WELCOME!

Congregation Conversation

August 1, 2021

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CHURCH OF WEST CHESTER

Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT Survey) Summary

Congregational Conversation

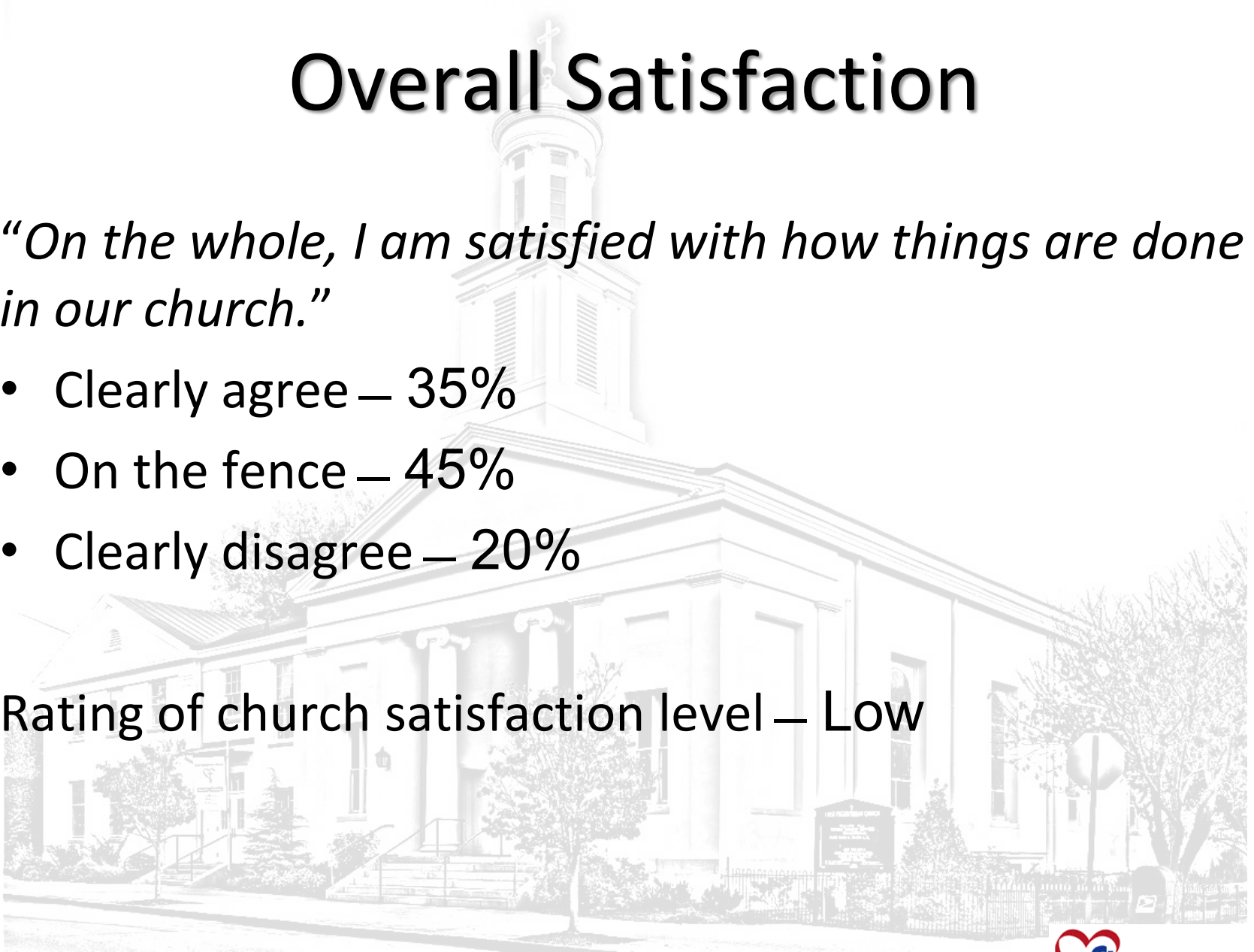### August 1, 2021

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Overall Satisfaction

"On the whole, I am satisfied with how things are done in our church."

- Clearly agree — 35%
- On the fence — 45%
- Clearly disagree — 20%

Rating of church satisfaction level — Low

Overall Energy

"*It seems to me that we are just going through the motions of church activity. There isn't much excitement among our members.*"

- Clearly agree — 26%
- On the fence — 49%
- Clearly disagree — 25%

Rating of church energy level — Low

Overall Energy

"On the whole, church activities are VERY important to me."
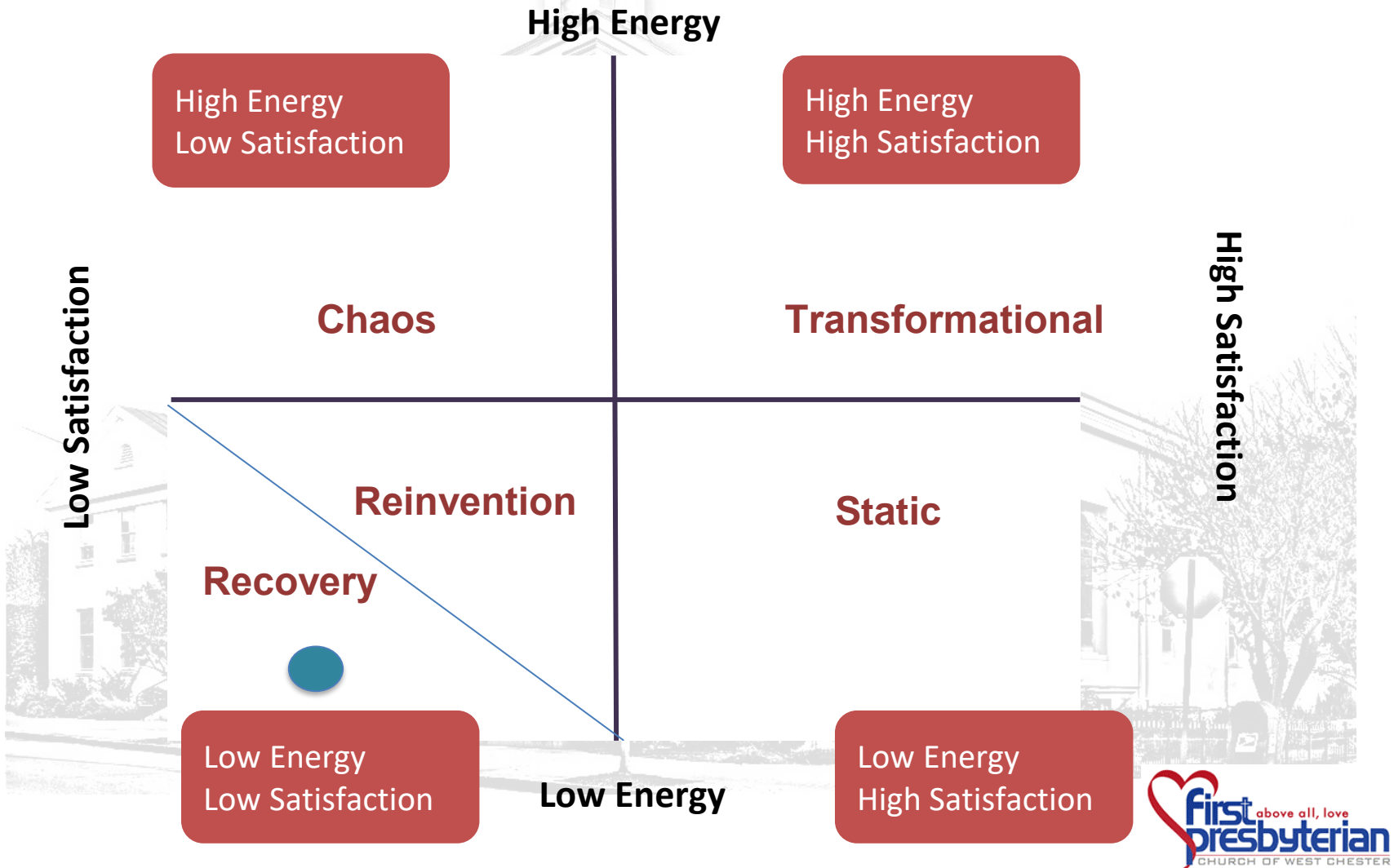
- Clearly agree — 60%

- On the fence — 34%

- Clearly disagree — 5%

Rating of church energy level — Low Average

Could be off by 1% due to rounding

CAT Data Indicates We Are a Low-Energy, Low-Satisfaction Church

High Energy

High Energy
Low Satisfaction

High Energy
High Satisfaction

Low Satisfaction

High Satisfaction

Chaos

Transformational

Reinvention

Static

Recovery

Low Energy
Low Satisfaction

Low Energy

Low Energy
High Satisfaction

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Routinely, data supports the existence of several risk factors to the church, leaders, and the pastor in this type of environment …

known as a *clergy-focused* system.
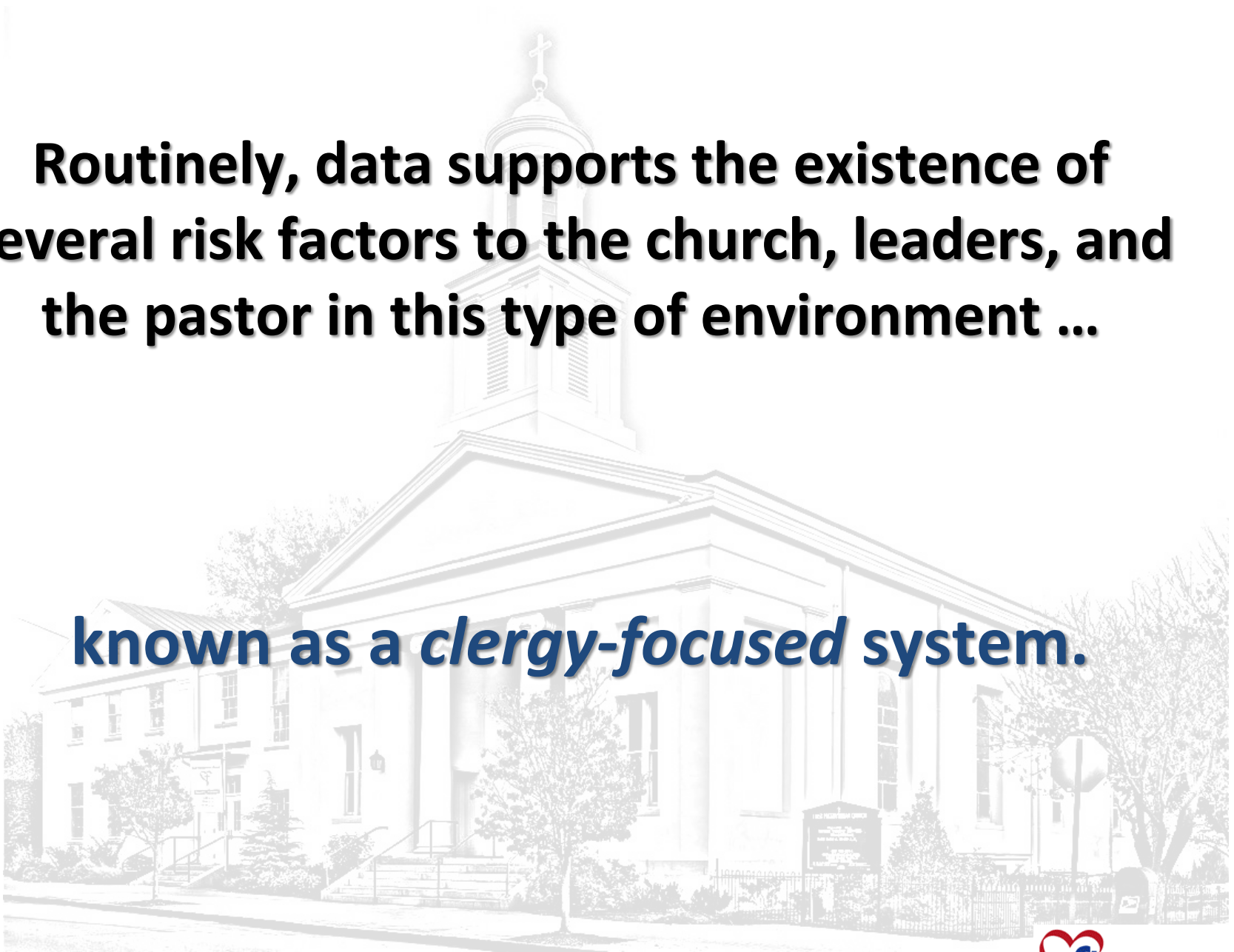
Holy Cow Identifies Risk Factors Common in Low-Energy, Low-Satisfaction Churches*

