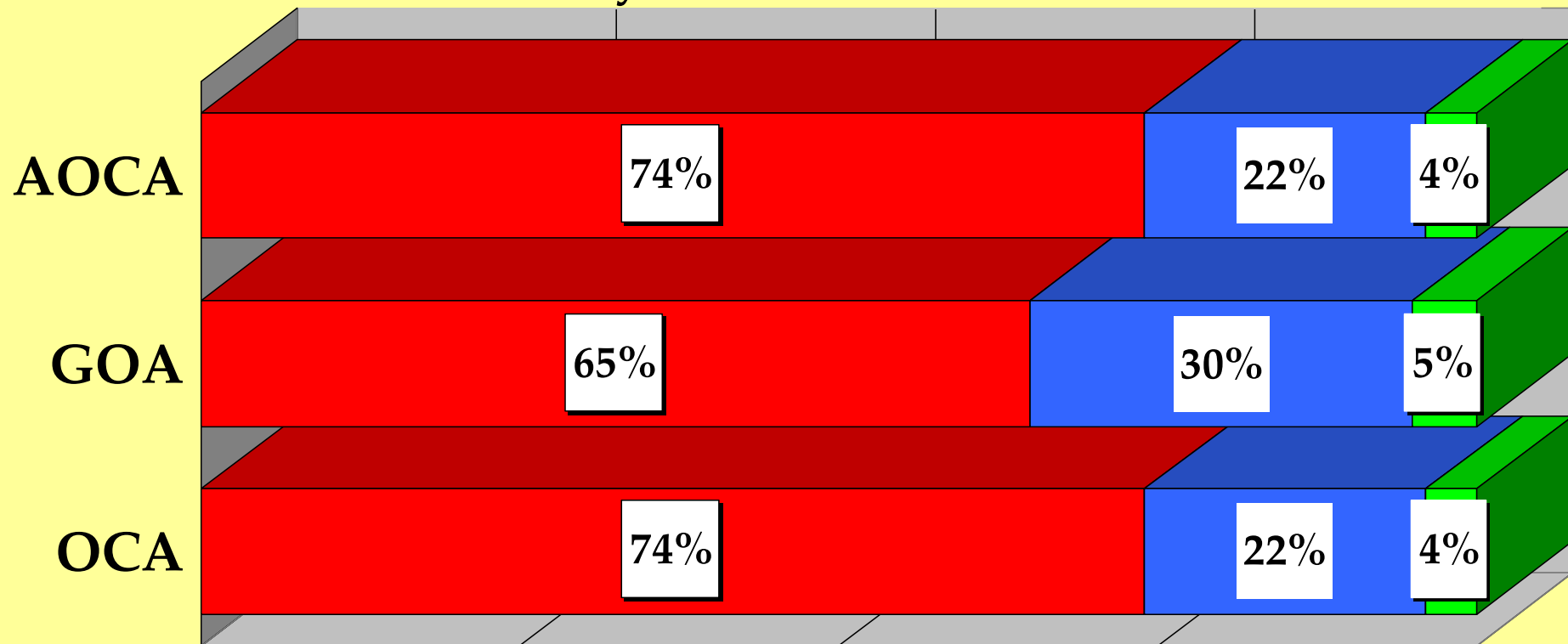
“How would you describe theological outlook of the majority of your regularly participating adults?”

- Conservative (somewhat or very) ■ Moderate**
- Liberal (somewhat or very)**



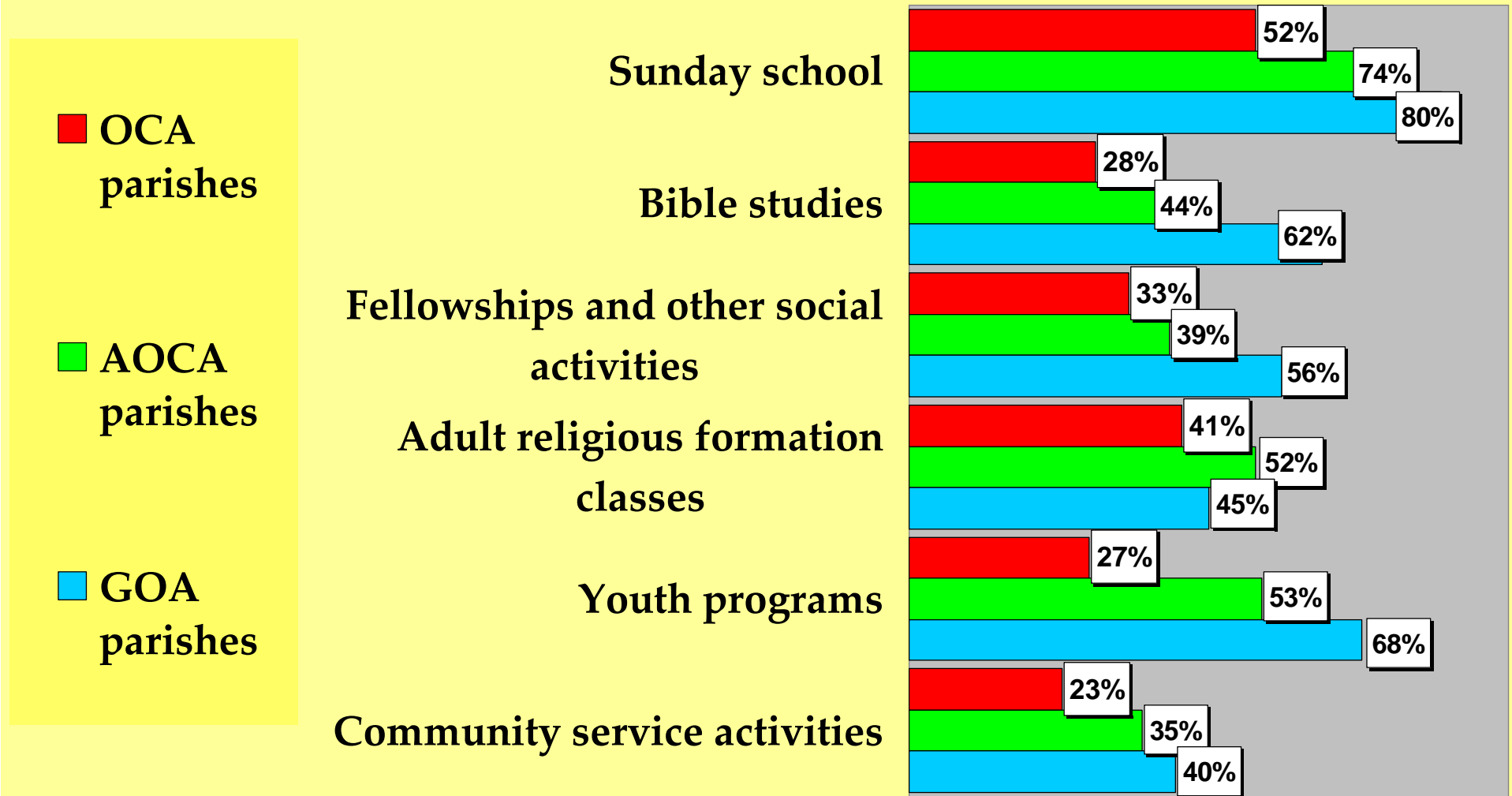
There is not much difference between AOCA, GOA and OCA parishes in terms of their “theological preferences” (conservative vers. liberal)
“How would you describe theological outlook of the majority of your regularly participating adults?”

