



U.S. CONGREGATIONS

Research Services
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Myths and Facts About Evangelism and Church Growth





Grow Christ's Church Deep and Wide

In Evangelism:

- Share the good news of Jesus Christ.
- Invite persons to join in the church's worship and fellowship.
- Baptize children and adults.
(Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 15)



A Focus on Strengths

Congregations make more progress by identifying and focusing on strengths instead of finding and trying to fix weaknesses.



What is a Strong Congregation?

- Provides a sense of community
- Seeks to educate worshipers about the faith
- Shares their faith with others
- Serves others
- Conveys the sense that life has meaning





The Trump-Card Approach

- Congregational size
- Worship style
- Leadership
- Congregational mission
- The minimum factor
- Context



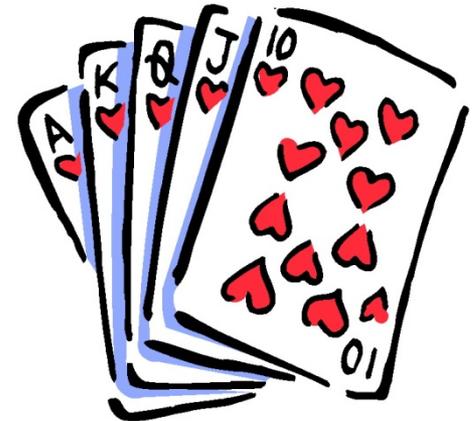
A Multi-Faceted Approach

- All congregations have strengths
- Congregations require multiple strengths



Identifying Strengths

- Data based approach
- U.S. Congregational Life Survey



U.S. Congregational Life Survey



- 5,000 congregations
- 500,000 worshipers
- All 50 states
- All sizes of congregations
- Over 50 denominations