Congregation

- High anxiety
- Loss of commitment to mission
- Loss of external focus
- Difficulty with pastoral transitions
- Periods of perceived absolute harmony and perceived absolute discord dependent of relationship with Pastor
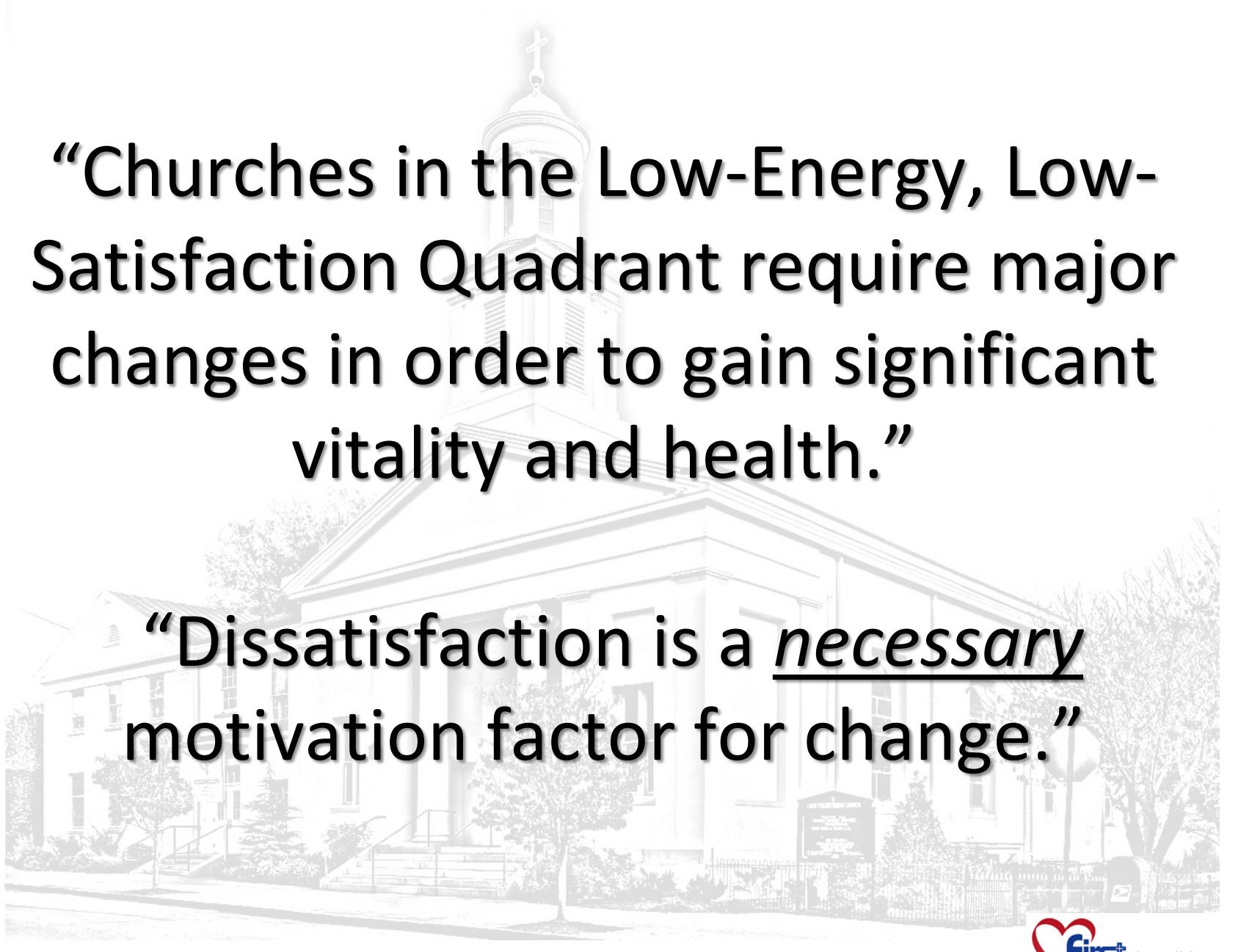
Leaders

- High frustration because decision making is often very difficult
- Loss of trust
- Loss of commitment to mission
- Leaders either over-function or under-function, but mutual effort is often absent

Clergy

- High anxiety
- Burn-out
- Loss of energy

* These apply to churches in general and not specifically to First Pres.

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"Churches in the Low-Energy, Low-Satisfaction Quadrant require major changes in order to gain significant vitality and health."

"Dissatisfaction is a _necessary_ motivation factor for change."

Top Three Stated Priorities

"Where would you like additional energies placed to expand or improve our ministries."

- **First** — Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church

- **Second** — Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church

- **Third** — Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships (small groups, nurtured friendships, shared meals, etc.)

Top Three Stated Priorities
By Age Group

- **Under 35 years of age** — "Work as an advocate for social and institutional change so that society might better reflect the values of the kingdom of God."

- **35 to 64 years of age** — "Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church."

- **65+ years of age** — "Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church."

Focusing on Priorities
Requires Flexibility and Change

- CAT survey data shows we're below average on the Flexibility Index and fall more into the "settled" category

- "The degree of flexibility a church has should be consistent with its strategic priorities."

- If our priorities are "to attract families with children and youth" … "work as an advocate for social and institutional change" … and "create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships" … we need to have the degree of flexibility necessary to achieve those goals

Focusing on Priorities
Requires Flexibility and Change

- Success in meeting our priorities requires an acceptance for change by current members AND a long-term sustained focus

- To make needed changes we need the right kind of new senior pastor, as well as a RECEPTIVE and ENGAGED membership
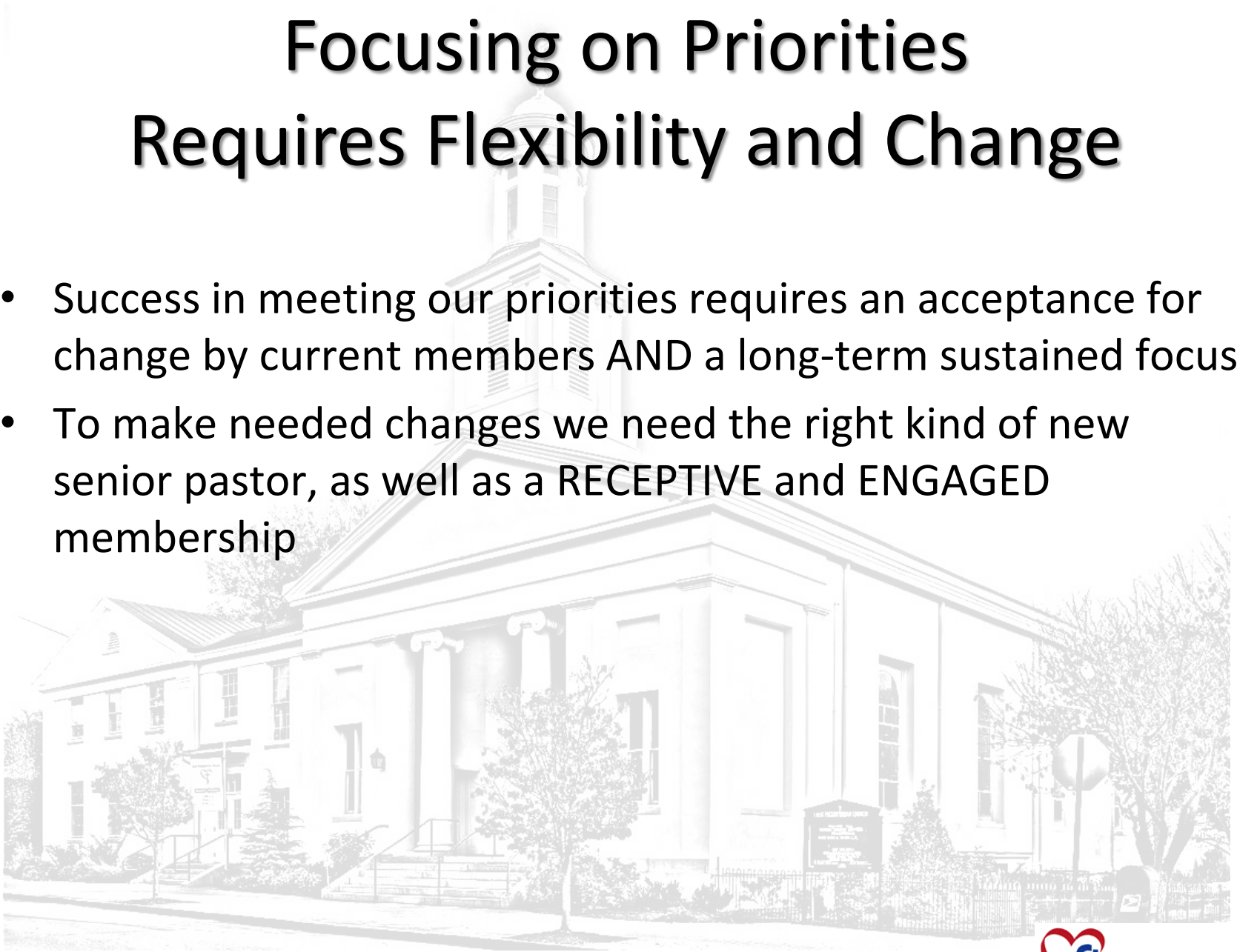
What's Next?