■ Conservative (somewhat or very) ■ Moderate
■ Liberal (somewhat or very)



Fact 3 Compared to AOCA and GOA, OCA churches are less active in developing parish-based programs

% of parishes reporting that following programs and activities are given “a lot of emphasis”

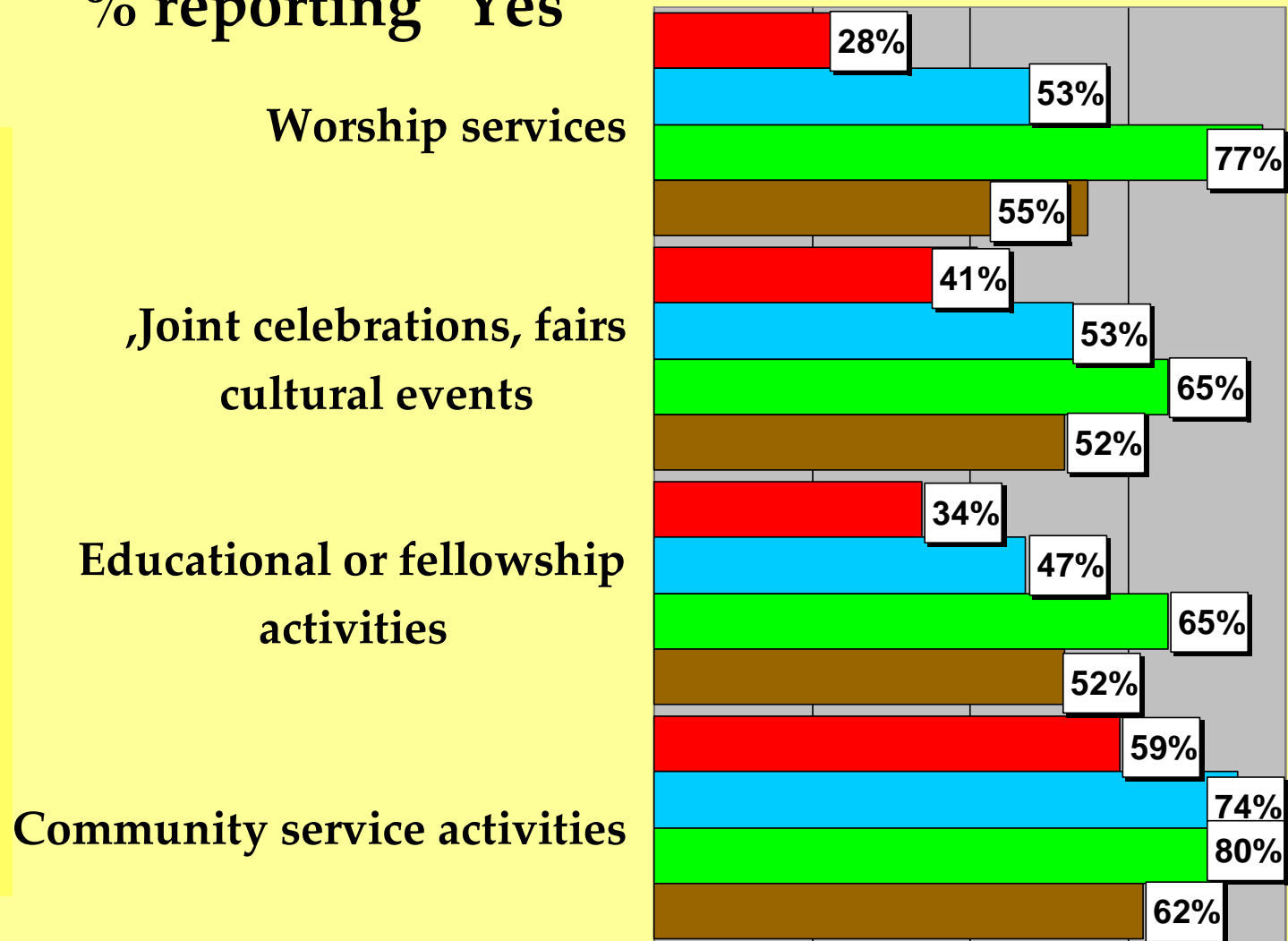


Fact 4 Compared to Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, the Orthodox Churches do not communicate much with religiously “others:” the level of ecumenical involvement of Orthodox parishes is significantly lower than among Roman Catholic parishes or Protestant congregations

“During past 12 months, has your parish / congregation been involved in any of the following ecumenical or interfaith activities?”

% reporting "Yes"