U.S. Congregational Life Survey

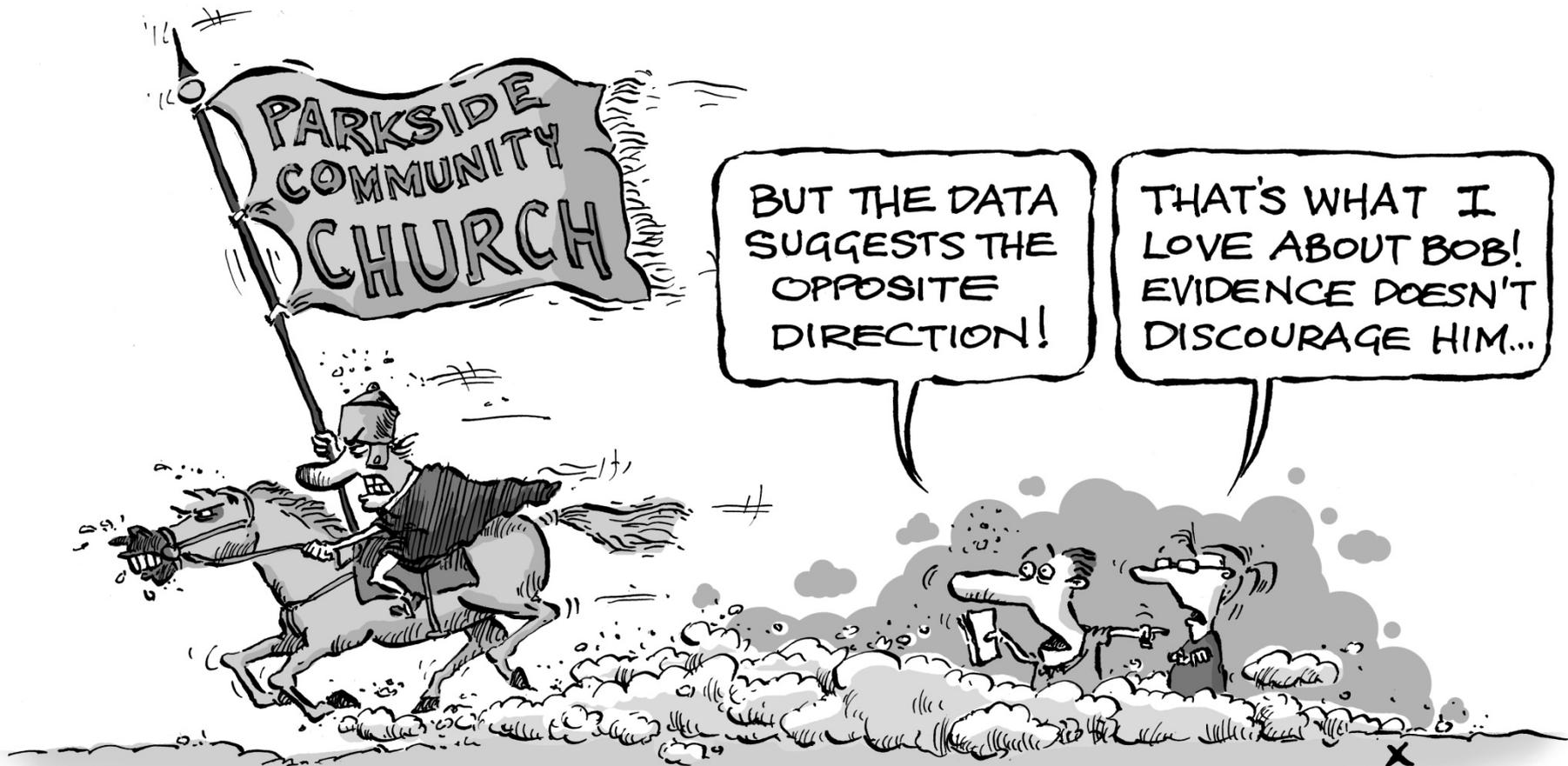


- 523 PC(USA) churches
- 93 fast-growing PC(USA) churches

U.S. Congregational Life Survey



- Focus on worshipers
- Focus on more than numerical growth
- Focus on multiple strengths
- Focus on resources for congregations





Myth or Fact?

Only congregations in rapidly growing areas are adding members.





Growth

Positive Predictors:

- Caring for Children and Youth
- Welcoming New People
- Participating in the Congregation





Growth

Negative Predictors:

- Growing Spiritually
- Focusing on the Community
- Sharing Faith



Growth

Not Related:

- Other 4 strengths
- Size of congregation
- Average age of worshipers
- Average income of worshipers
- Faith group
- Population growth





Myth or Fact?

Only new or recently established congregations are growing.



Age of Growing Churches

Of growing PC(USA) churches:

- 37% established before 1900
- 17% established between 1900 and 1959
- Less than half established since 1960





Myth or Fact?

Only large
churches grow.



Size of Growing Churches

Of growing PC(USA) churches:

- 39% have fewer than 200 in worship
- Another 40% have fewer than 300 in worship





Myth or Fact?

Most people have been attending their congregation for years and years.

