



# *Three Fundamental Religious Changes in America and What They Mean for Parish Ministry.*



**Hartford Seminary  
April 22, 2013**

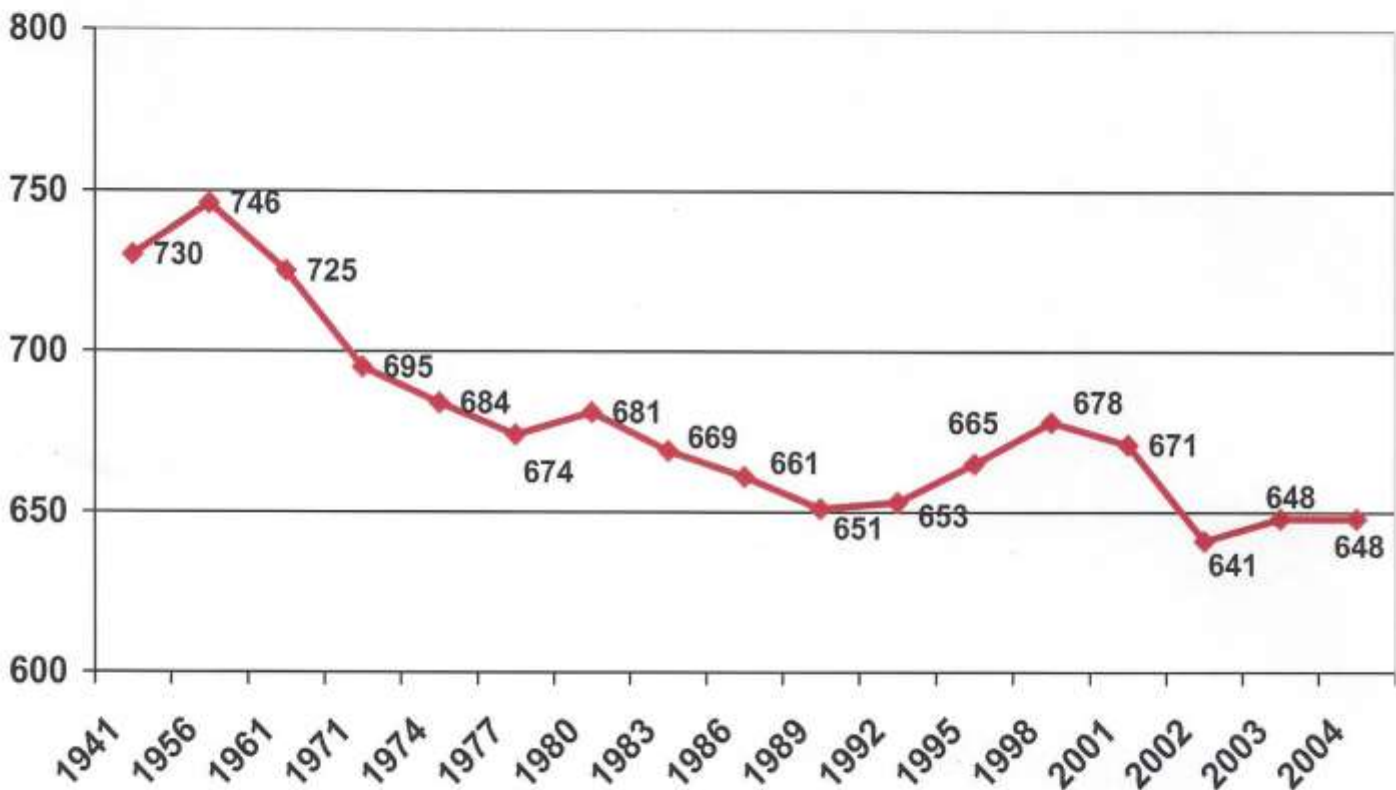
**David Roozen, Director  
Hartford Seminary Institute  
For Religion Research  
[roozen@hartsem.edu](mailto:roozen@hartsem.edu)**



# *In Regard to Religious Change:*

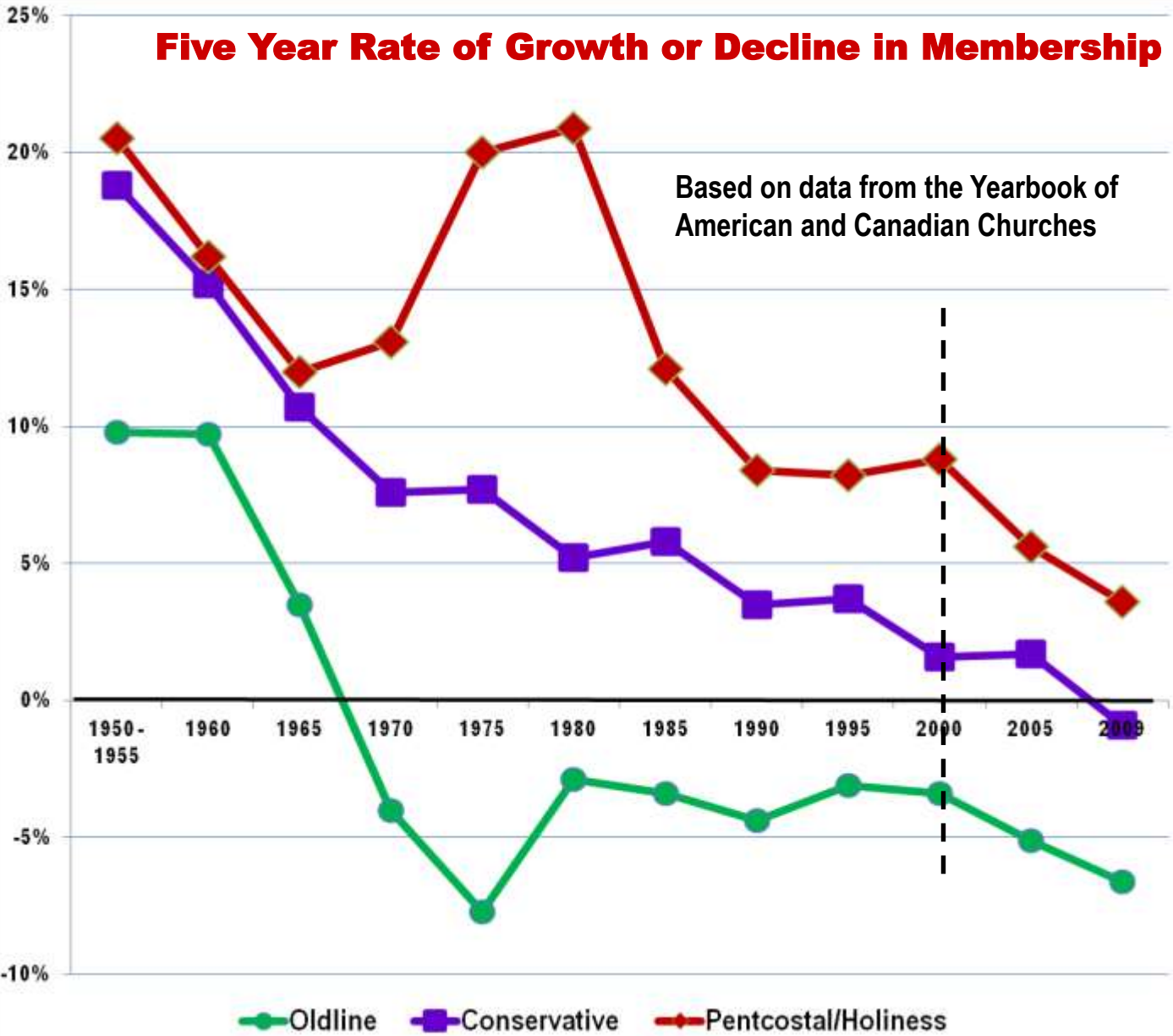
## **Not A Good Half Century For the United States 1941 -- 2004**