- CAT survey data represents your opinions — what you told us — based on past experiences

- Our goal is to use this information as a path forward

- A big step forward on that path is to find the right senior pastor to guide us down that path

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And now, Bill Wilson will review highlights from a two-day workshop he recently led with Session and the Transition Team …

First Presbyterian West Chester

Congregational Conversation

August 1, 2021

CHC
Center For Healthy Churches
Cultivating Hope and Health In the Spirit of Christ

Our Mission:

CHC is devoted to improving the spiritual, emotional and organizational health of churches and ministers. We bring hope, help and healing in the spirit of Christ.
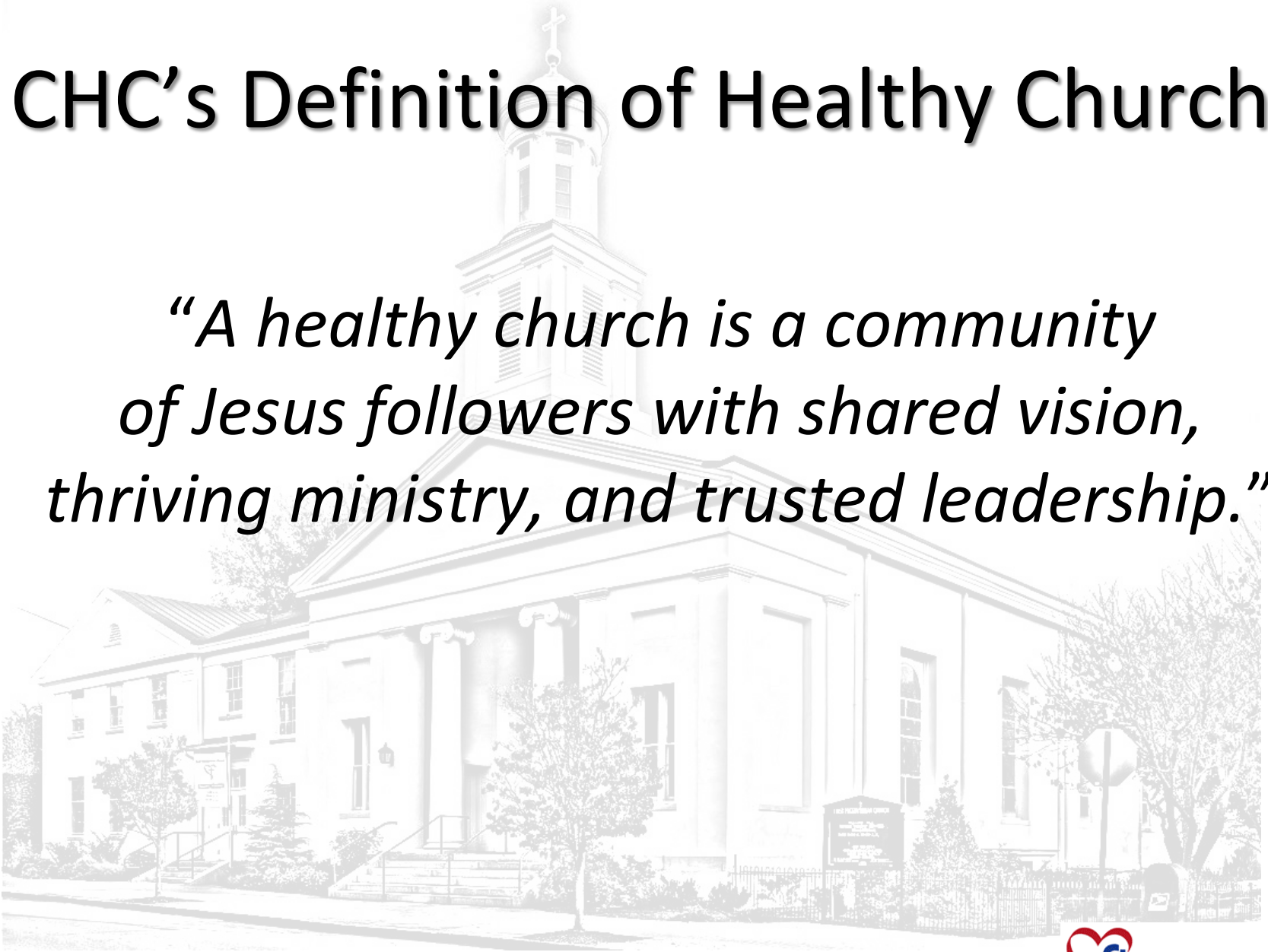
www.CHChurches.org

Our Team:

– 28 consultants from across US

– 12 ICF Leadership Coaches

– Trans-denominational

– Clergy (active/retired)

– Therapists

– Academics

– Laity

– Nationwide

CHC's Definition of Healthy Church

"A healthy church is a community of Jesus followers with shared vision, thriving ministry, and trusted leadership."

Bill Wilson, Director CHC

- First Baptist Church, Greenville, SC (1980 ─ 1986)
- Farmville Baptist Church, Farmville, VA (1986 ─ 1992)
- First Baptist Church, Waynesboro, VA (1992 ─ 2003)
- First Baptist Church, Dalton, GA (2003 ─ 2009)
- President, The Center for Congregational Health at Wake Forest Hospital (2009 ─ 2013)
- Director, The Center for Healthy Churches (2014 ─)
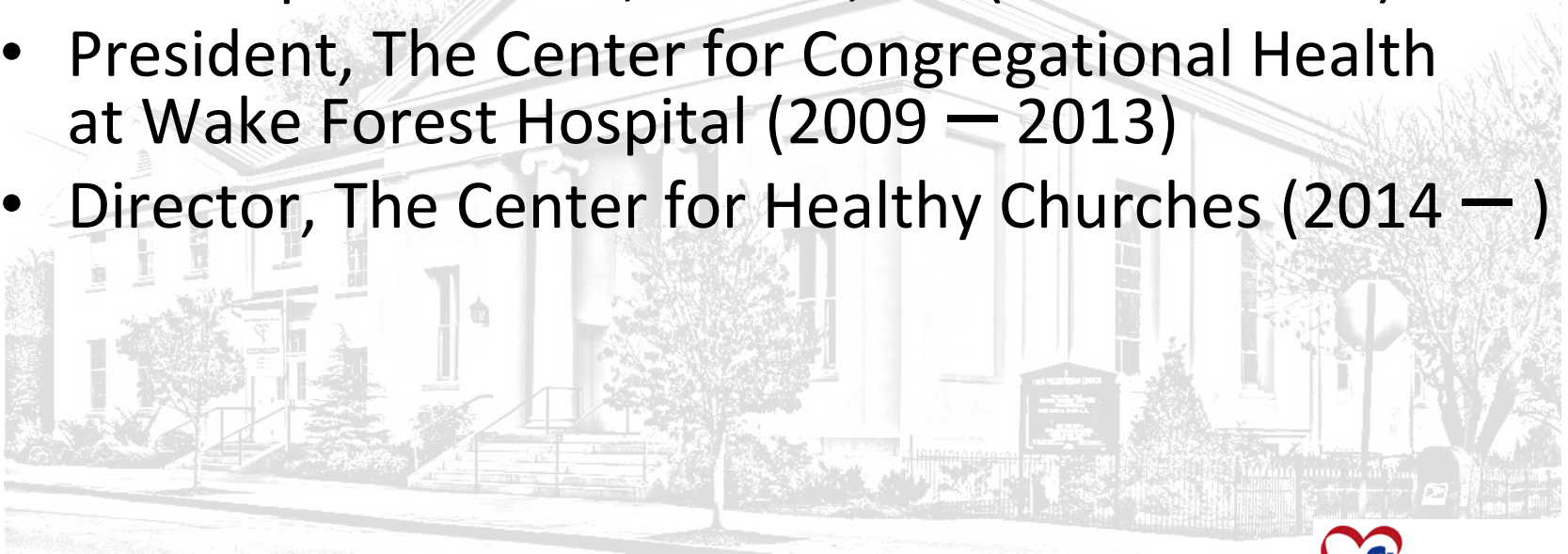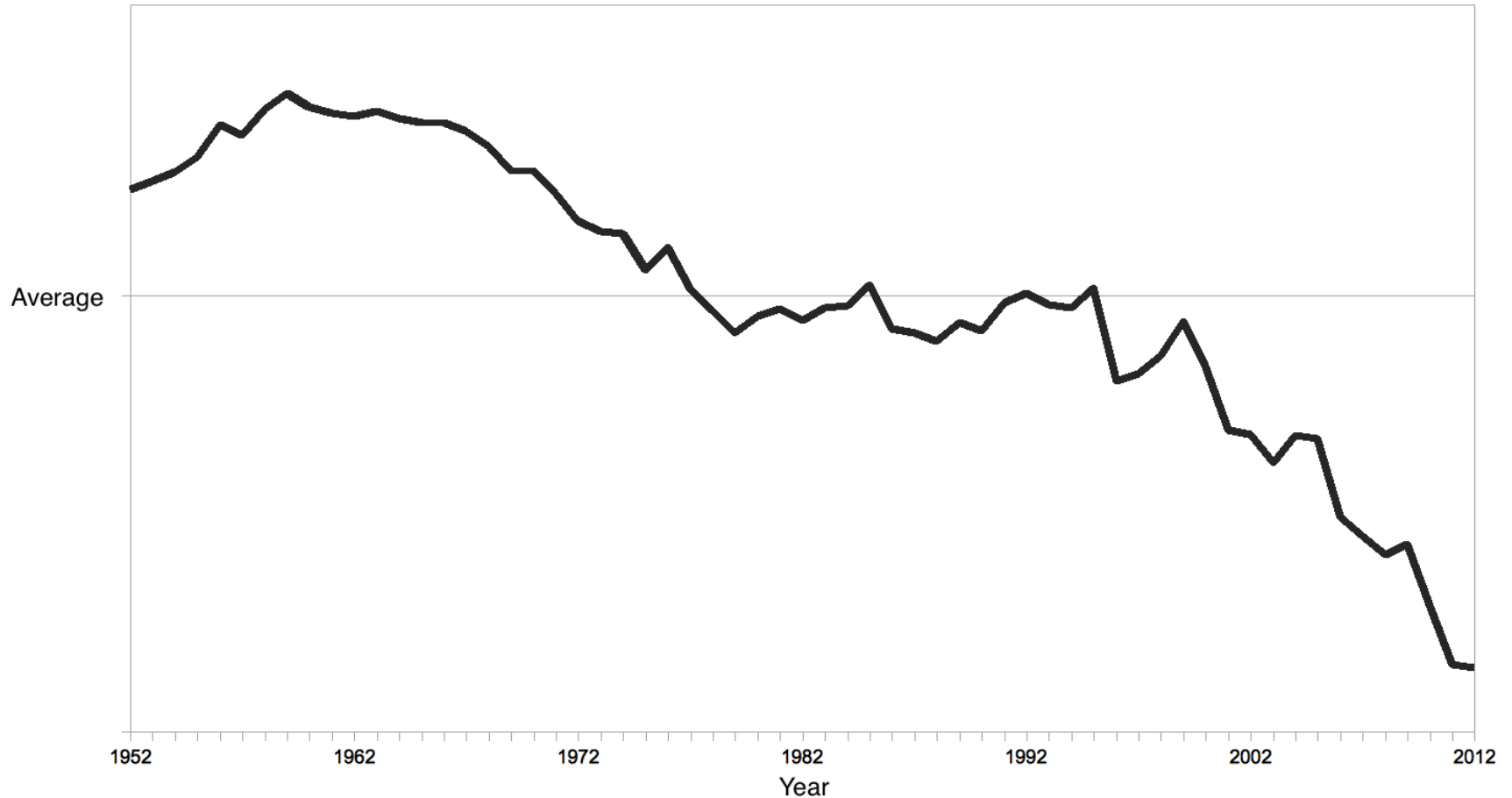
The Most Important Thing About Me ...