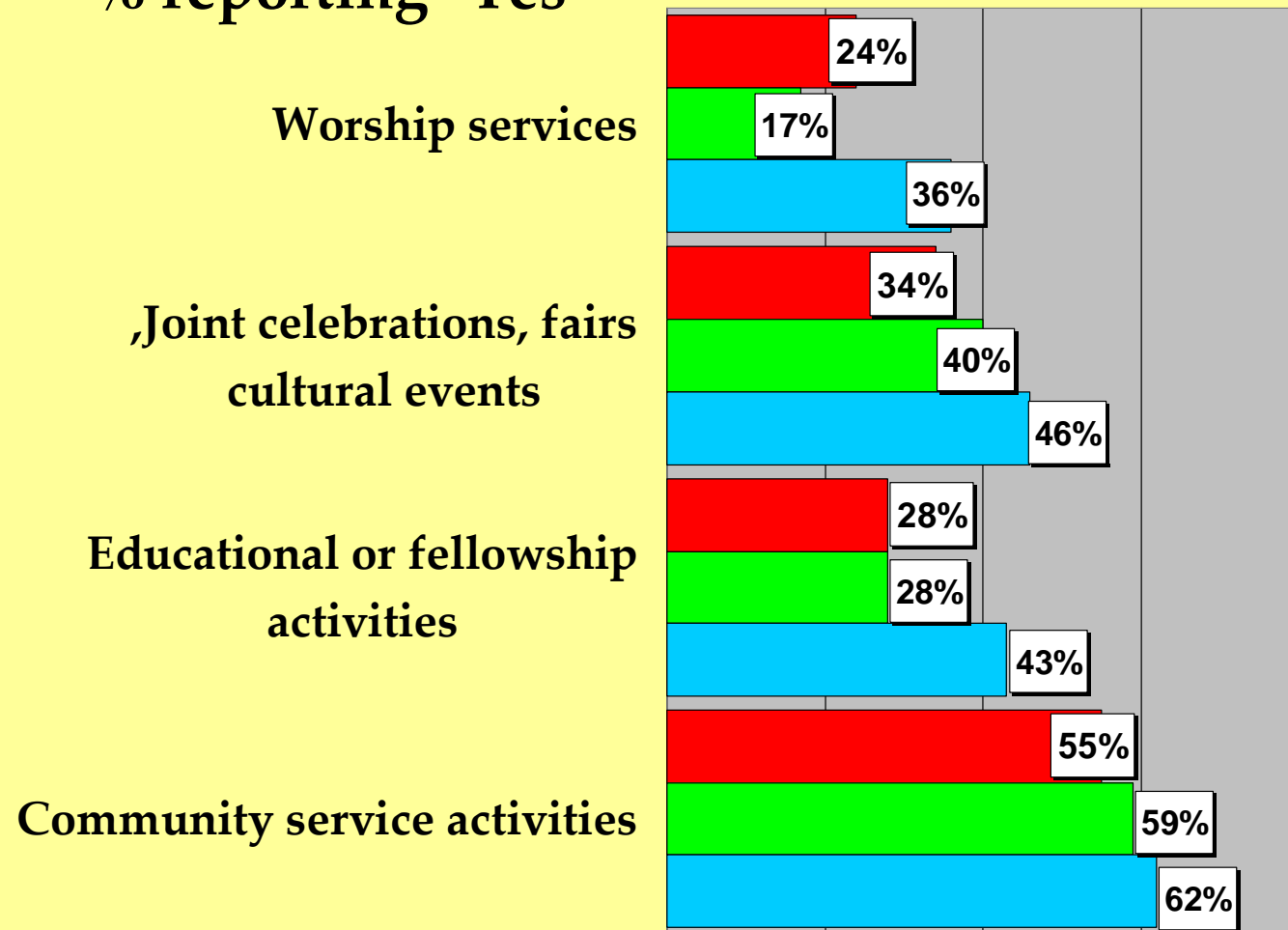
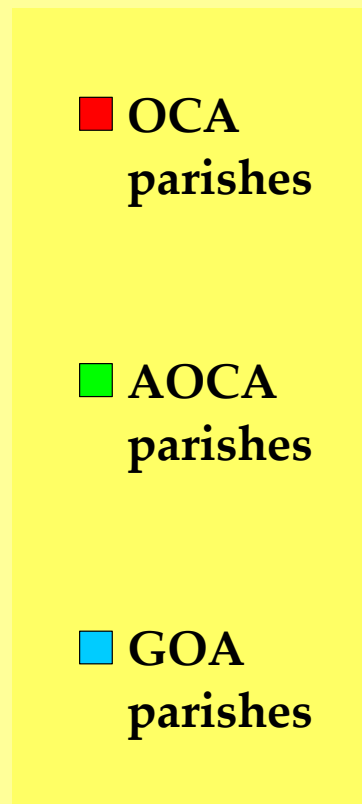
- Eastern Orthodox Churches
- Roman Catholic Church
- Mainline Protestant Churches
- Evangelical Protestant Churches



Overall OCA parishes have lower level of ecumenical involvement than GOA or AOCA churches

“During past 12 months, has your parish been involved in any of the following ecumenical or interfaith activities?”

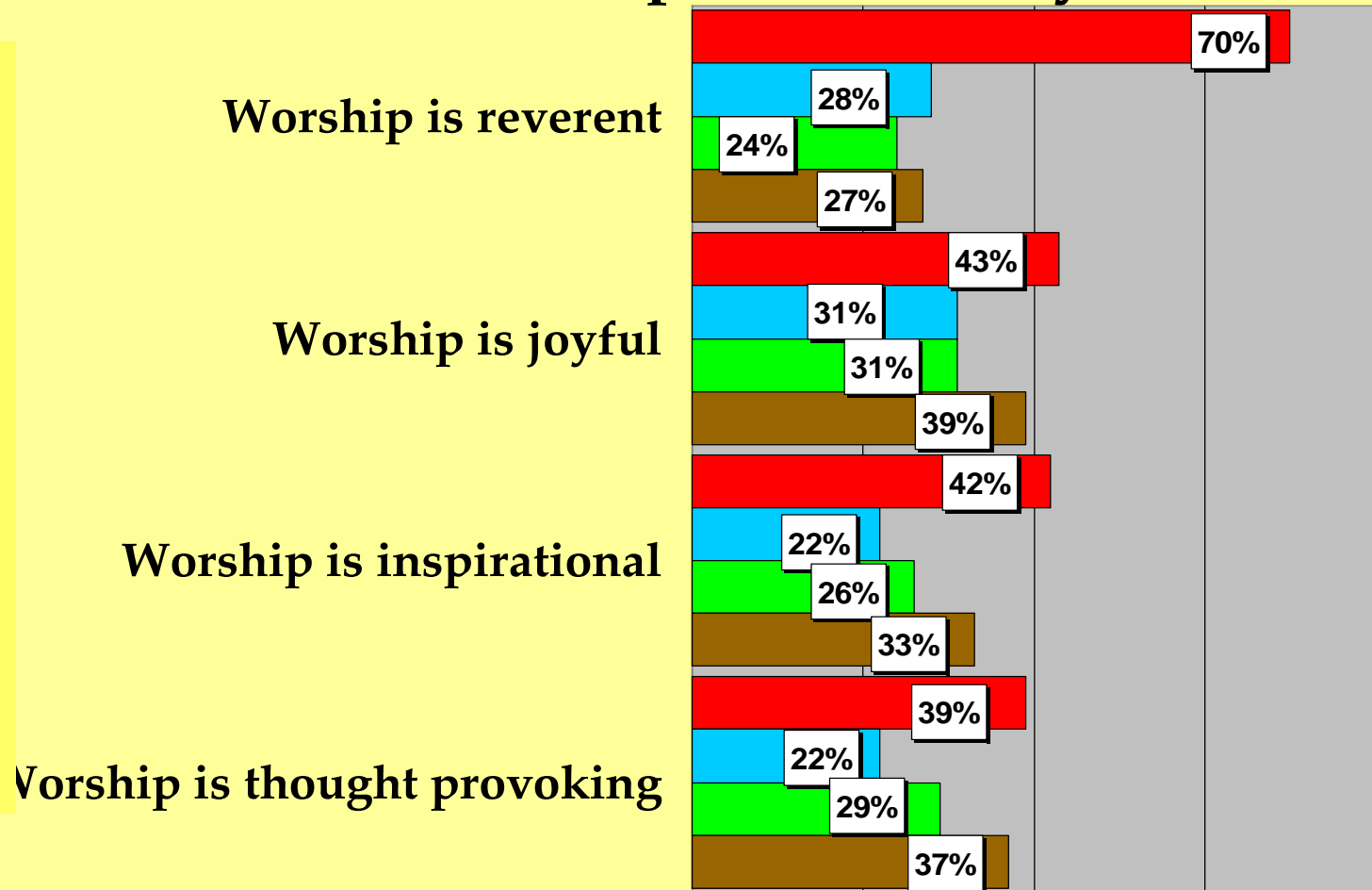
% reporting "Yes"