**GALLUP'S INDEX OF LEADING RELIGIOUS INDICATORS**



# Declines Have Accelerated in the Last Decade

## Five Year Rate of Growth or Decline in Membership



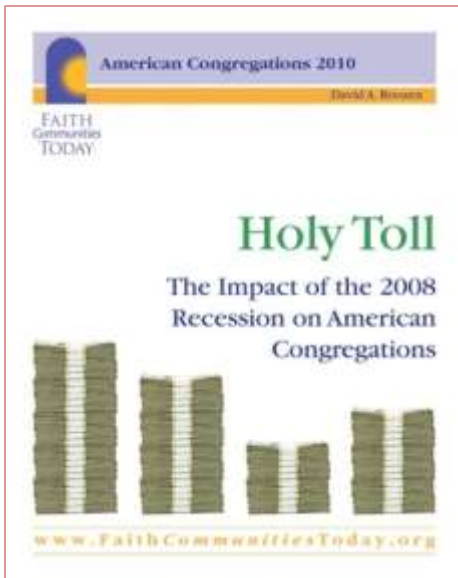
Episcopal  
 Presbyterian-USA  
 United Church of Christ  
 Church of the Brethren  
 Evangelical Lutheran-ELCA  
 Reformed Church of Am  
 United Methodist

Christian and Missionary Alliance  
 Cumberland Presbyterian  
 Evangelical Covenant  
 Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod  
 N.A. Baptist Conf  
 7th Day Adventist  
 Southern Baptist Conv  
 Wisc Evang Lutheran Synod

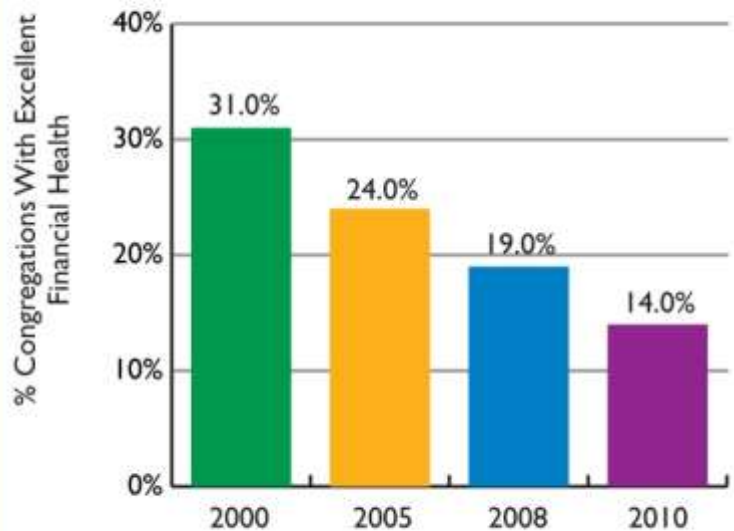
Assemblies of God  
 Church of God-Anderson  
 Church of God-Cleveland  
 Church of Nazarene  
 Free Methoddist of N.A.  
 Salvation Army