What is the problem we're trying to solve?

- The ongoing decline of the Western Church
- The looming tsunami of church / parish closures and downsizing
- The increasing irrelevance of much of what takes place within the church to the call of the Church
- The generational disillusionment with the church
- The loss of the church's influence upon the moral center of culture

The Challenge is REAL

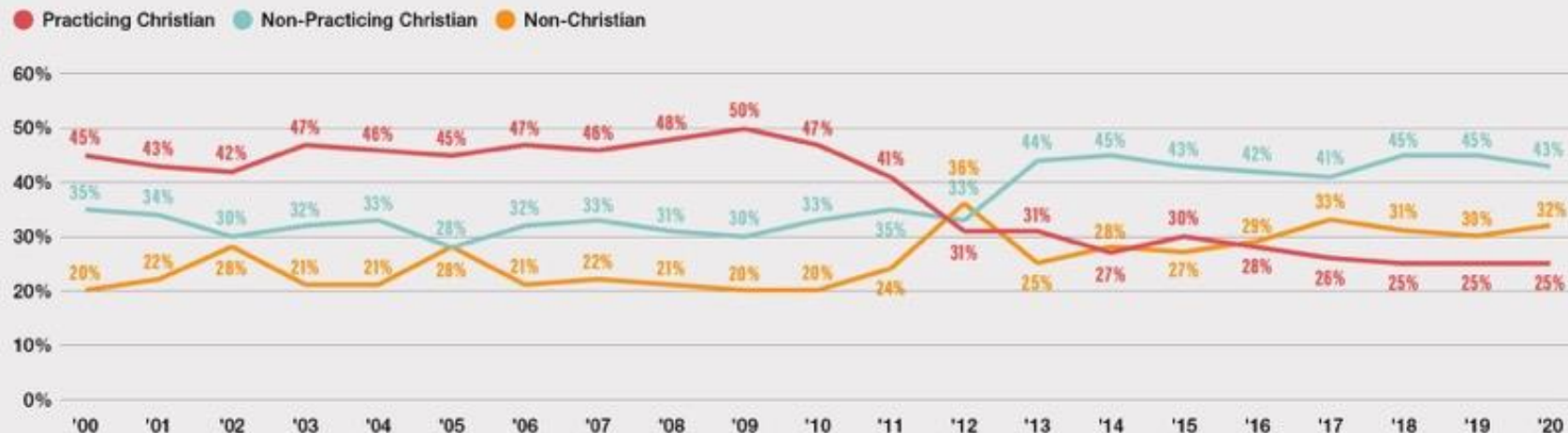# The Great Decline: 60 years of religion in America

Average

Year

HOW AMERICANS RELATE TO CHRISTIANITY IS CHANGING: 2000-2020

Barna | STATE OF THE CHURCH

● Practicing Christian   ● Non-Practicing Christian   ● Non-Christian

Practicing Christian: '00 45%, '01 43%, '02 42%, '03 47%, '04 46%, '05 45%, '06 47%, '07 46%, '08 48%, '09 50%, '10 47%, '11 41%, '12 31%, '13 31%, '14 28%, '15 30%, '16 28%, '17 26%, '18 25%, '19 25%, '20 25%

Non-Practicing Christian: '00 35%, '01 34%, '02 30%, '03 32%, '04 33%, '05 28%, '06 32%, '07 33%, '08 31%, '09 30%, '10 33%, '11 35%, '12 33%, '13 44%, '14 45%, '15 43%, '16 42%, '17 41%, '18 45%, '19 45%, '20 43%

Non-Christian: '00 20%, '01 22%, '02 28%, '03 21%, '04 21%, '05 28%, '06 21%, '07 22%, '08 21%, '09 20%, '10 20%, '11 24%, '12 36%, '13 25%, '14 27%, '15 27%, '16 29%, '17 33%, '18 31%, '19 30%, '20 32%

n = 96,171 U.S. adults | 2000-2020

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WEEKLY CHURCH ATTENDANCE: 1993-2020
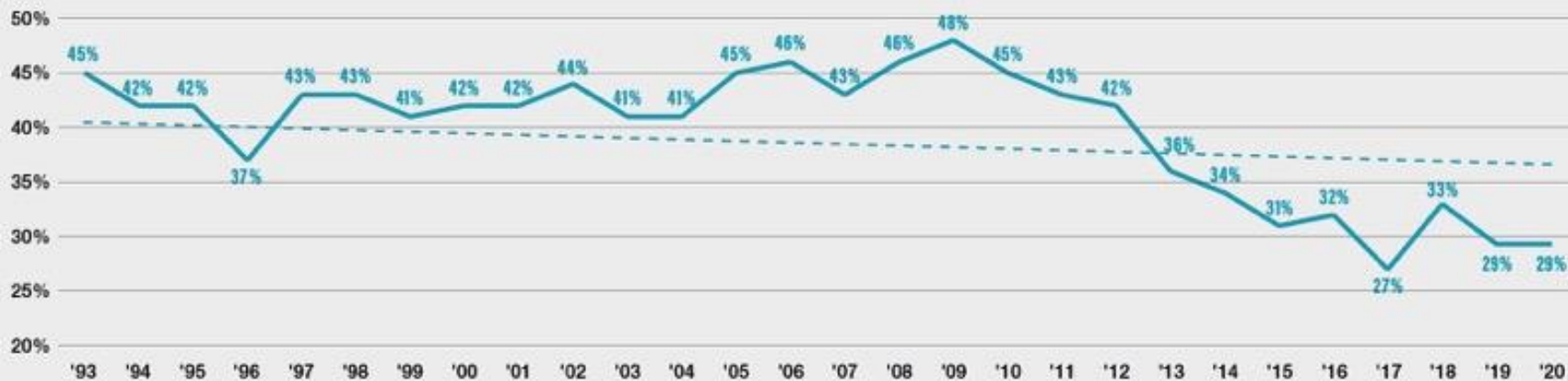
Religious affiliation, by year of survey
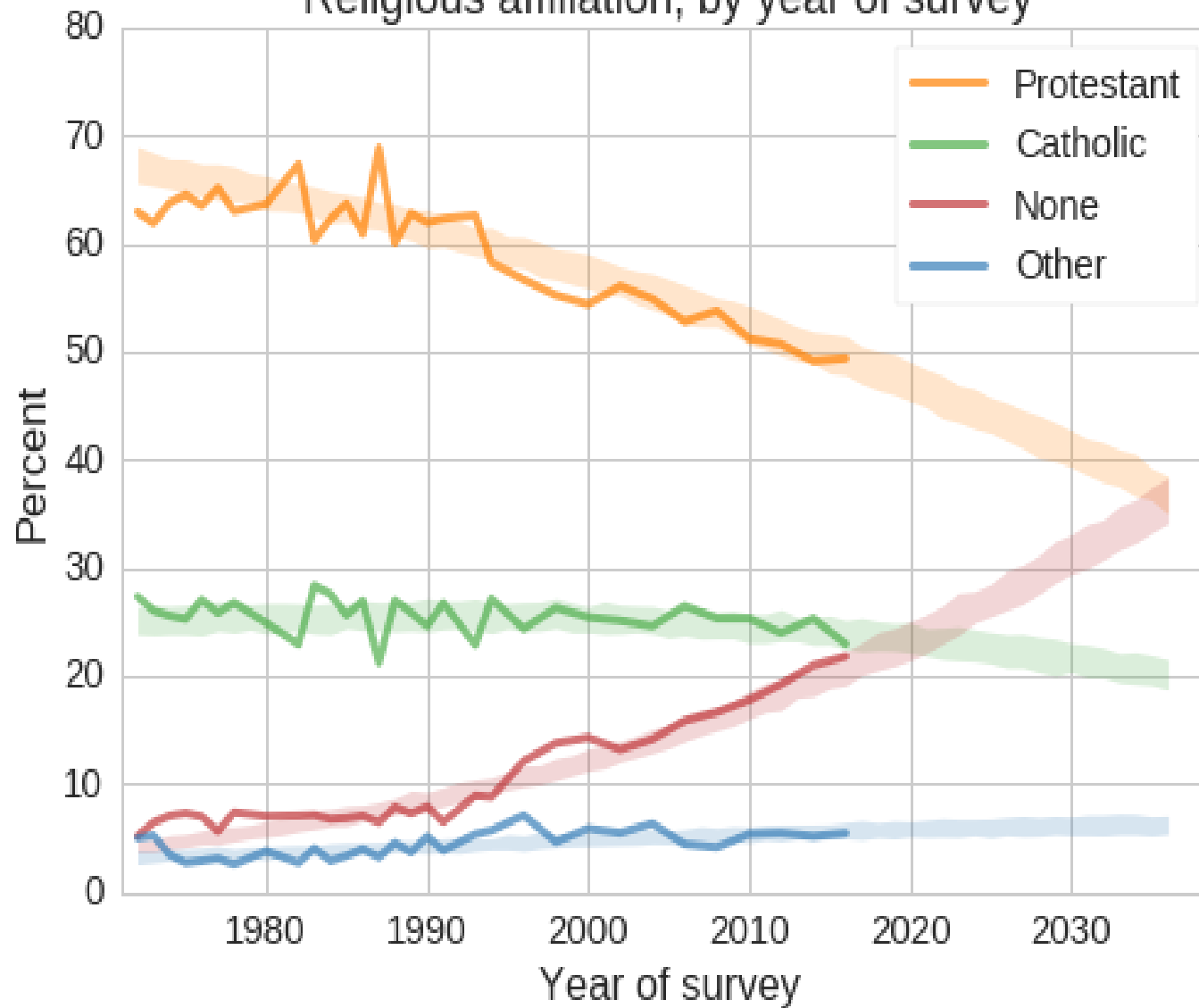
Declines in Church Attendance