Fact 5 Reportedly, worship in Orthodox parishes is more “powerful” than in Roman Catholic and Protestant churches

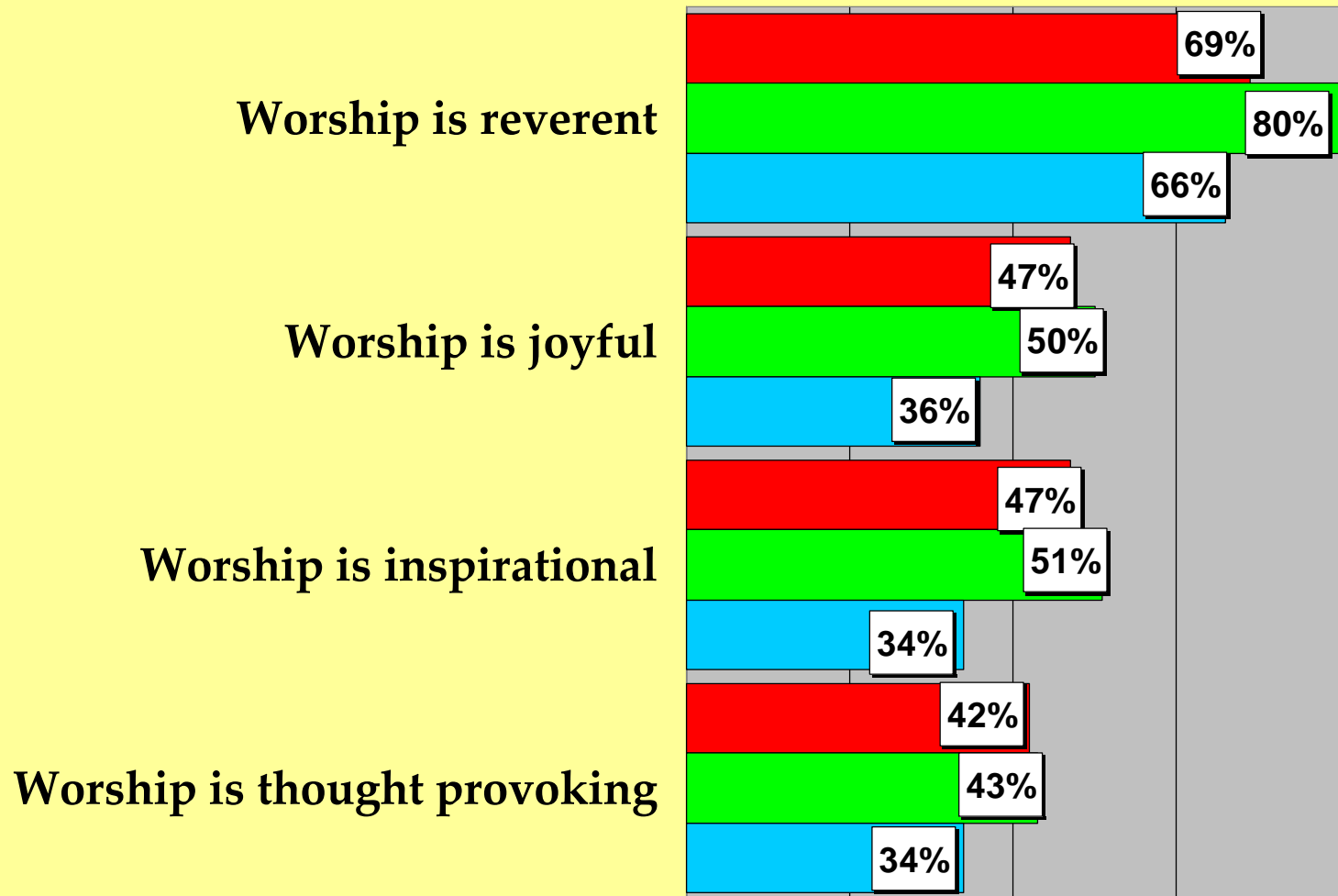
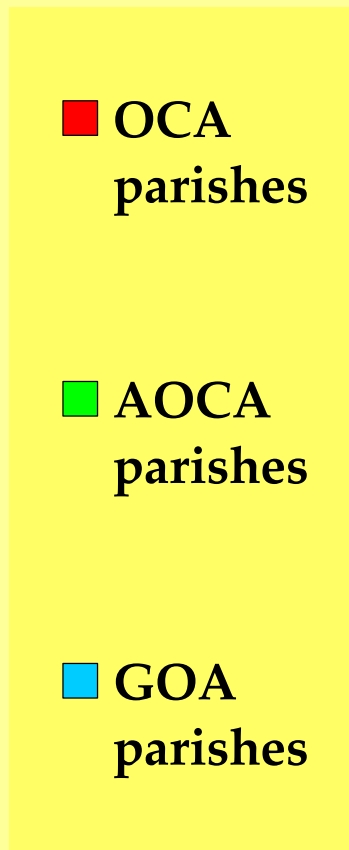
% of parishes / congregations reporting that following describe their week-end worship service “very well”

- Eastern Orthodox Churches
- Roman Catholic Church
- Mainline Protestant Churches
- Evangelical Protestant Churches