# And It Is Not Just A Matter of People in the Pews, But Also:

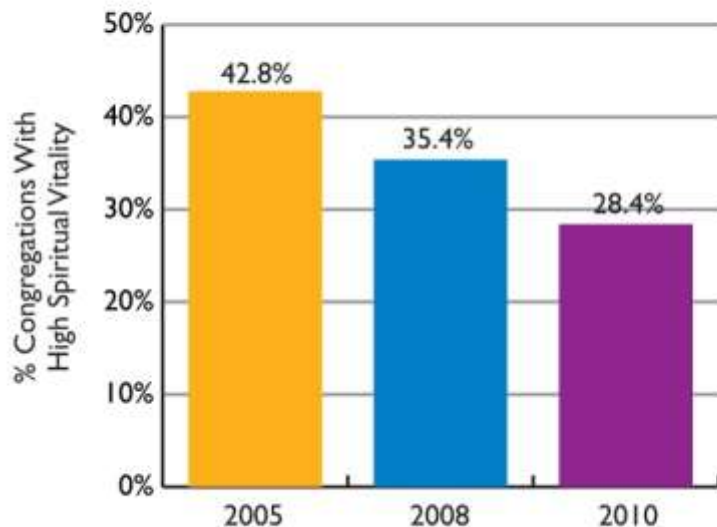
## A Steep Drop in Financial Health



**Figure 14: An Accelerating Decline in Financial Health**



**Figure 29: Most Disconcerting! A Sharp Erosion of Spiritual Vitality**



**And, a Nearly  
Equal Drop in  
The Spiritual  
Vitality of  
Congregations**

# **But The Declines Are Only The “Glass Half Empty” Take On The Decade, which also includes, among other negatives:**

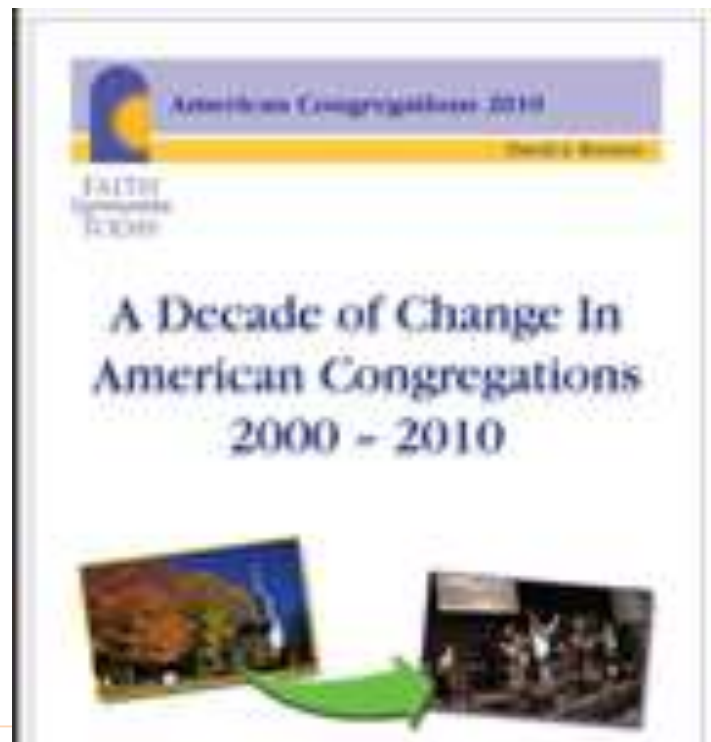
- Continuing high levels of conflict, and
- Aging memberships.

## **On The Positive Side, The Decade Brought:**

- 1. A continued increase in innovative, adaptive worship**
- 2. A surprisingly rapid adoption of electronic technologies**
- 3. A dramatic increase in racial/ethnic congregations, many for immigrant groups**
- 4. A general increase in the breadth of both member-oriented and mission oriented programs**

**The decade also gave Witness to:**

- 5. An increase in connection across faith traditions**
- 6. A twist in the historical pattern of religious involvement in the electoral process**



# Within This Tangled Swirl Of American Religious Change, Our Brief Time Today Only Allows A Very cursory Look At Three Threads:

- **The Ascendance of Innovative Worship**
  - **The Corrosive, Yet Also Potentially Energizing Effect of Conflict**
  - **The Opportunities and Challenges of Increasing Racial/Ethnic Diversity**

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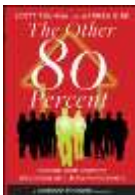
Further Resources on Congregations & Change

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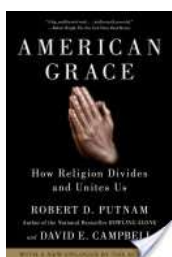
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Hartford Institute Publications, [www.FaithCommunitiesToday.org/](http://www.FaithCommunitiesToday.org/)



***The Other 80 Percent: Turning Your Church's Spectators into Active Participants***  
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**Most recent and encyclopedic book on religious change in the united States**

***American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*** Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell

# **A Final Word of Preface To help Set The Broader Context:**

## **Three Foundational, MEGA-TRENDS Changing America's Religious Landscape**

- **From WORD  
to SPIRIT**
- **From PROPHETIC  
to POLITICAL**
- **From MISSION  
to WORSHIP**

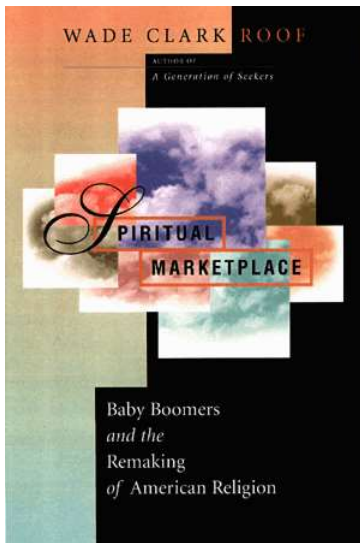
# Of these, the transition from *Word to Spirit* Is the Most Profound and Foundational

It is not uncommon – indeed it is most typical – for persons to think of religion as a collection of beliefs and doctrines most closely tied to, if not directly drawn from, a sacred Scripture. The beliefs, doctrines and scripture are cognitive and objective (i.e., they are external to the believer). Worship in such a tradition tends to emphasize preaching and the style of preaching is expository. This is what I mean by a religious orientation grounded in **THE WORD.**

In contrast, we are becoming increasingly aware that many persons practice religion more in terms of a liturgical or personal relationship to God. Such an approach is more experiential and subjective. (i.e., it is internal to the believer). Worship in such a tradition emphasizes ritual and/or prayer and the gifts of the spirit. If preaching is included it tends to be narrative. This is what I mean by a religious perspective oriented to **THE SPIRIT.**

The transition from **WORD** to **SPIRIT** is, most profoundly, a transition from an **EXTERNAL to an INTERNAL** locus of authority, and part and partial of this transition is religion as **CHOICE.**





**Baby boomer carried Cultural Revolution of the 1960s with its:**

- **Cultural individualism**
- **Ethic of self-fulfillment**
- **Anti-establishmentarianism**
- **Church as choice**

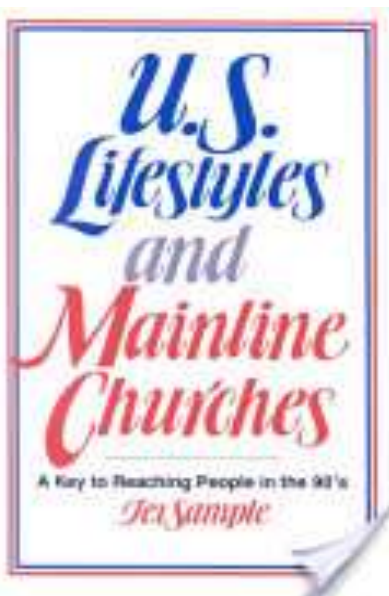
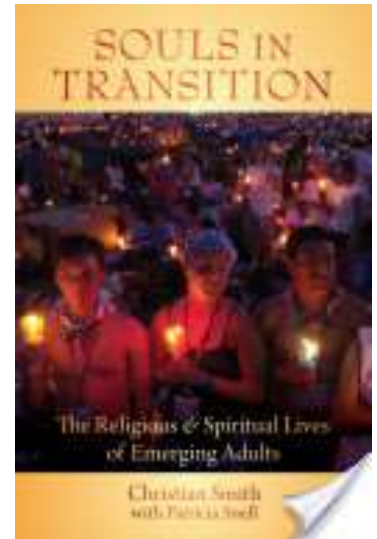
***Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion***