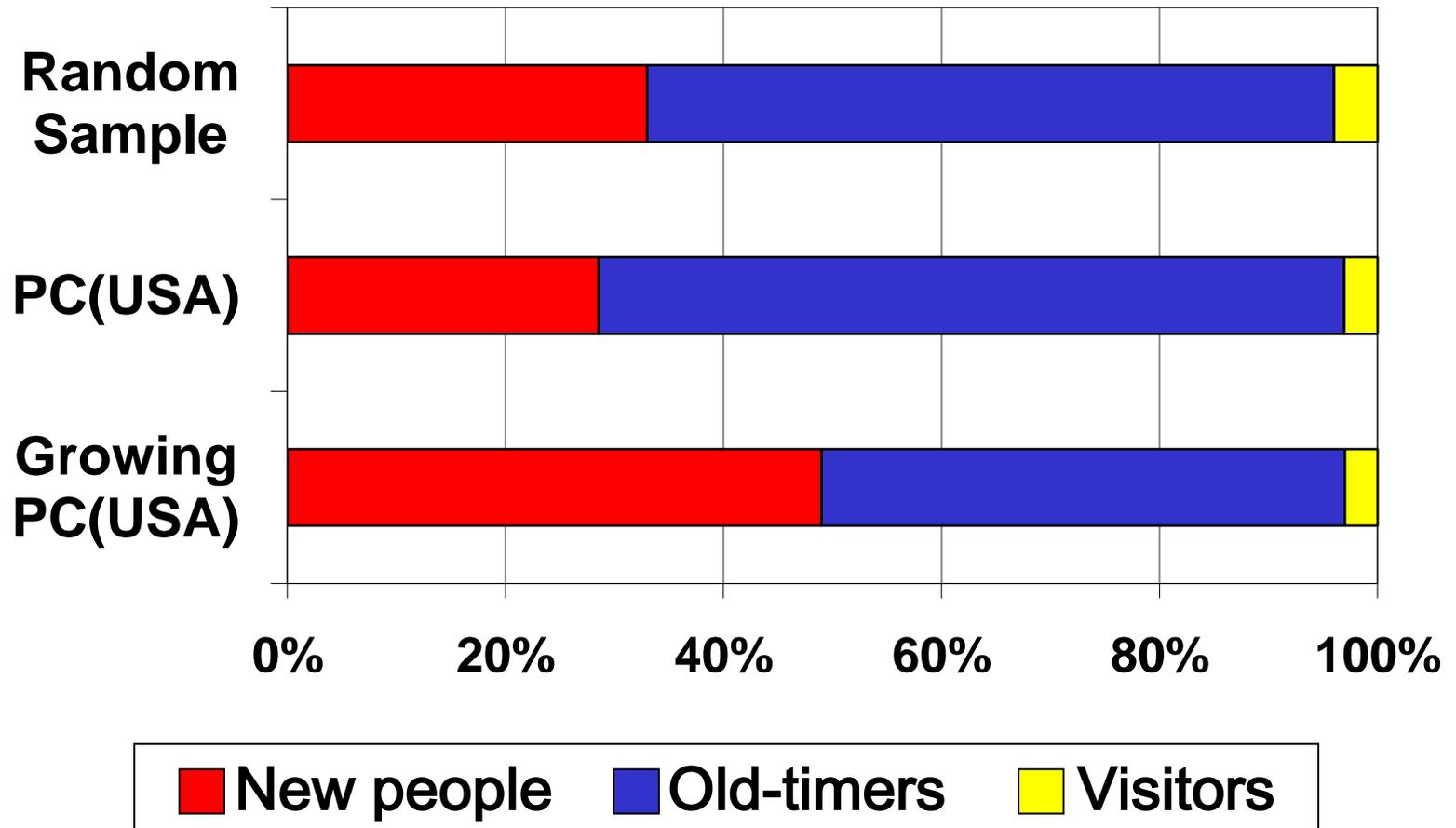


New People

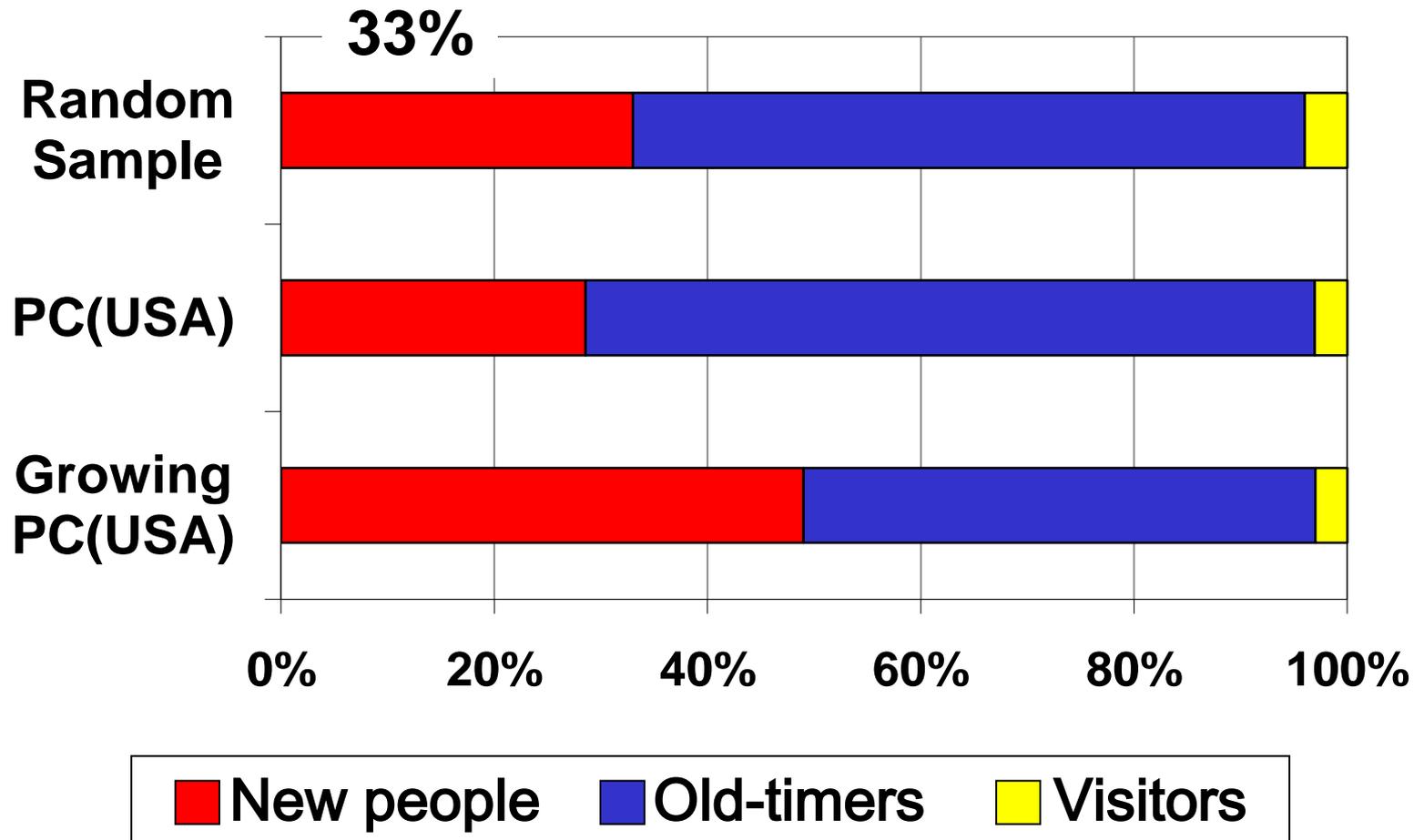
- Began attending the church in the past five years
- Not visitors
- Not “old-timers”