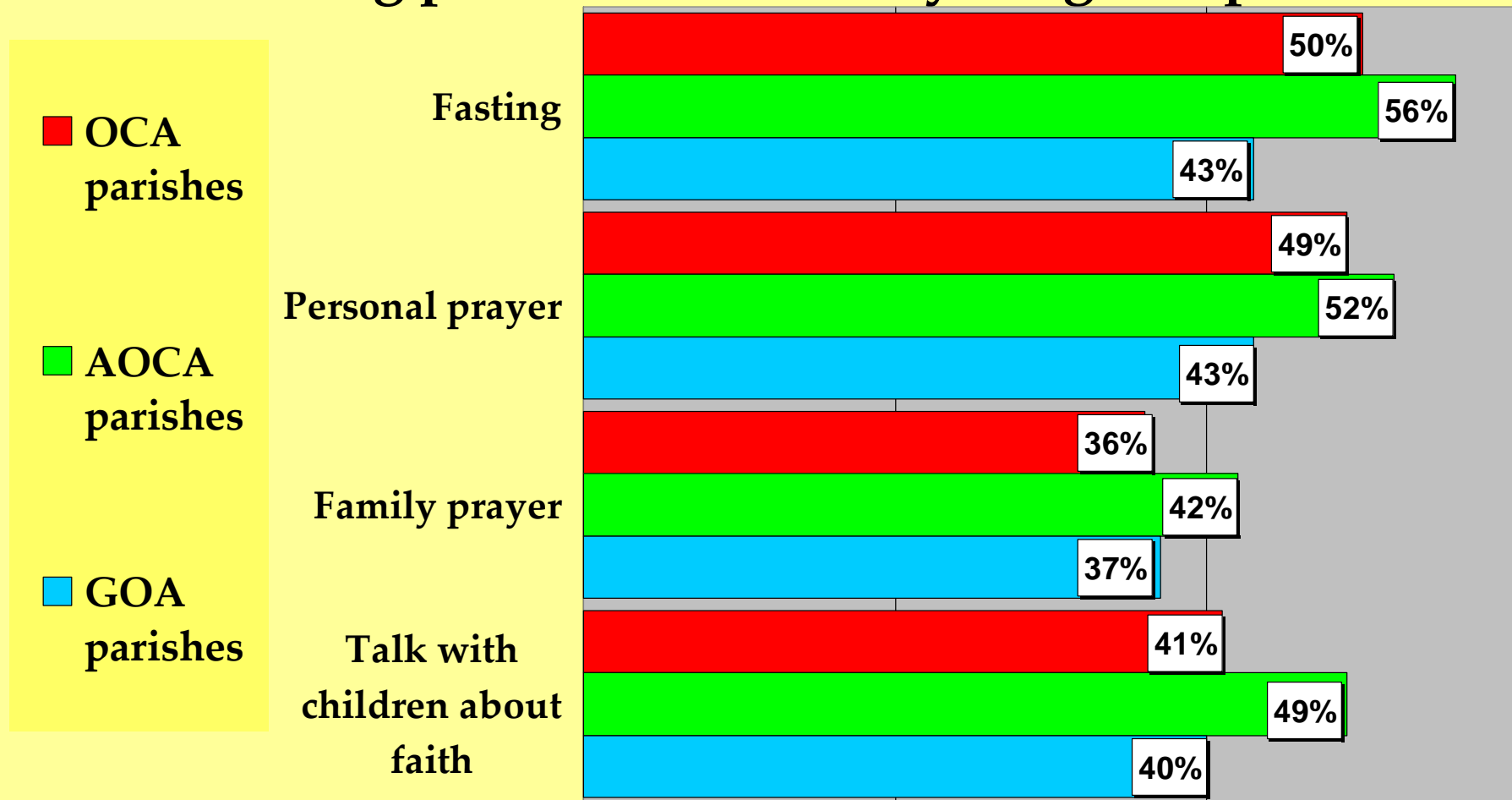


Reportedly, worship in OCA and, especially, AOCA parishes is more “powerful” than in GOA churches

% of parishes reporting that following describe their weekend worship service “very well”