Wade Clark Roof

**The ‘Moralistic Therapeutic Deism’ of the Millenials.**

***Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults***

Christian Smith  
With Patricia Snell



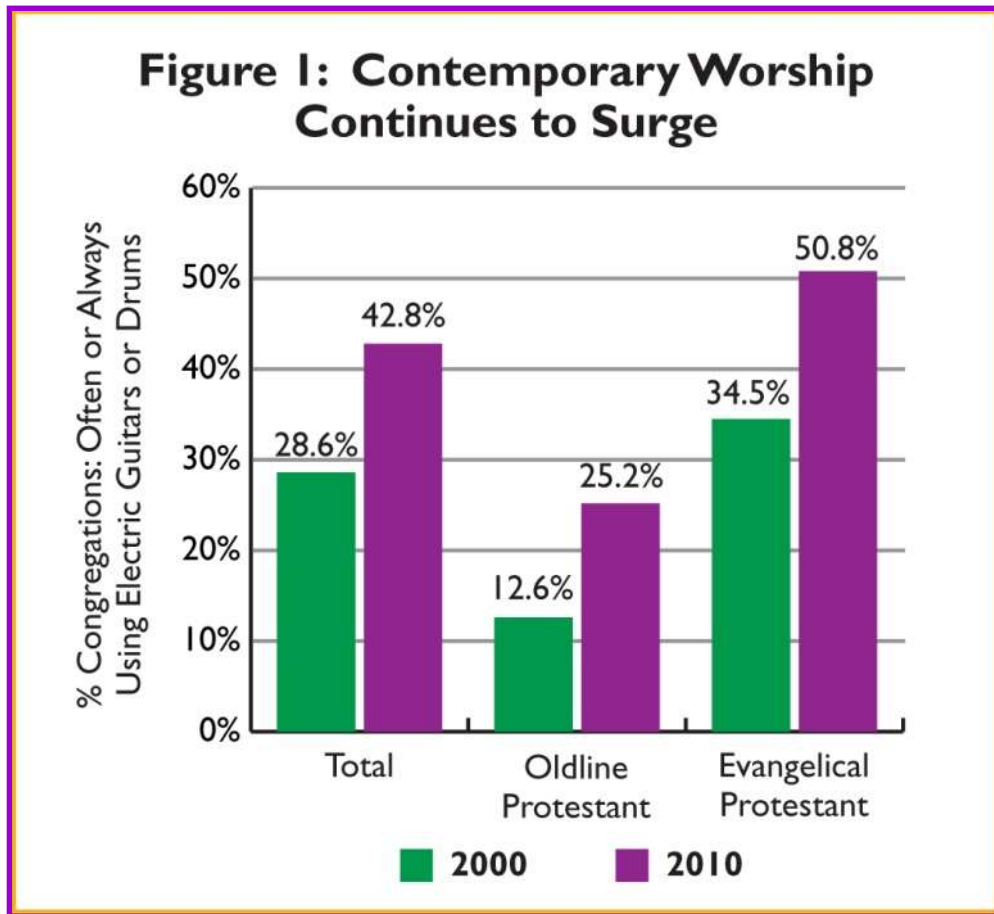
**Still the best single book for understanding the implications of different generationally-related cultural worlds for congregational life!**

***U. S. Lifestyles and Mainline Churches : A Key to Researching People in the 90's***  
Tex Sample

- **From PROPHETIC  
to POLITICAL**

- **From MISSION**  
**to WORSHIP**

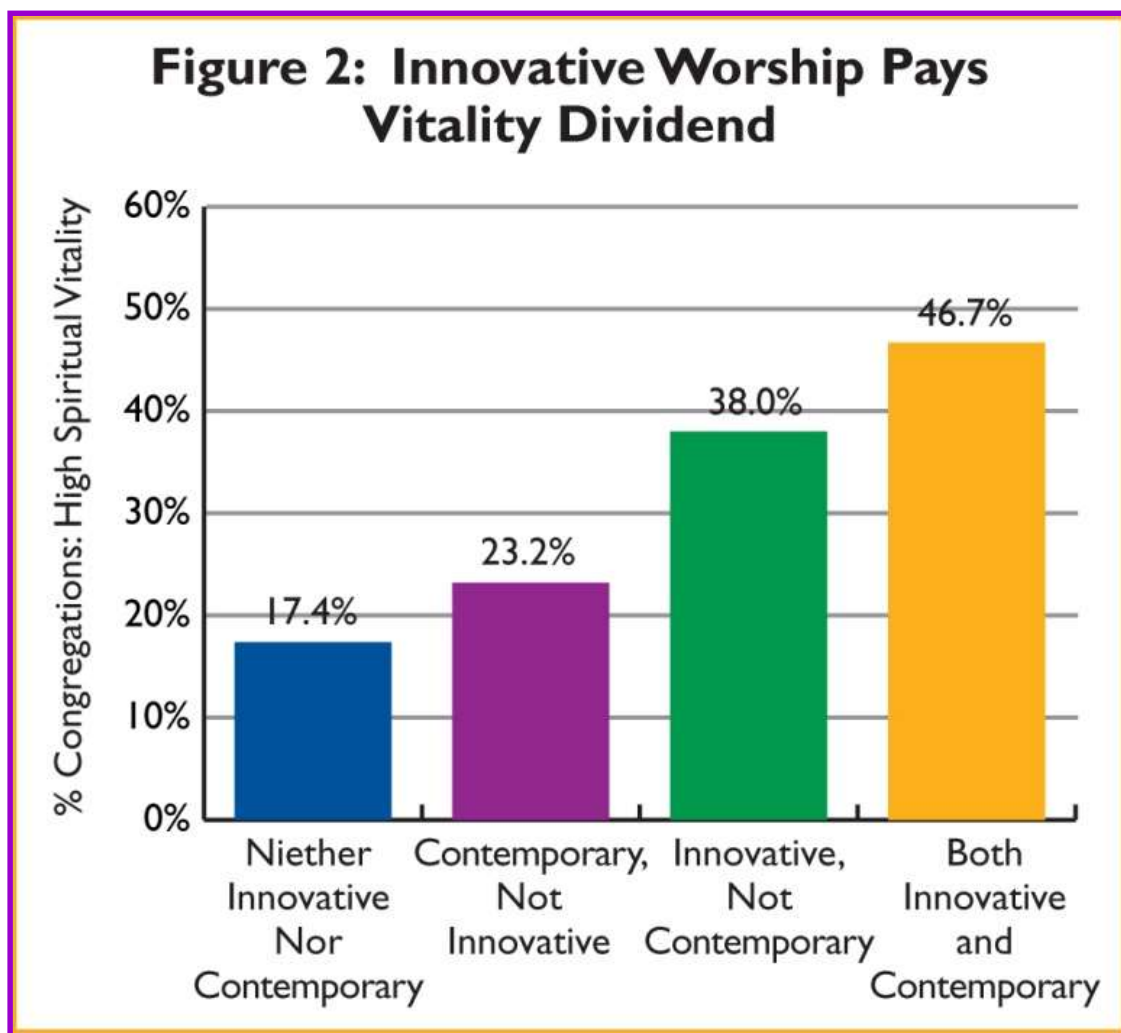
# A Continued Increase in Innovative, Adaptive Worship