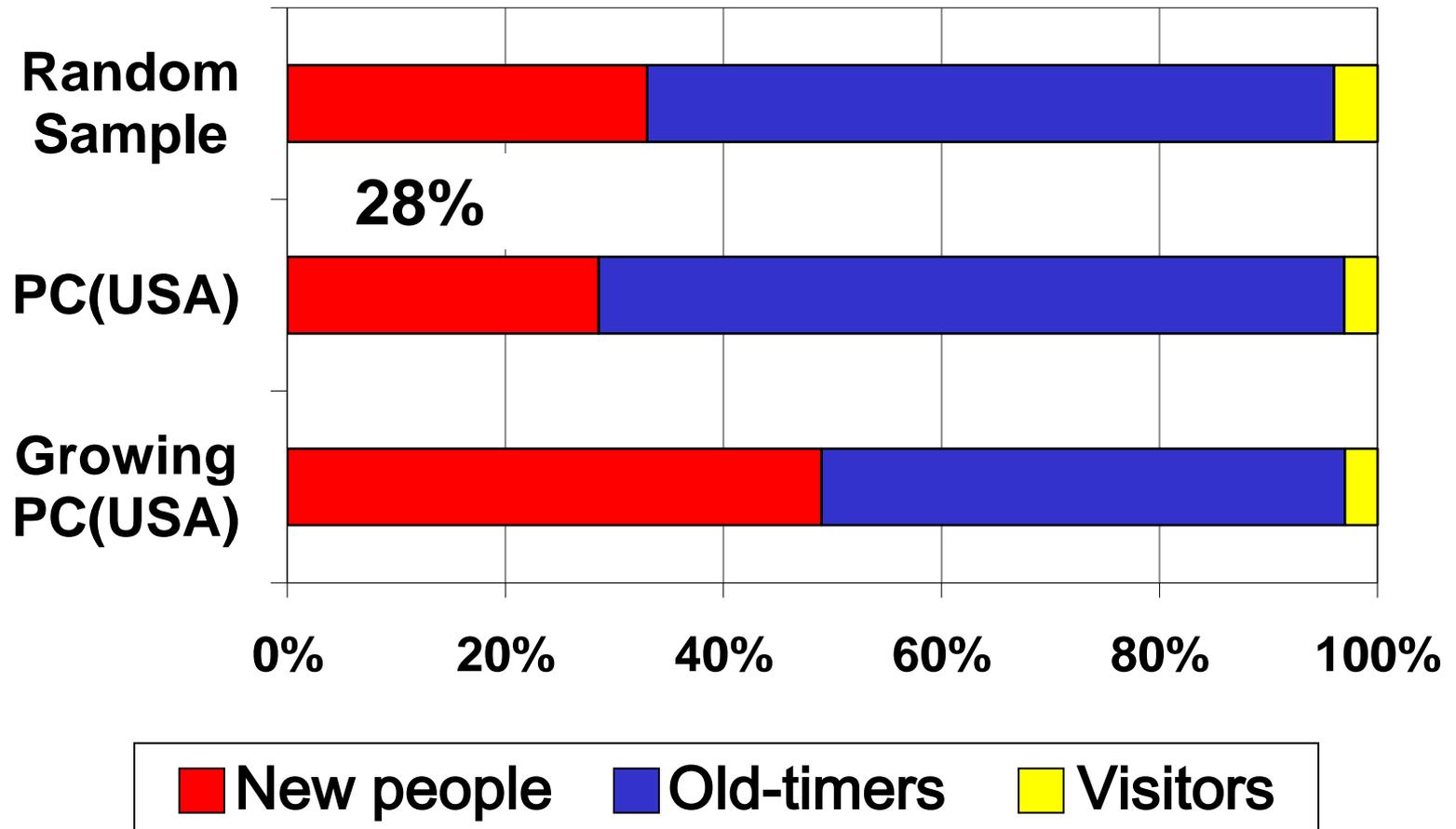
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