Decline of Membership

Percentage of Americans who are members of a church or other religious community
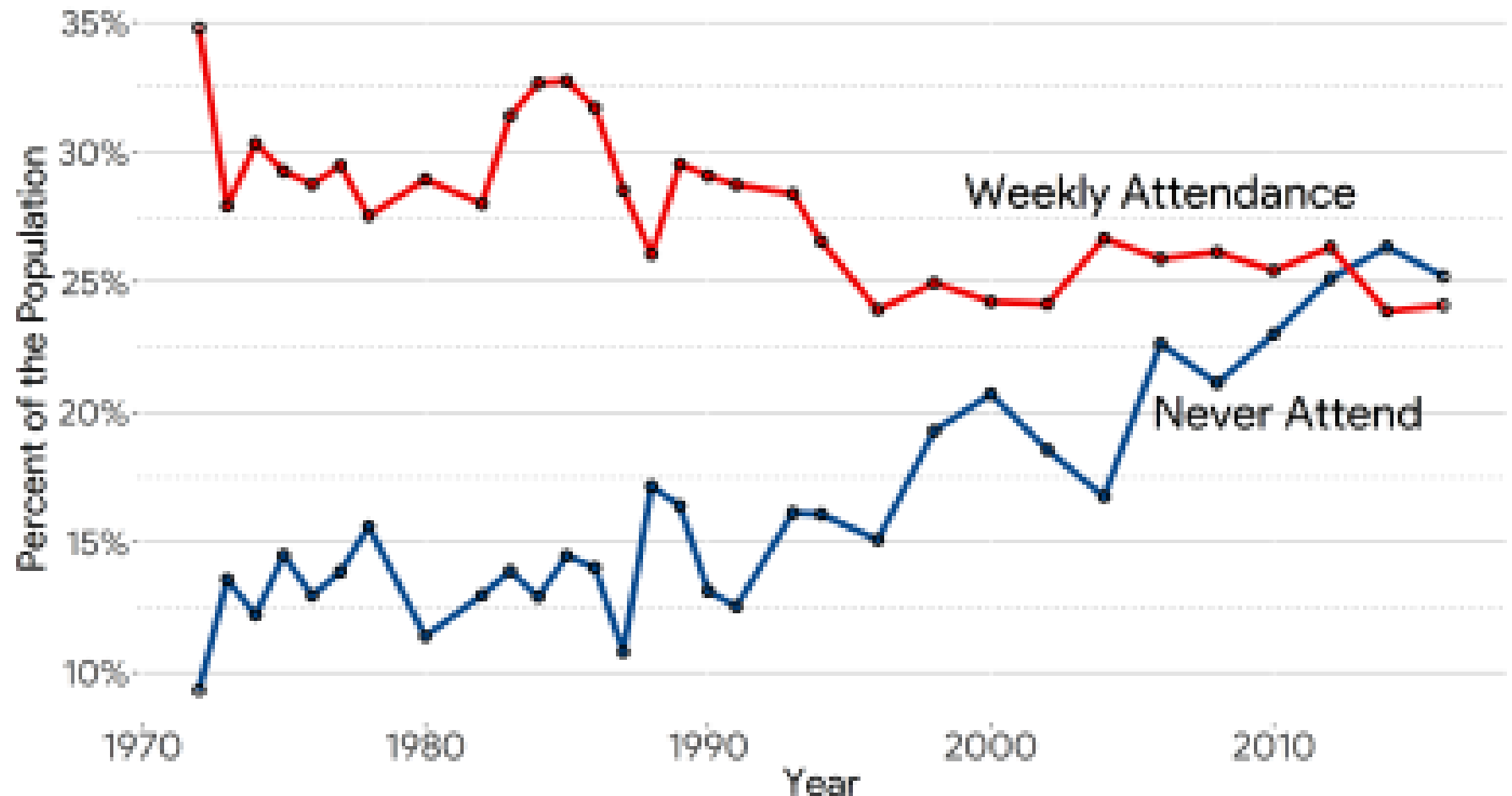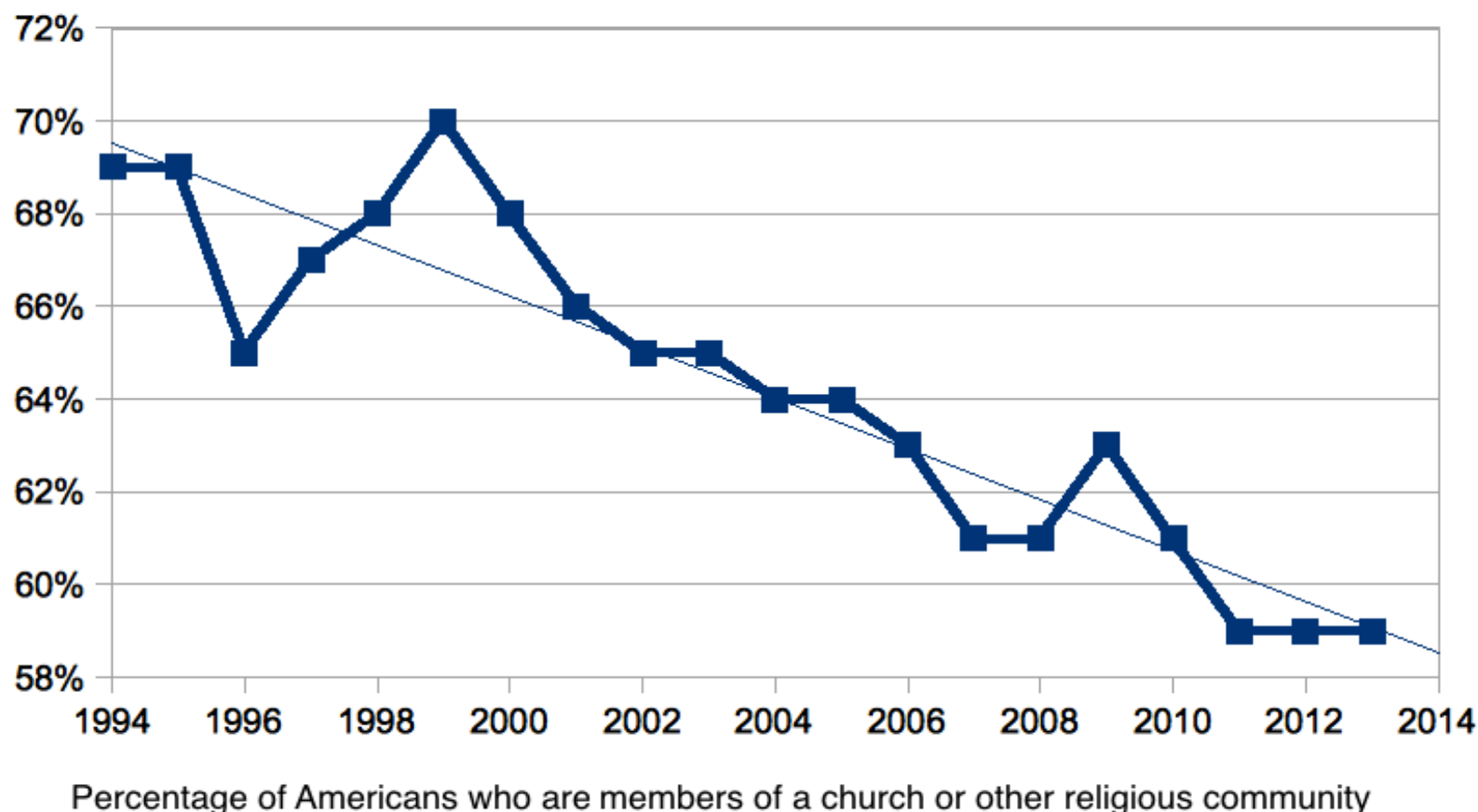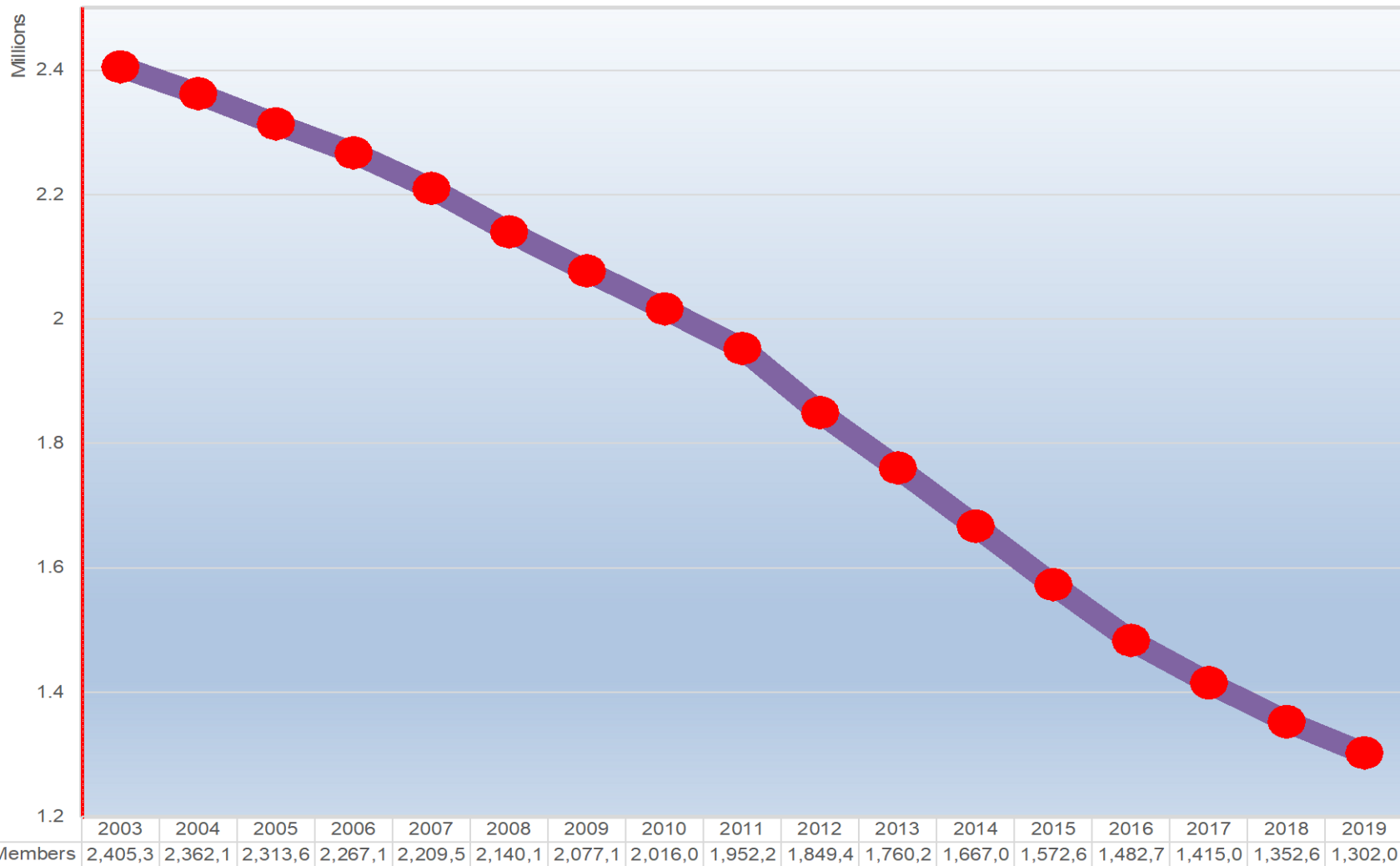
Graph by Corner of Church & State, an RNS blog
Source: Gallup