*‘Nowhere is the democratization of the sacred more evident than in the music sung in new paradigm churches. It is populist, written by common people whose lives have been transformed. And it is contemporary, drawing on the musical forms of popular culture. Social movements, both secular and religious, have often been accompanied by a radical shift in musical expression. Music reflects the deep unconscious structures of a culture, and correspondingly, the music of social movements signals discord with those routinized structures. Movement music simultaneously symbolizes a break with the old and provides a source of cohesion for those choosing the new way.’*

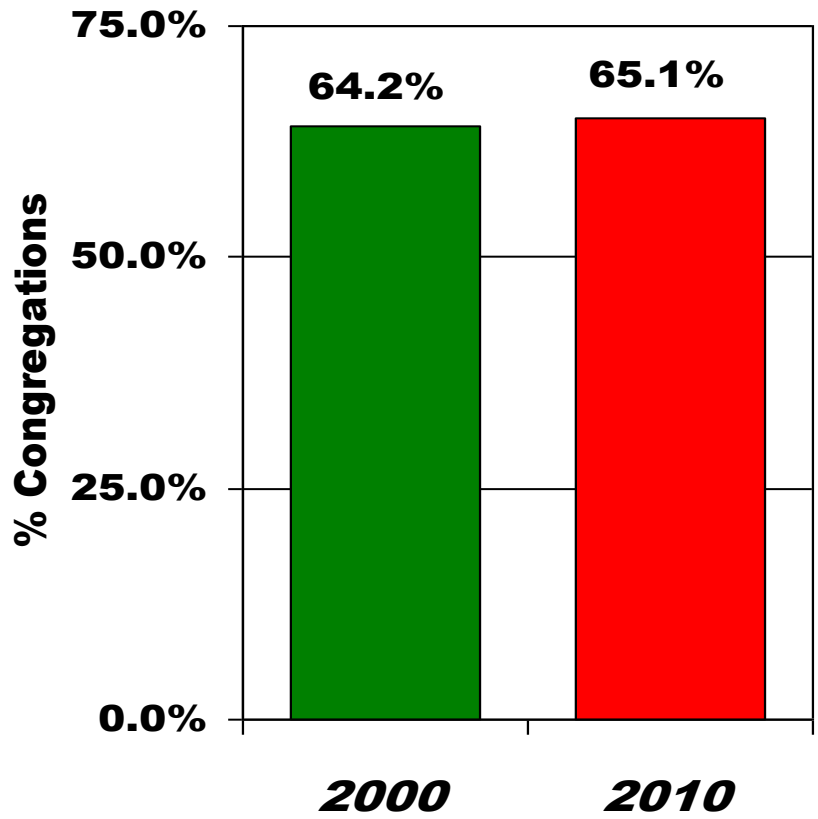
*Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity In the New Millennium, Donald E. Miller*

## But It Is Really Innovative Worship That Pays The Strongest Vitality Dividend



- **Think for a moment – What is the most magnificent & inspirational worship service you have ever experienced?**
- **Would your worship attendance increase if every service was like this? Would the depth of your spiritual commitment deepen?**
- **What kind of worship might do the same things for your kids/ grand children/ nieces or nephews?**