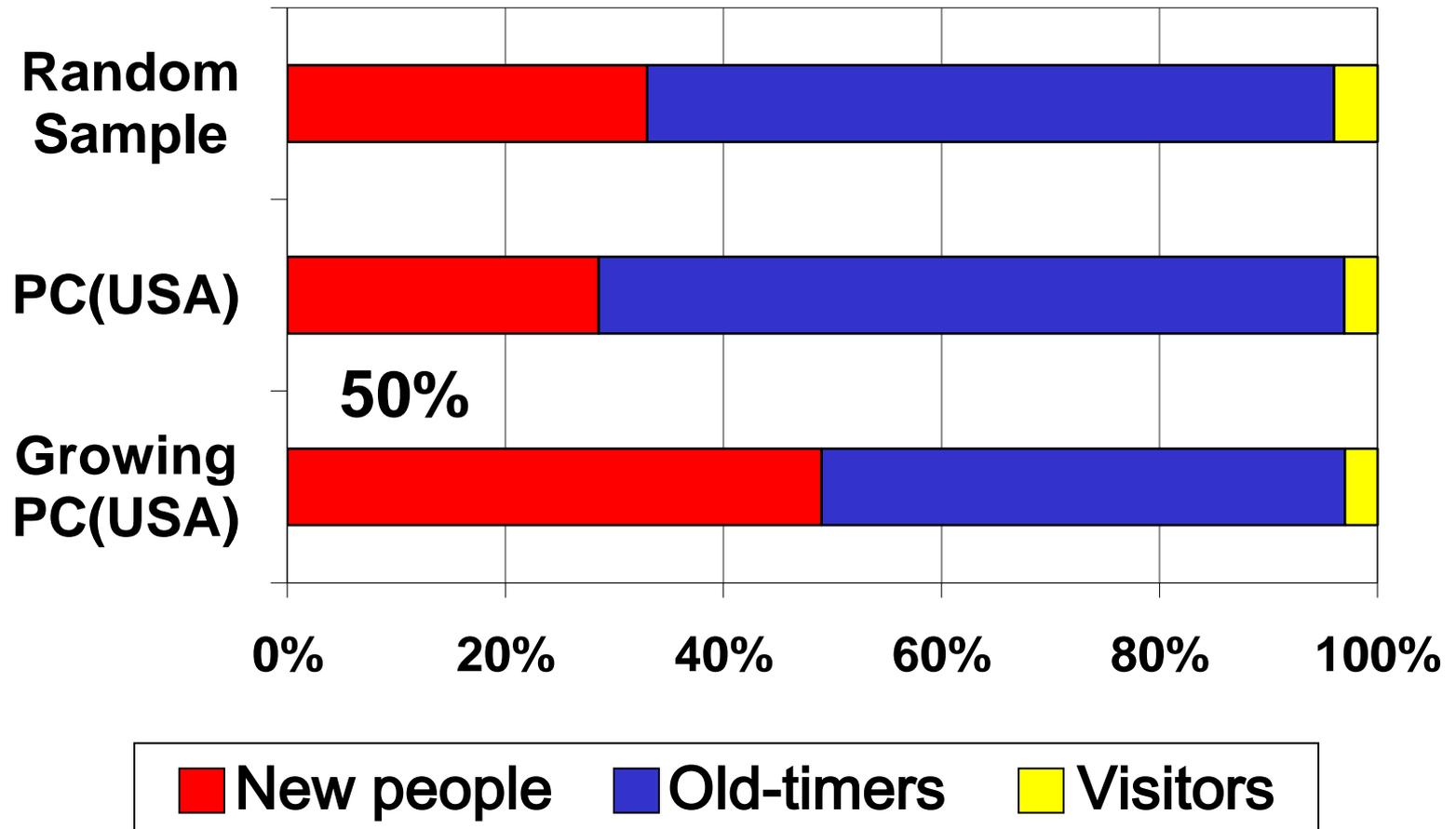
New People