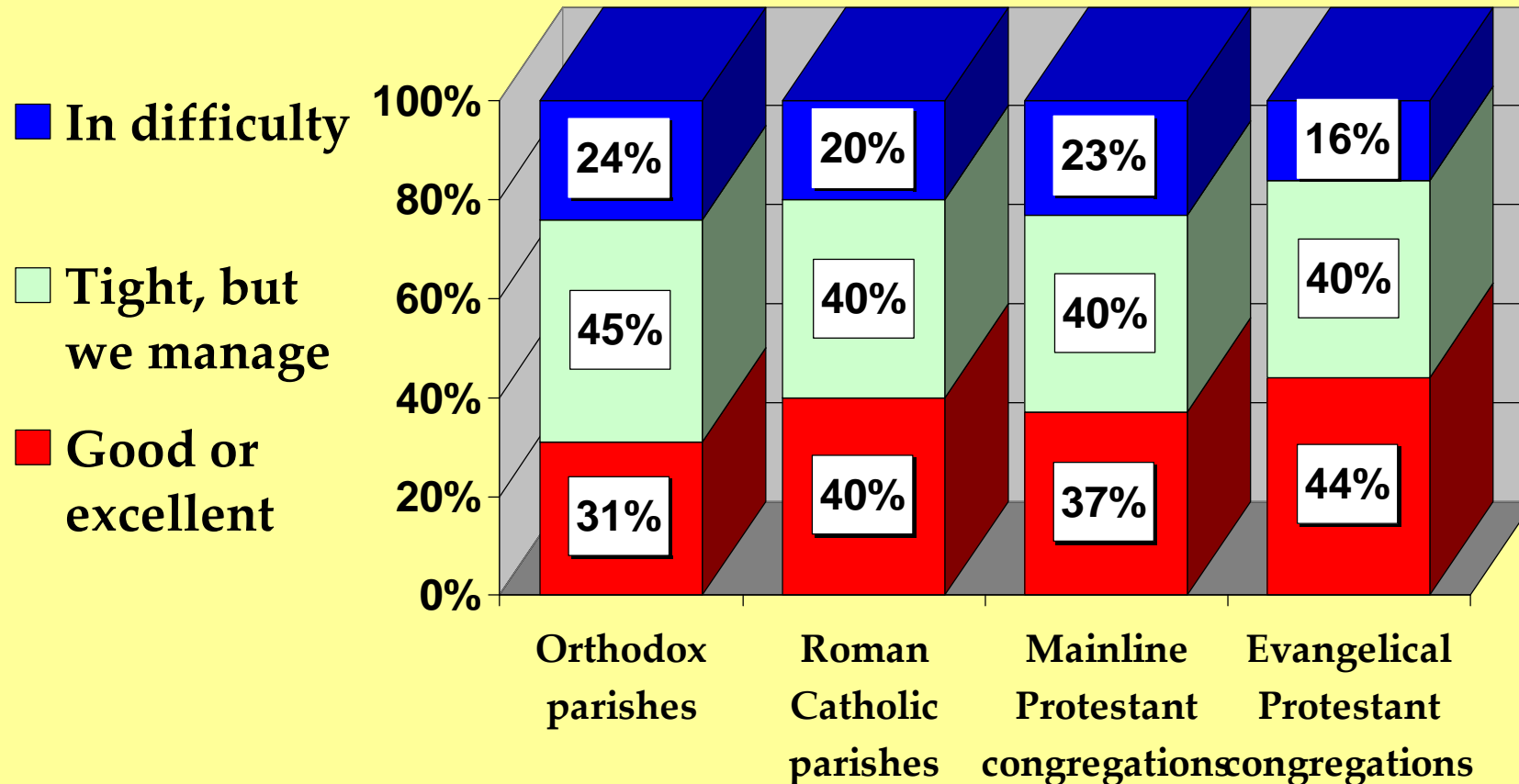


Fact 6. With regard to personal religious practices of their members, OCA churches are more “relaxed” than AOCA but stricter than GOA churches
% of parishes reporting that they place “a lot of emphasis” on following personal and family religious practices



Fact 7 Financial health of Orthodox Parishes is worse compared to Roman-Catholic parishes and Protestant Congregations

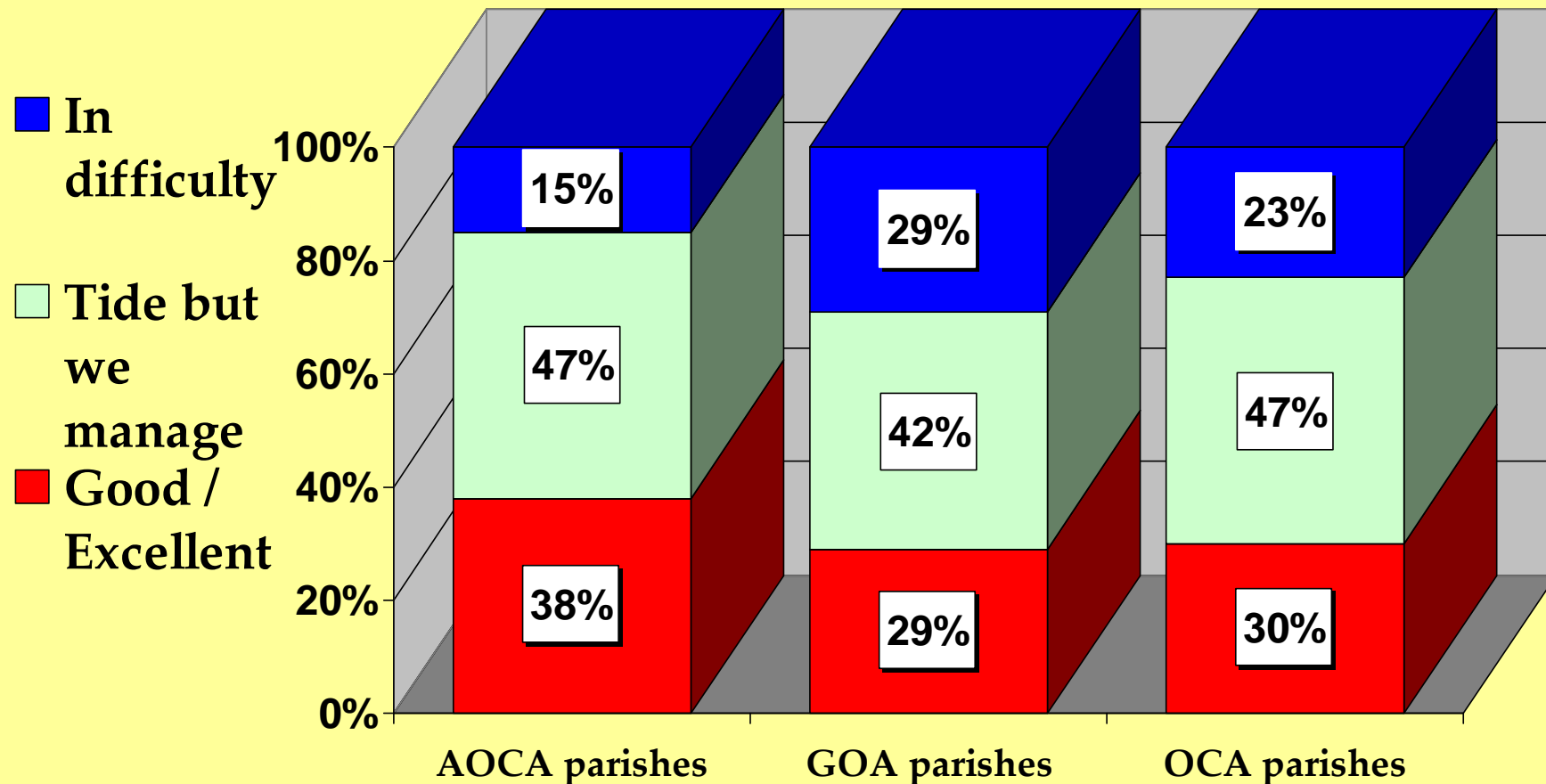
“How would you describe current (2010) financial health of your parish / congregation?”
% of parishes / congregations reporting:



Compared to GOA and OCA churches, Antiochian parishes report better financial situation.

“How would you describe current (2010) financial health of your parish?”