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Number of Members

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Members	2,405,3	2,362,1	2,313,6	2,267,1	2,209,5	2,140,1	2,077,1	2,016,0	1,952,2	1,849,4	1,760,2	1,667,0	1,572,6	1,482,7	1,415,0	1,352,6	1,302,0

Presbyterian
FOUNDATION

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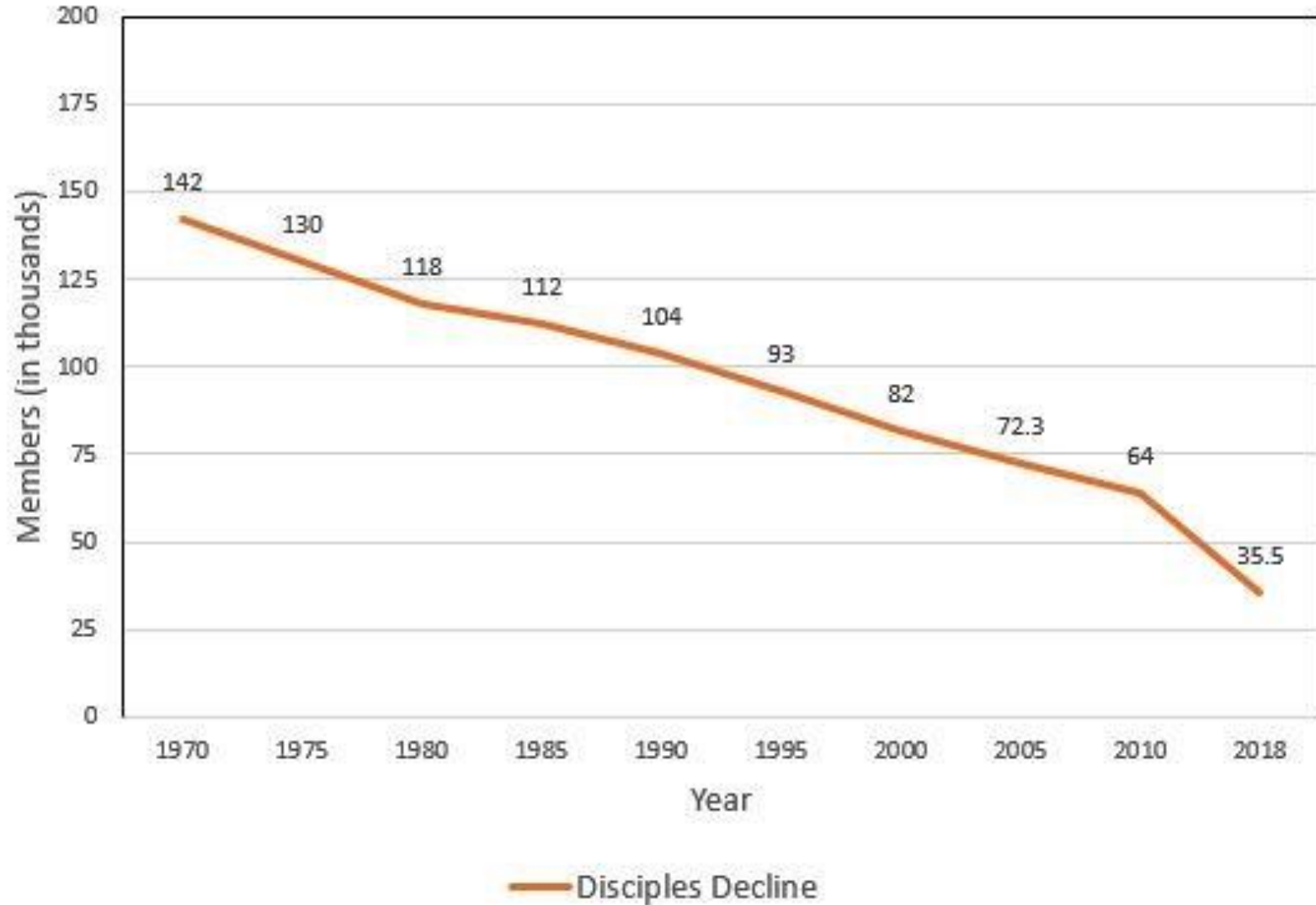CHURCH OF WEST CHESTER

SBC: Year-to-Year Change in Total Members
1950 - 2014
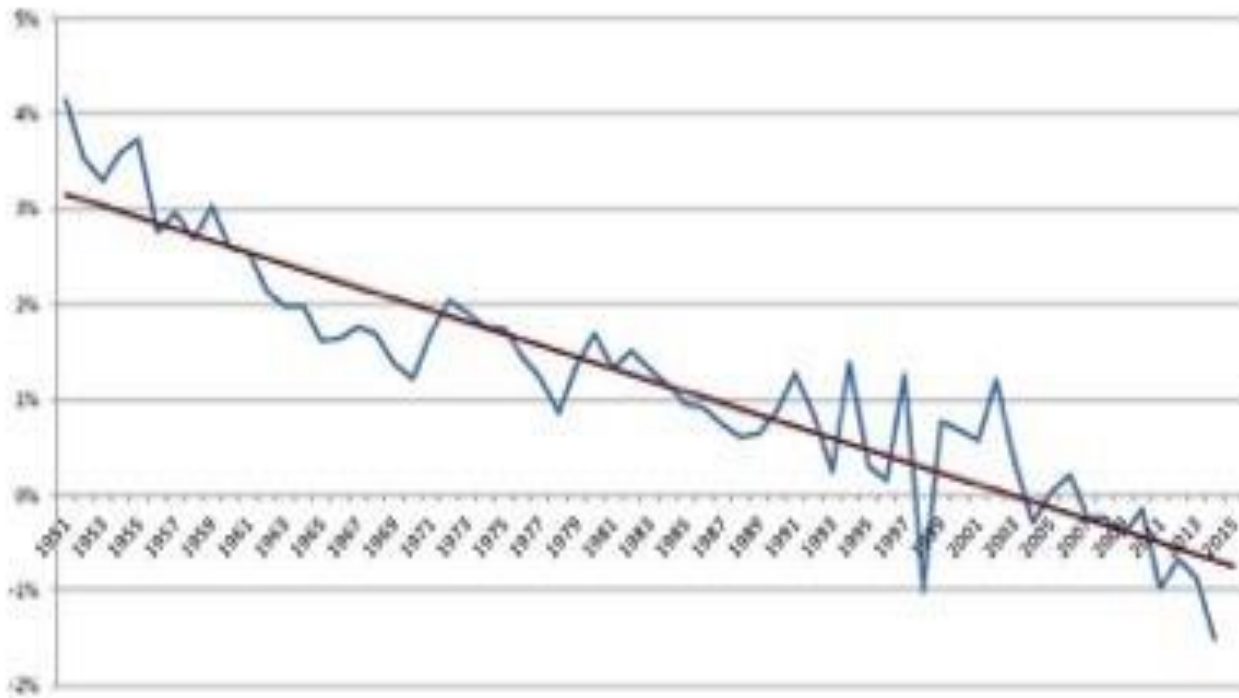
Source: Annual Church Profile 1950-2014