## Conflict In One or More of Four Key Areas\* in Past Five Years

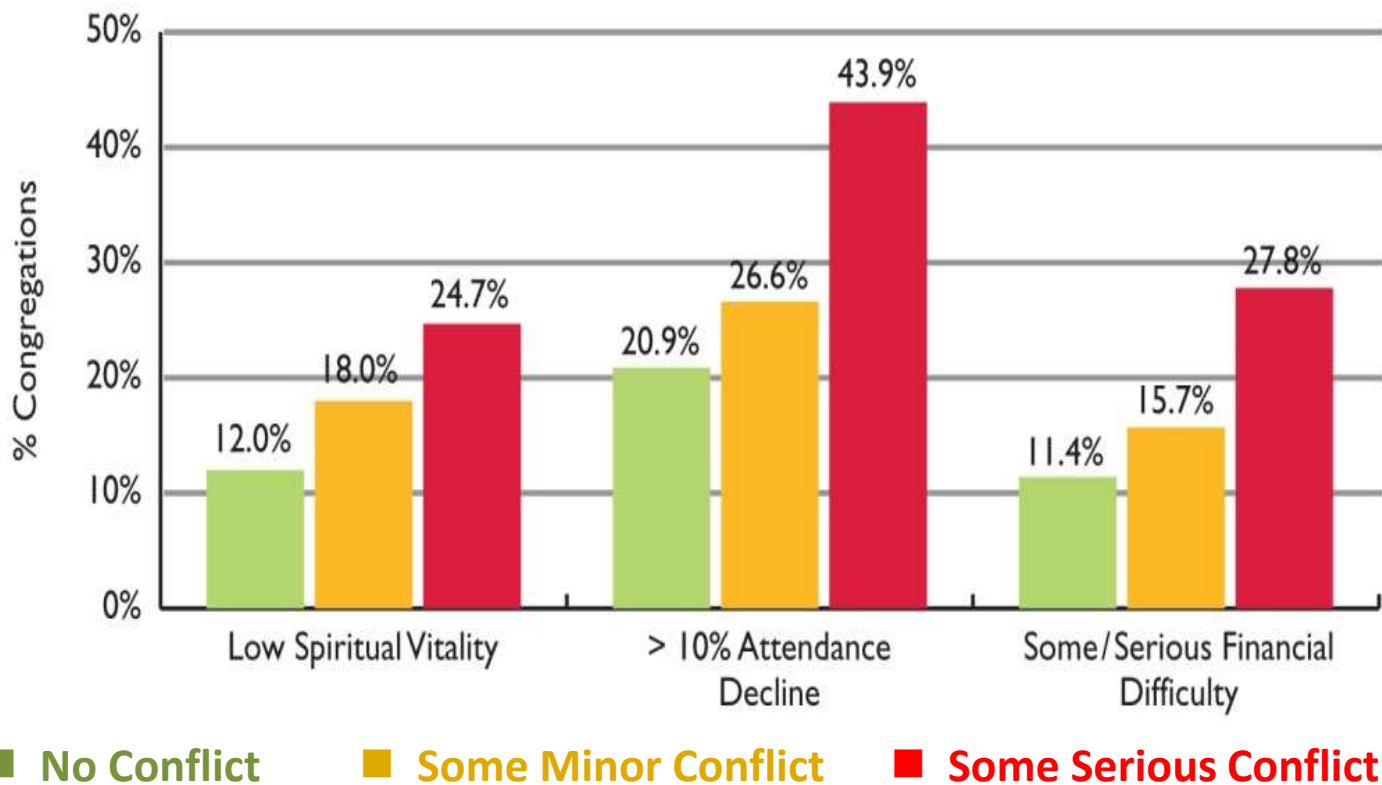


Continuing  
High  
Levels of  
Conflict

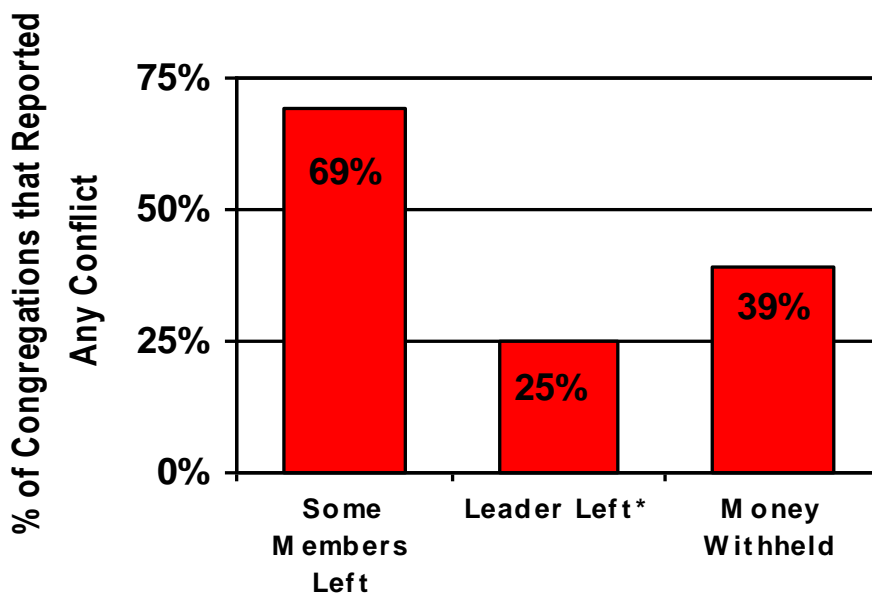
### \*Four Key Areas:

- ◆ Worship
- ◆ Finances
- ◆ Program Priorities
- ◆ Leadership

# Conflict Typically Thought Of As, And Can In Fact Be A Bad Thing

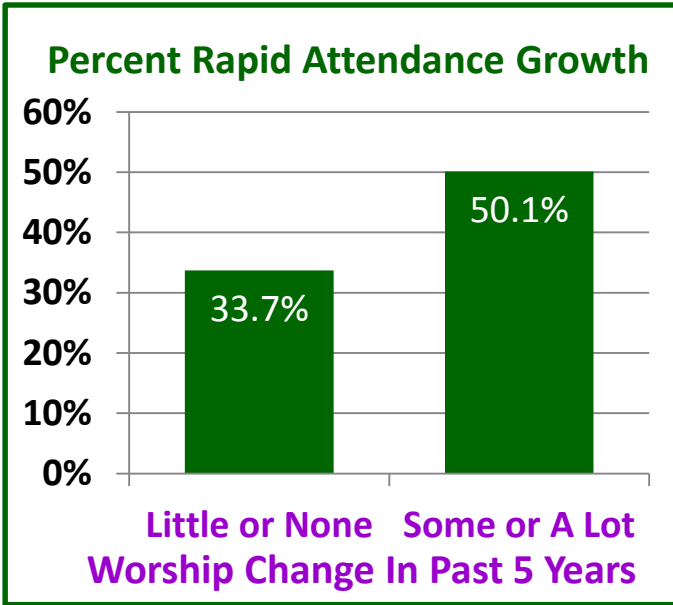


## Consequences of Conflict

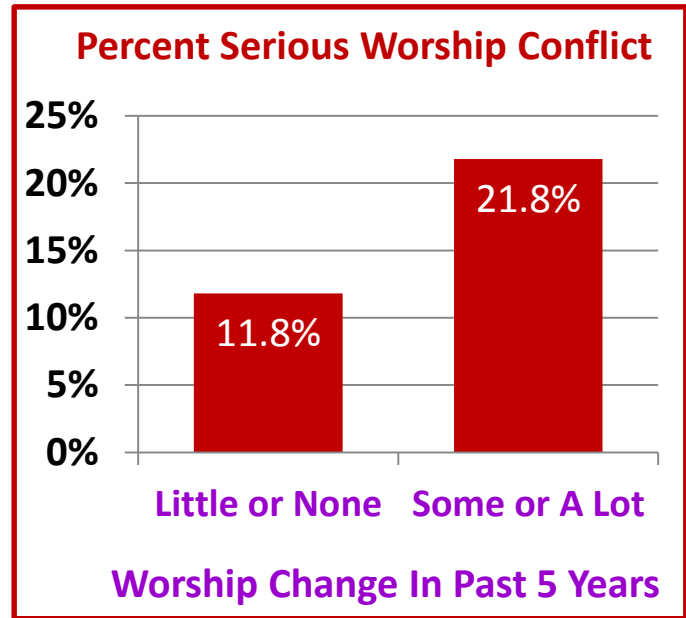


# But The Most Significant Implication of Conflict for Congregations Today Is Conflicts Relationship To *CHANGE*

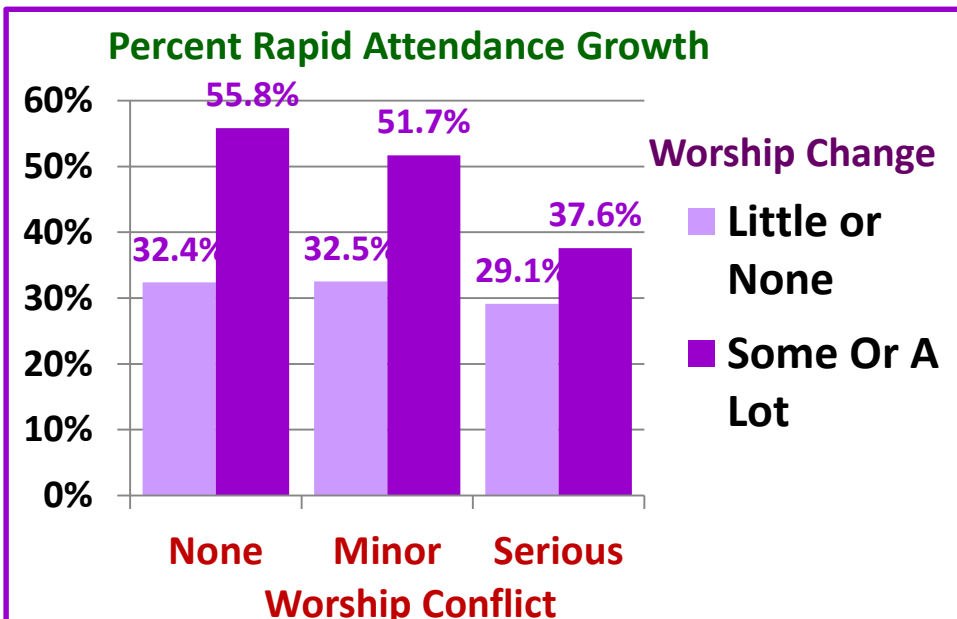
## ① Vitality and Growth Typically Require Change