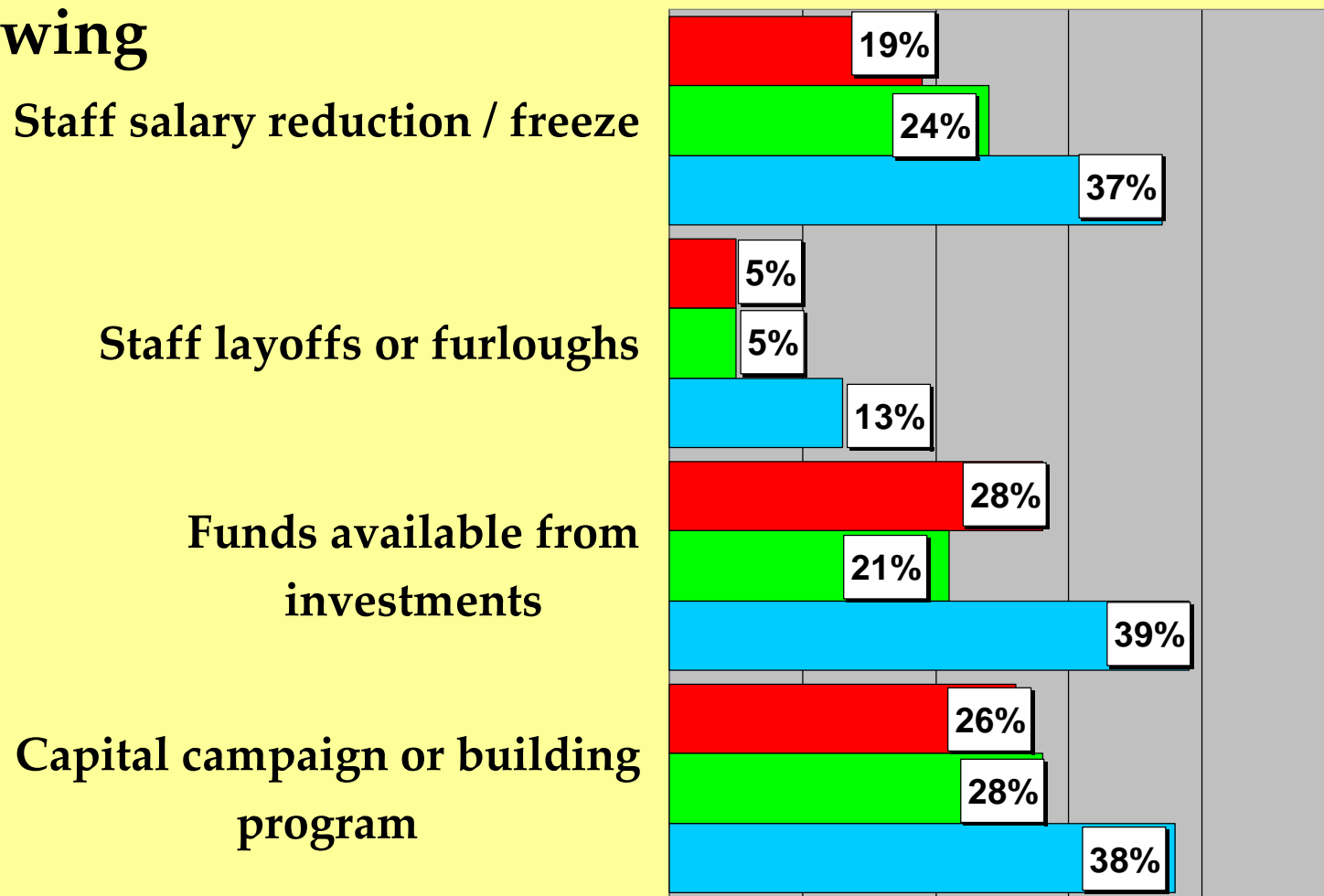
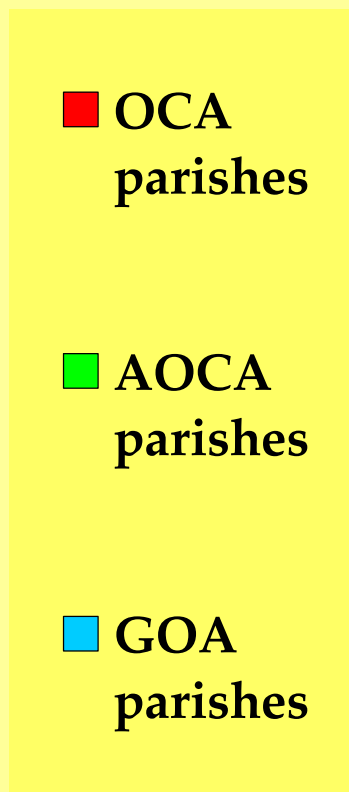
% of parishes / congregations reporting:



GOA churches were hit harder by financial crisis than the OCA and AOCA parishes

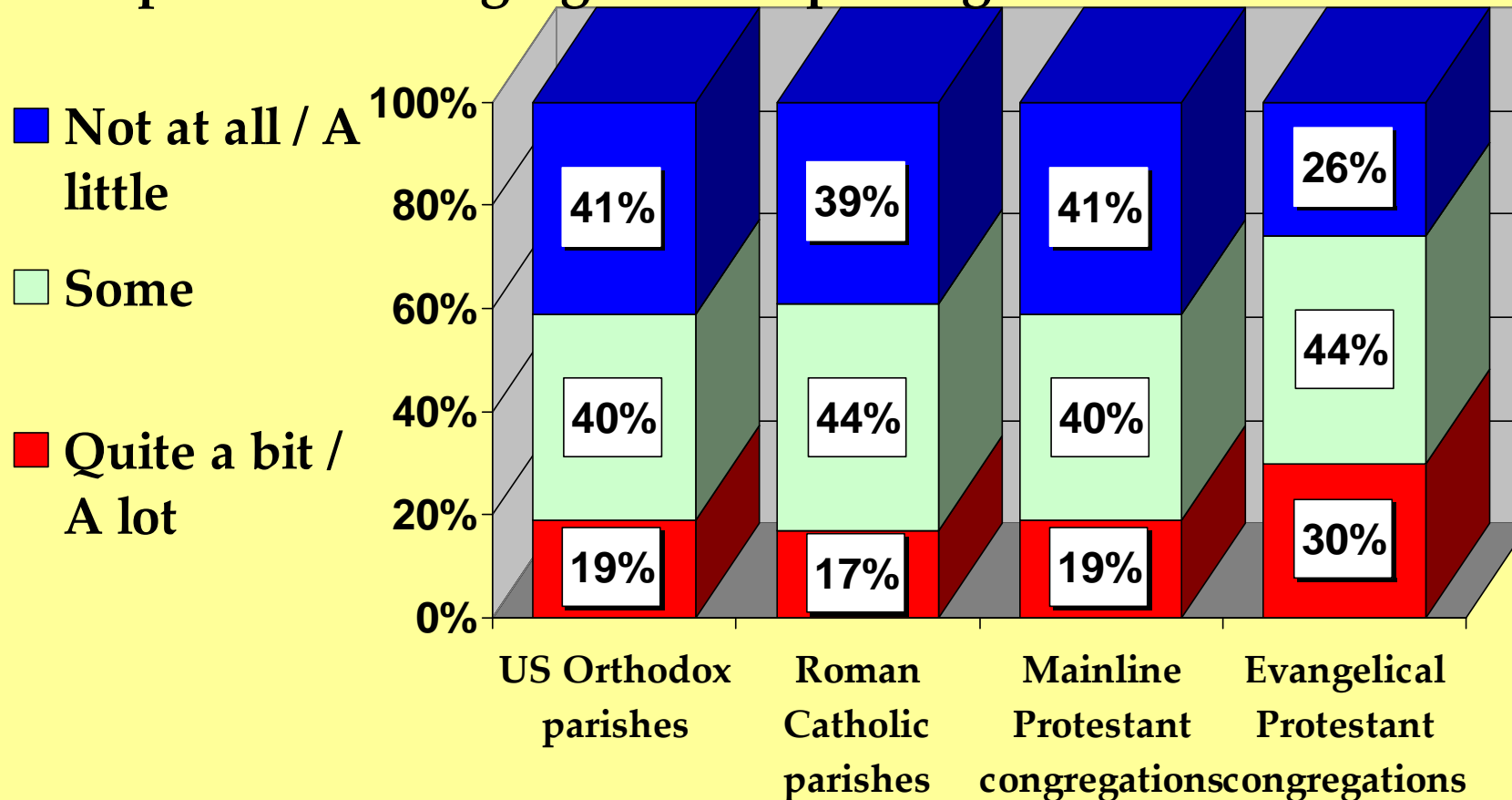
“How would you assess the impact of 2008-09 crisis on your parish’s staff and operations?”