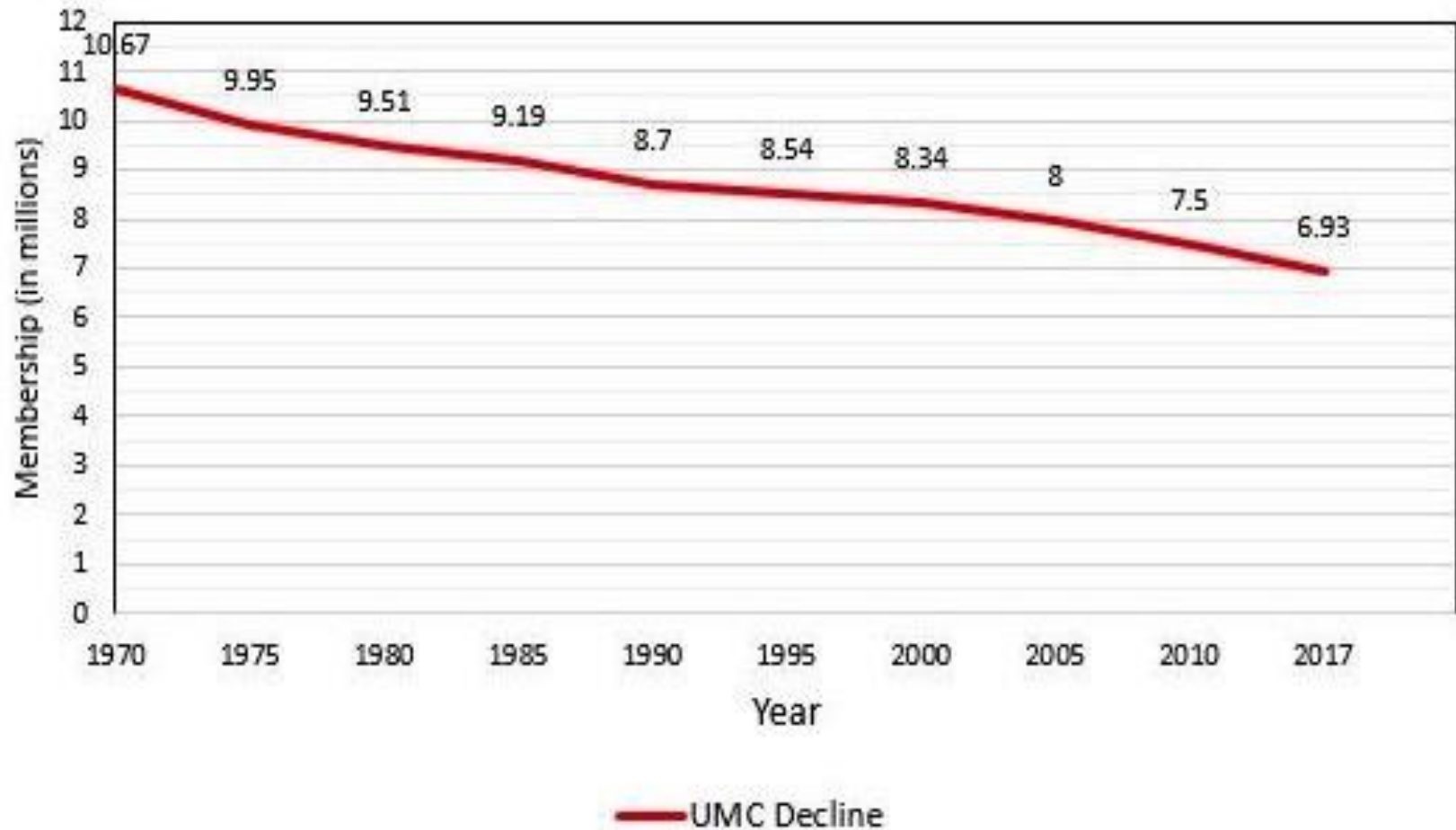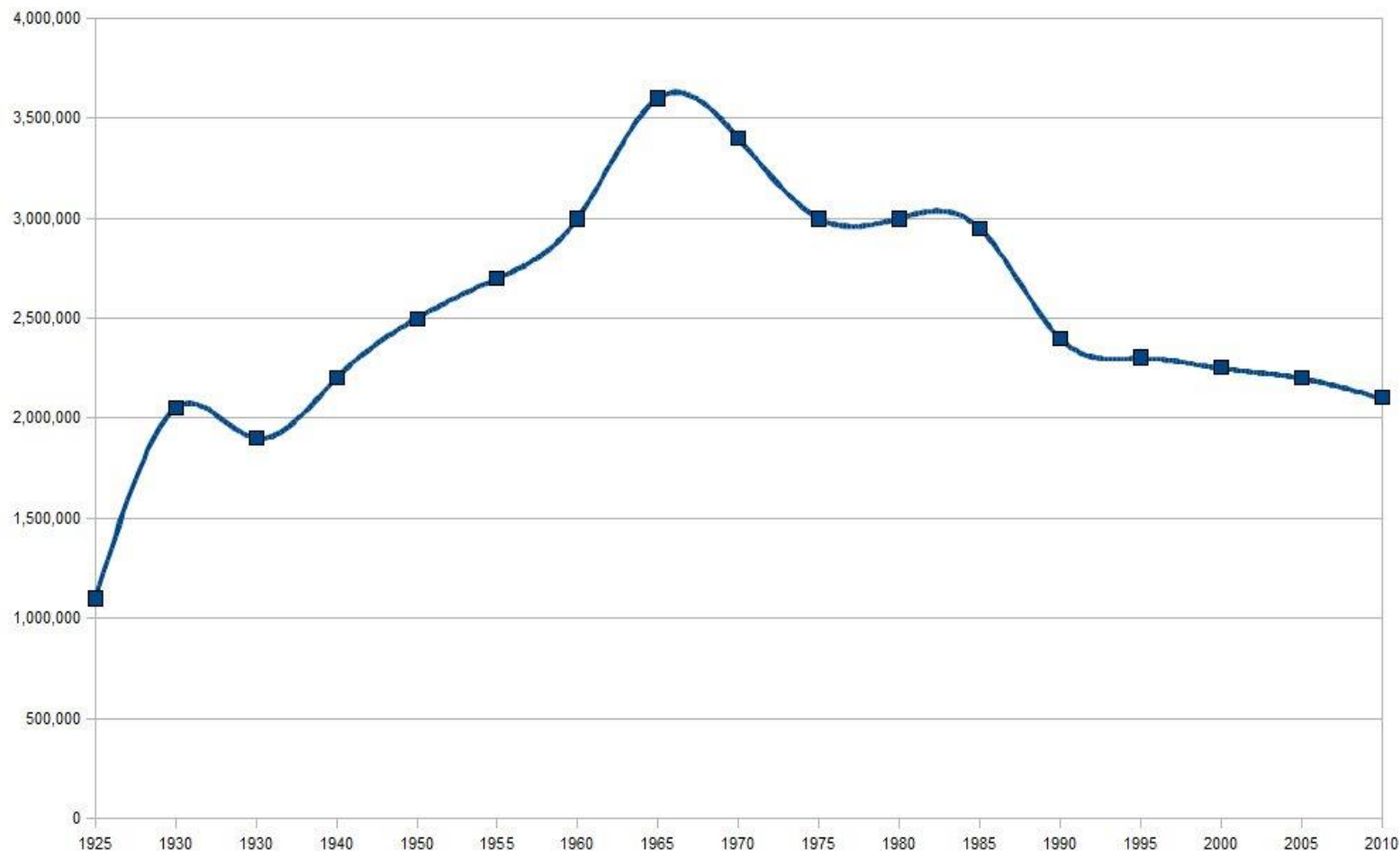Disciples of Christ Decline (1970-2018)

UMC Decline (1970-2017)
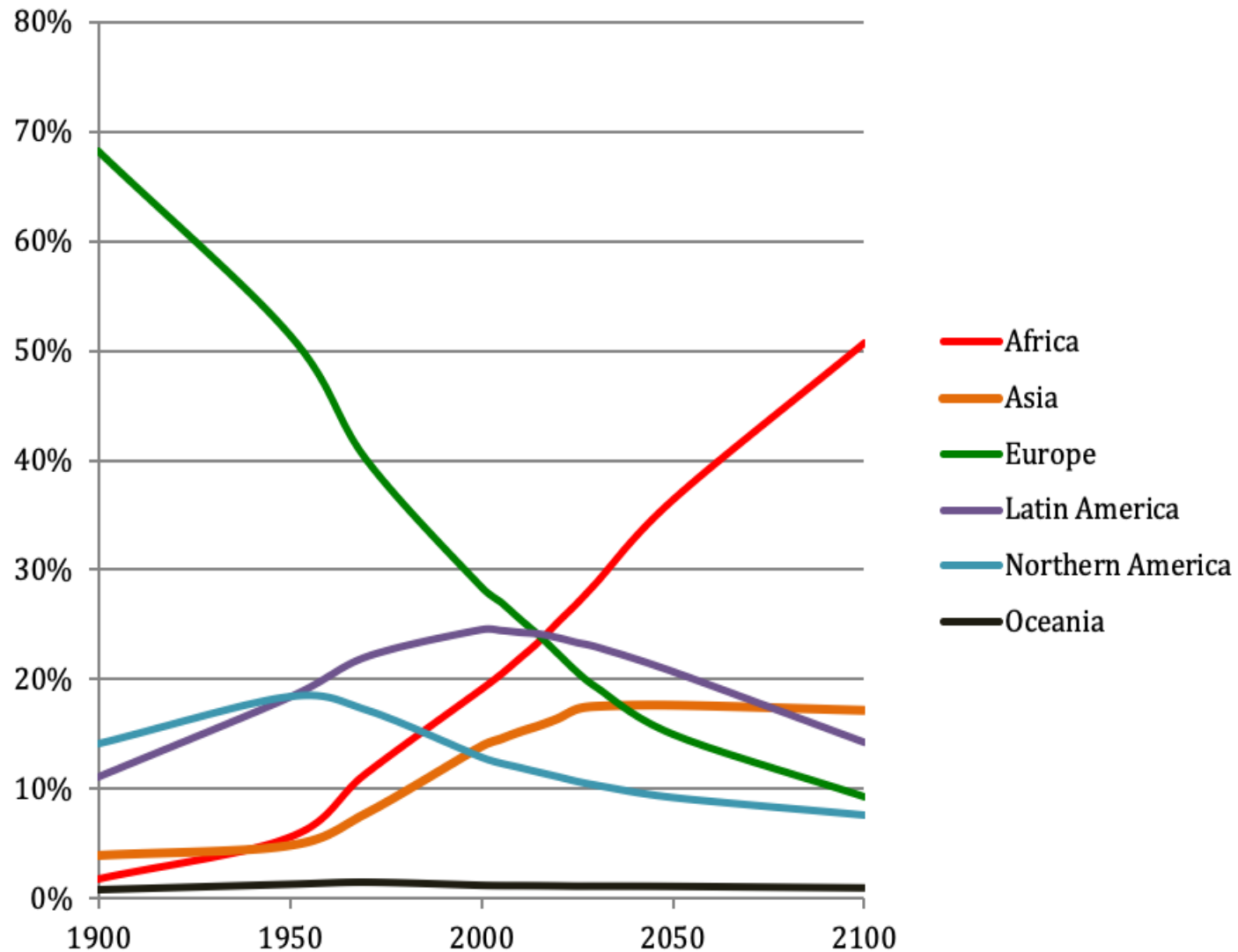
Baptized Members in Episcopal Church
1925-2010

Percent of the world's Christians in each continent

Life Cycle of Organizations

Peak Performance

Shared Beliefs & Missional Goals

Nostalgia

High Energy

Decline & Conflict

Birth

Death

Possible Resurrection, not Resuscitation

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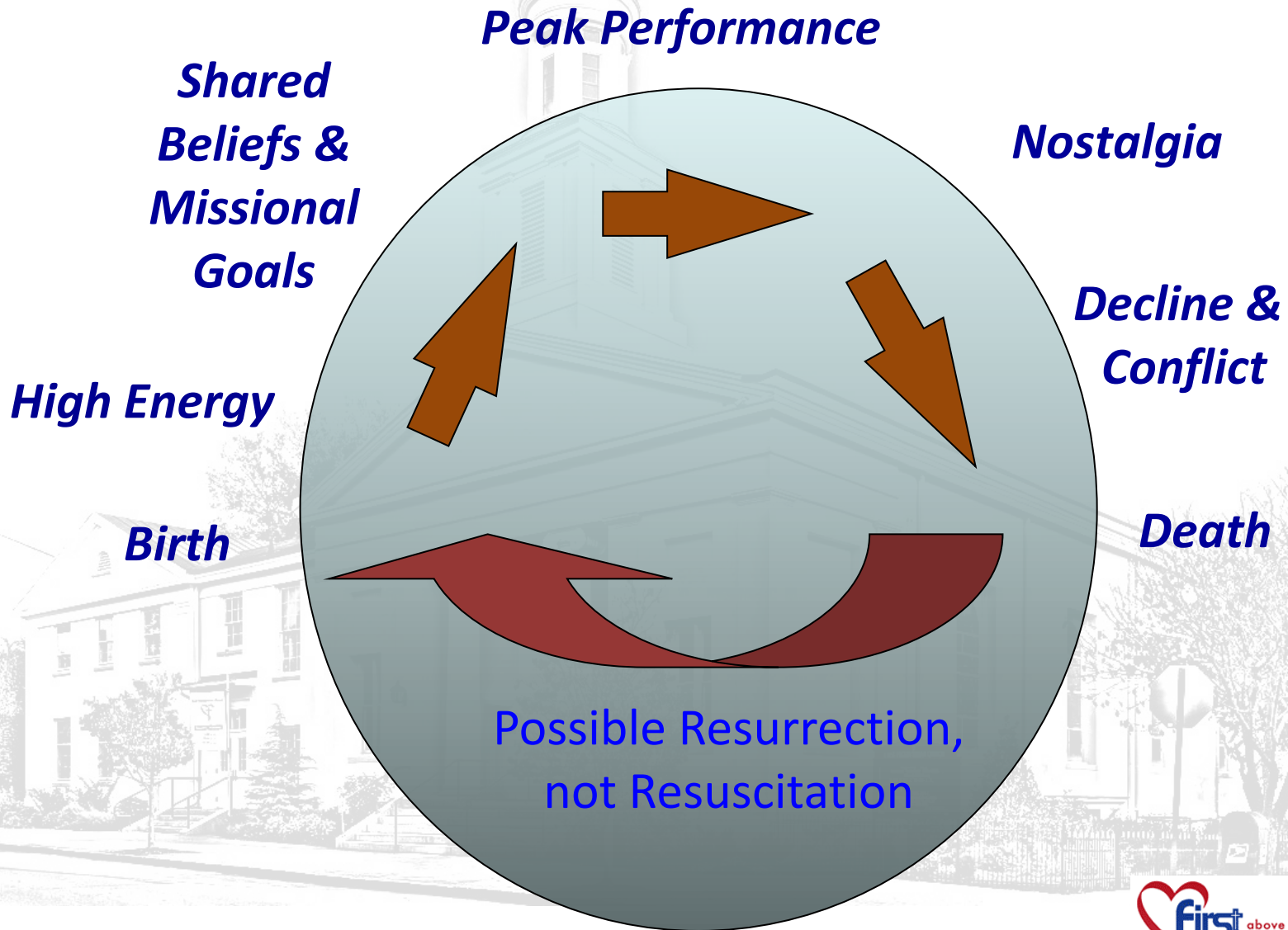
With Shared Vision

Healthy churches have clarified their Mission / Vision and focus the majority of their time and resources on becoming ...