## ② Change Typically Produces Conflict

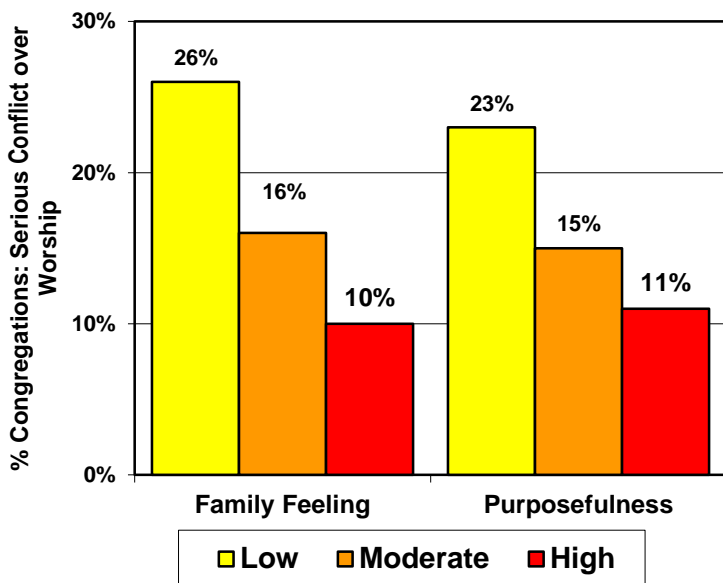


## ③ Vitality and Growth Typically Require Managing Conflict





## Buffers Against Serious Conflict

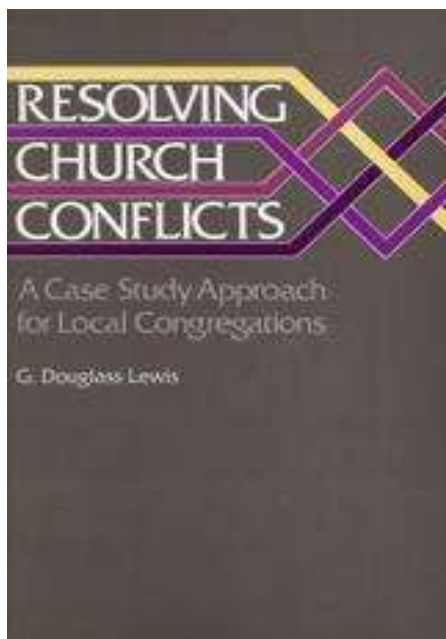


**Fortunately, There Are Resources For Dealing With Conflict**

### [Insights Into: Congregational Conflict](#)

Is your congregation going through a period of conflict that you aren't sure how to handle? Or are you interested in preparing to better handle future conflicts? This publication offers research, tips and resources to help clergy, seminarians, and congregational leaders deal constructively with this inevitable part of congregational life.

[Download it @ www.FaithCommunitiesToday.org](http://www.FaithCommunitiesToday.org)