% of parishes reporting “Moderate or Major impact” on each of following



Fact 8 US Orthodox parishes are as involved in recruiting new members as Catholic parishes or Mainline Protestant churches. But they lag far behind Evangelicals churches.

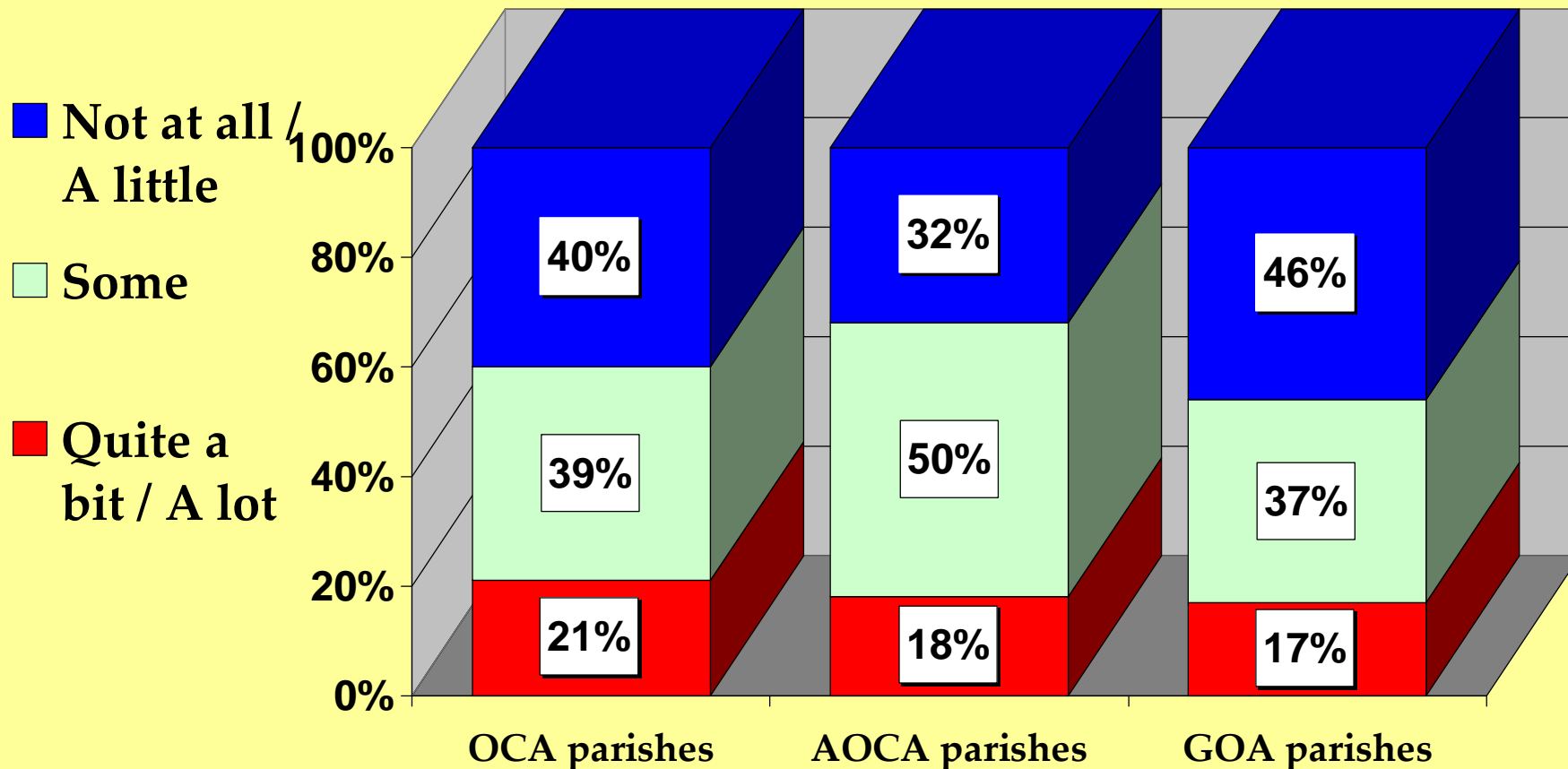
“Overall, to what extent are your parish’s / congregation’s participants involved in recruiting new members?”
% of parishes / congregations reporting:



The stereotype about particular missionary “zeal” of Antiochian churches seems to be exaggerated.

“Overall, to what extent are your parish’s members involved in recruiting new members?”

% of parishes / congregations reporting:



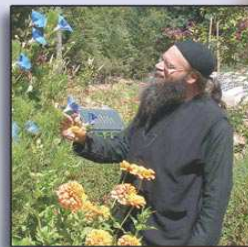
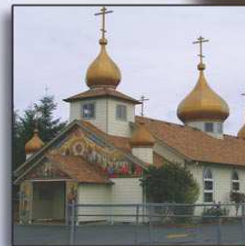
Comprehensive source of information on all US Orthodox Churches (including county level data-base)

Atlas of

American Orthodox Christian Churches

Edited by

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A few useful web-sites on church-life in USA:

www.orthodoxreality.org : about American Orthodox Churches today

www.orthodoxhistory.org: about history of US Orthodox Churches

www.usreligioncensus.org: county level data on religious affiliation, membership and attendance in USA

www.hirr.hartsem.edu: vast and diverse information on various (mainly Christian) religious communities in USA

**If you are back home and have
questions, please, write me at
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**Now is time for “difficult” questions:
please ask!**