Mission-Centric

Many churches are fuzzy regarding what is at the center of their reason for being.

With Shared Vision

- Some are Pastor- / Staff-Centric

- Some are Program-Centric

- Some are Laity-Centric

- Some are Building-Centric

- Some are History-Centric

- Some are Denomination-Centric

It is common for "mission creep" to set in and cause us to lose sight of our primary reason for being.

With Shared Vision

Clarify your Mission / Vision
*Focus* on becoming Mission-Centric

Key Questions:
- What's right about us?
- Who are we?
- Why are we here?
- Where are we?
- Where do we go now?
- How will we succeed?
- What is most important right now?
- Who will do what?

With Thriving Ministry

- They are making a difference in the lives of constituents
- They have rediscovered their community and their neighbors
- They go deeper, not wider
- They think of ministry as a 7-day-a-week endeavor
- They have rebalanced their "Internal / External" portfolio balance

With Trusted Leadership

- The issue of scapegoating
- The challenges of building a high-trust culture
- The looming recalibration of laity / clergy roles
- Leaner and more focused upon outcomes
- A healthy church must have a healthy leader(s)
- All leadership is in service of the mission
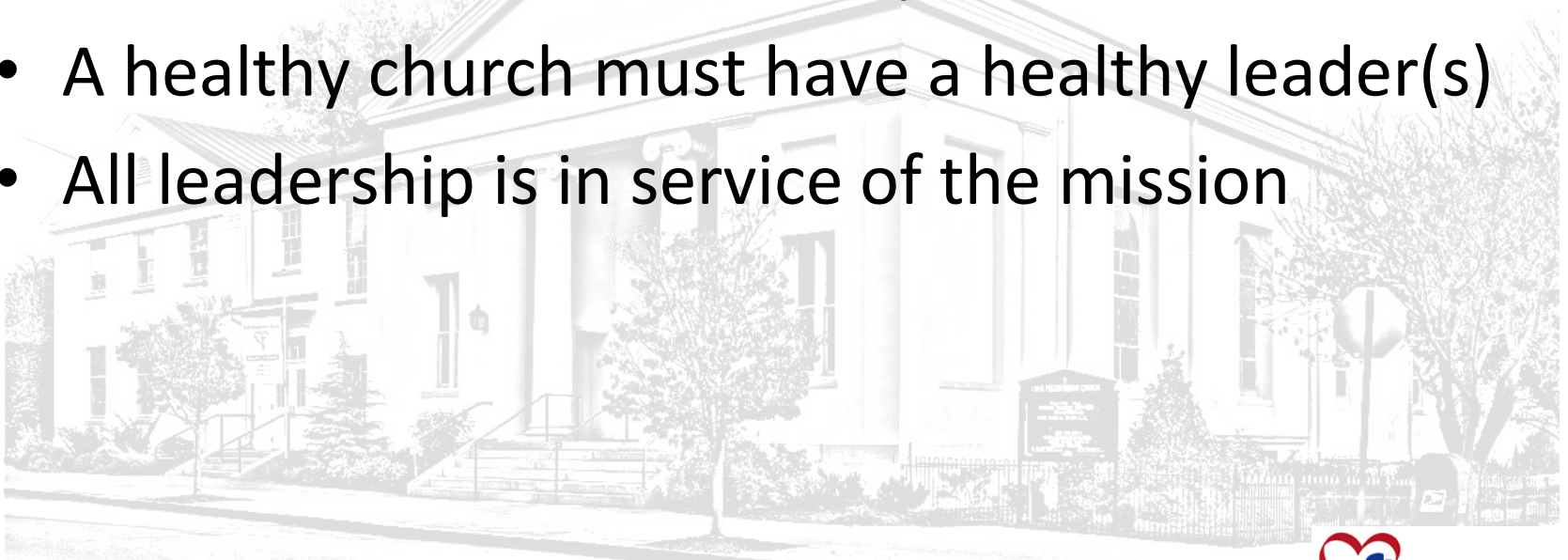
So … what does a healthy leadership model look like?

- Spirit-led, mission-driven, team-based

- Distinctive roles for clergy and laity

- Open to discomfort

- Staff to mission, rather than adapt mission to staff preferences

- Focused on measuring impact and not simply "nickels and noses"

- Cultivates a pervasive high-trust culture

Implications for your Pastor Search Process

- A "Turnaround Call" is desired

- Is First Pres motivated to pivot toward a more balanced ministry with the established church and toward the surrounding community?

  (Internal-External focus)

- This will not happen without clear and compelling leadership from your Pastor

- Consider what character and leadership traits your next Pastor must possess

June 11-12 Workshop

Session and Staff met June 11 and June 12 to process the CAT survey and to identify a way forward.

We were confronted by the CAT results ...

- It was hard to see "low energy, low satisfaction"

- We really heard the message that many churches are in this mode

We are ready to redirect the slope

- We have the opportunity to redirect the slope

- It's not about "fixing" or "going back" to a point in time

- It's about discerning who God needs the church to be today

What is our context?

Some of the main things we identified that go into our identity...

- We are in the Borough

- We have a history and current passion for mission

- We are a "big tent" church

- We are strong in worship

- We have a range of worship styles

- We are strong in caregiving
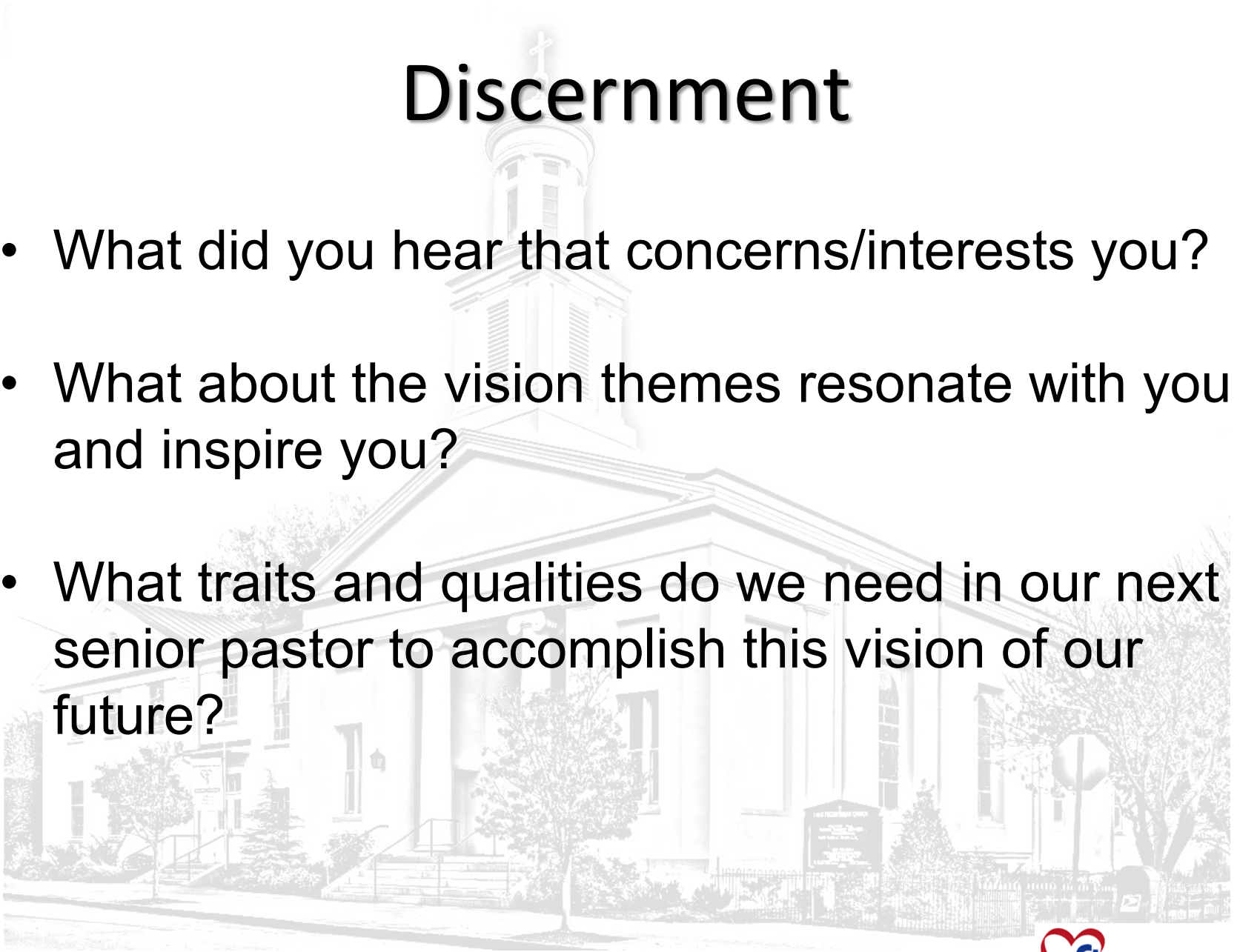
What is essential to our identity?

Catalyst for God's love in the Borough

Equipping worship

Building the Body

Discernment

- What did you hear that concerns/interests you?

- What about the vision themes resonate with you and inspire you?

- What traits and qualities do we need in our next senior pastor to accomplish this vision of our future?

What's next

- Forming a PNC: Aug/Sep
  - Nominating Committee beginning tonight!
  - Will be asking for nominations from the congregation
- Identity
  - Refining based on input
  - Expanding into narrative for recruitment
  - Connecting to current ministries
- Working the Transition Objectives
  - Staffing and Finance models
  - Properties Committee actively exploring options