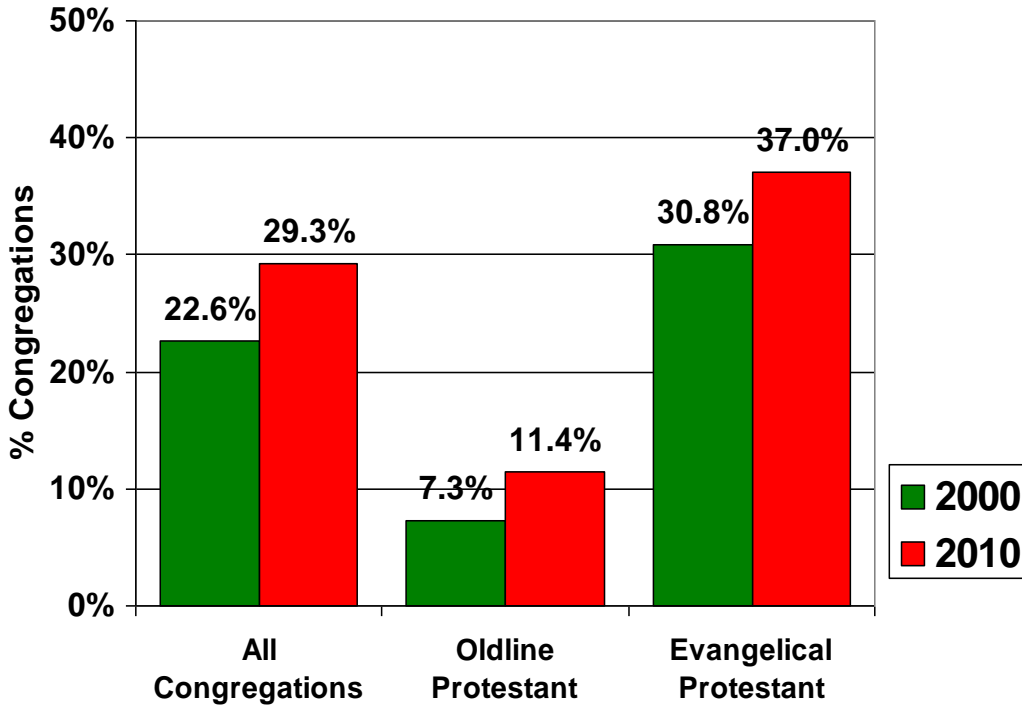


**Resolving Church Conflicts:  
A Case Study Approach for  
Local Congregations**  
by [G. Douglass Lewis](#)

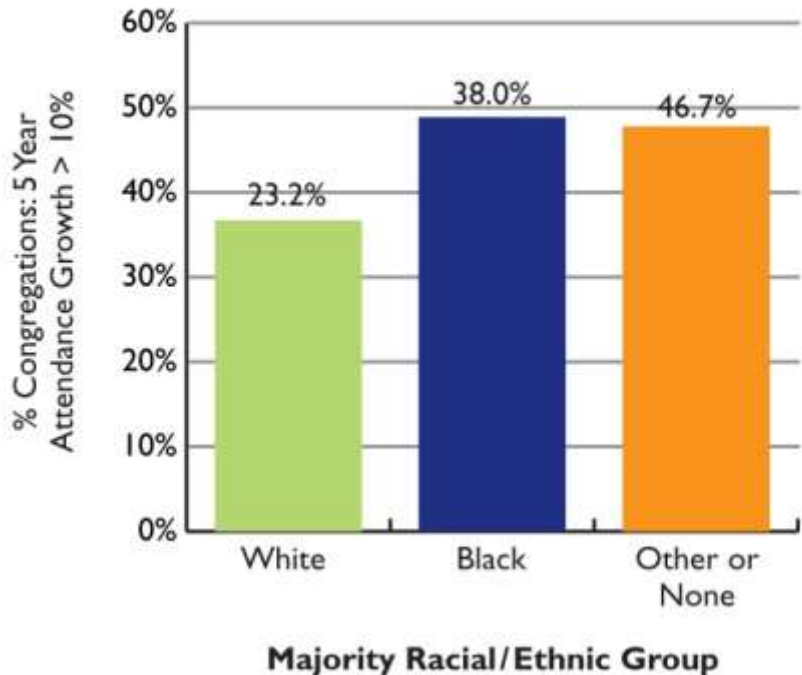
# Considerably More Ethnic



## Predominantly Racial/Ethnic Minority Congregations: % Of All U.S. Congregations



## Ten percent Or More 5-Year Attendance Growth

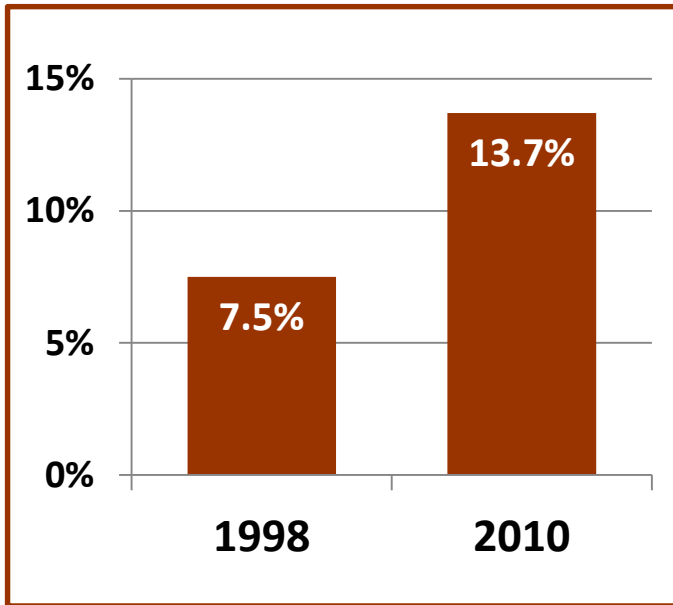


And, More Likely To Be Growing

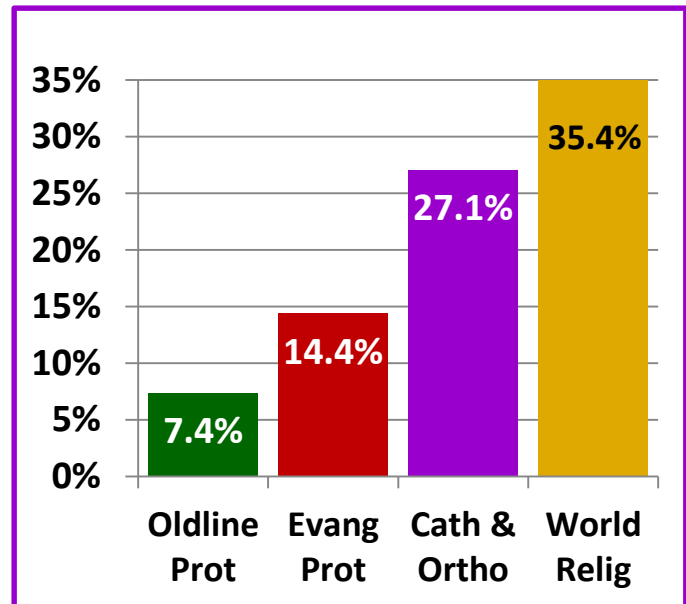
# The Number of Multiracial Congregations is also Increasing

(Congregations with no more than 80% of  
participants from any given racial/ethnic group)

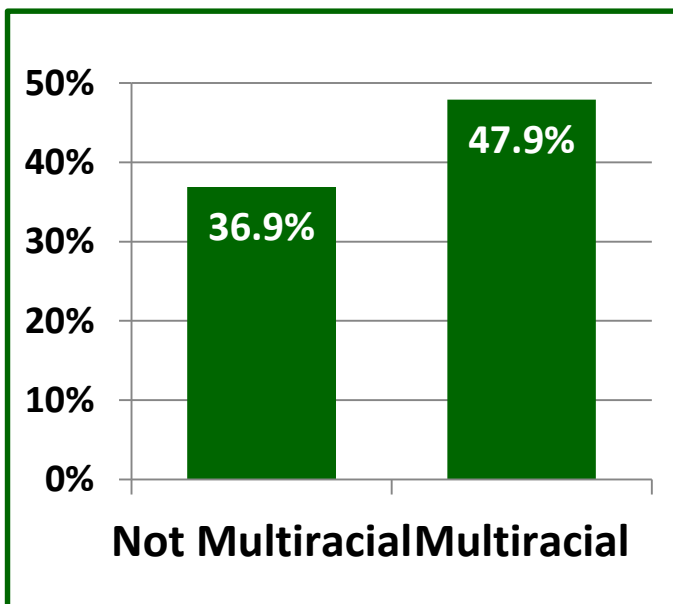
## Percent Multiracial Congregations



## 2010 Percent Multiracial Congregations By Family



## Percent Rapidly Growing



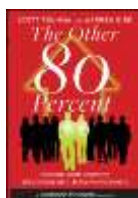
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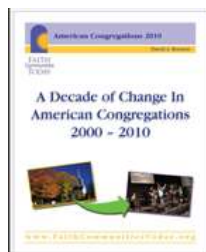
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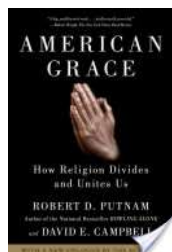


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