New People



New People





Myth or Fact?

Most new people are new
to the faith.

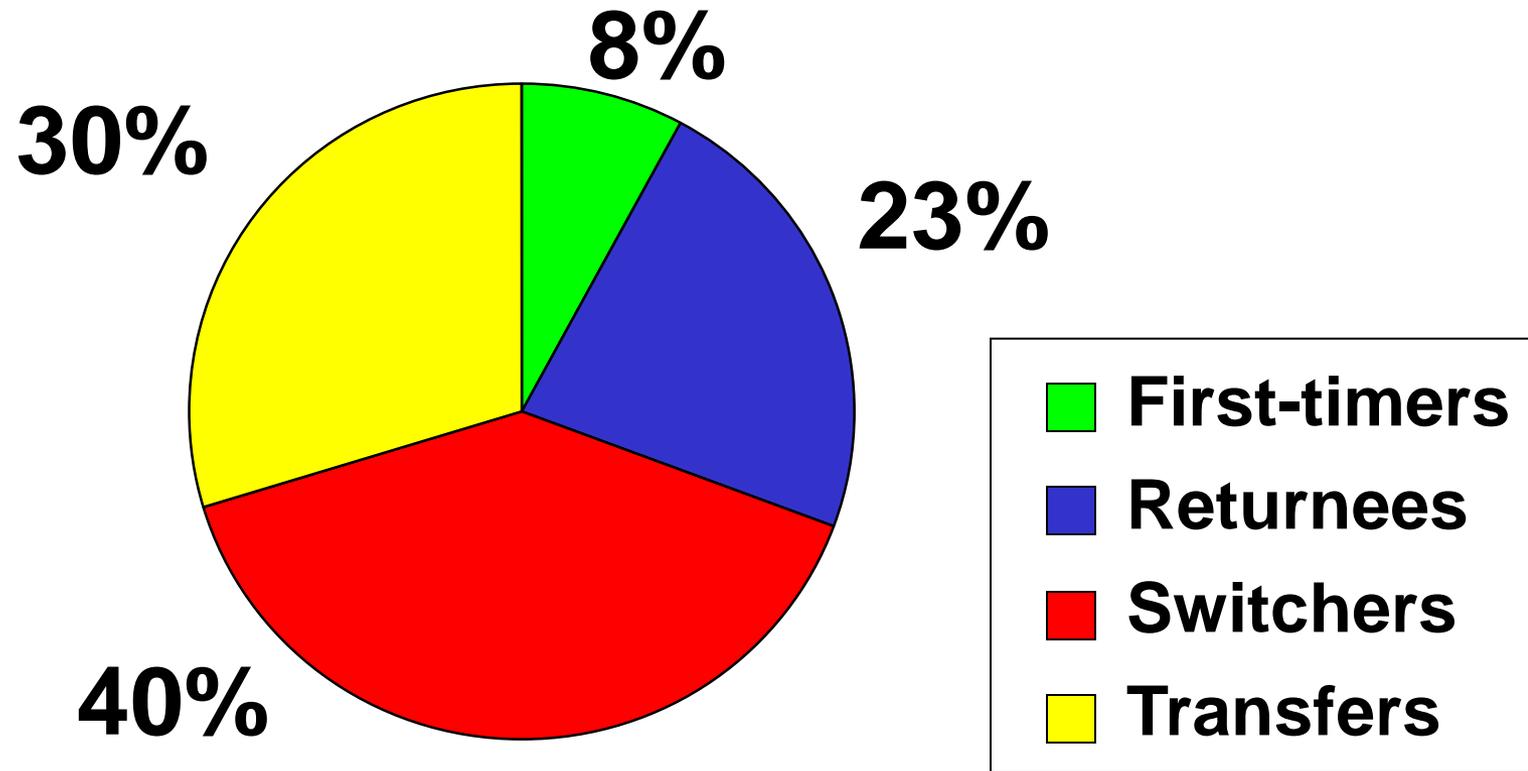


Types of New People

- **First-timers**—no faith background
- **Returnees**—recently not attending
- **Switchers**—change denomination
- **Transfers**—change congregations within the denomination



Types of New People





Myth or Fact?

New people usually learn about the congregation from advertising.





Finding a New Congregation

How did you first find out about the congregation?

- Advertising: 6%
- Looking for my denomination: 9%
- Passed by: 23%
- Someone invited me: 49%



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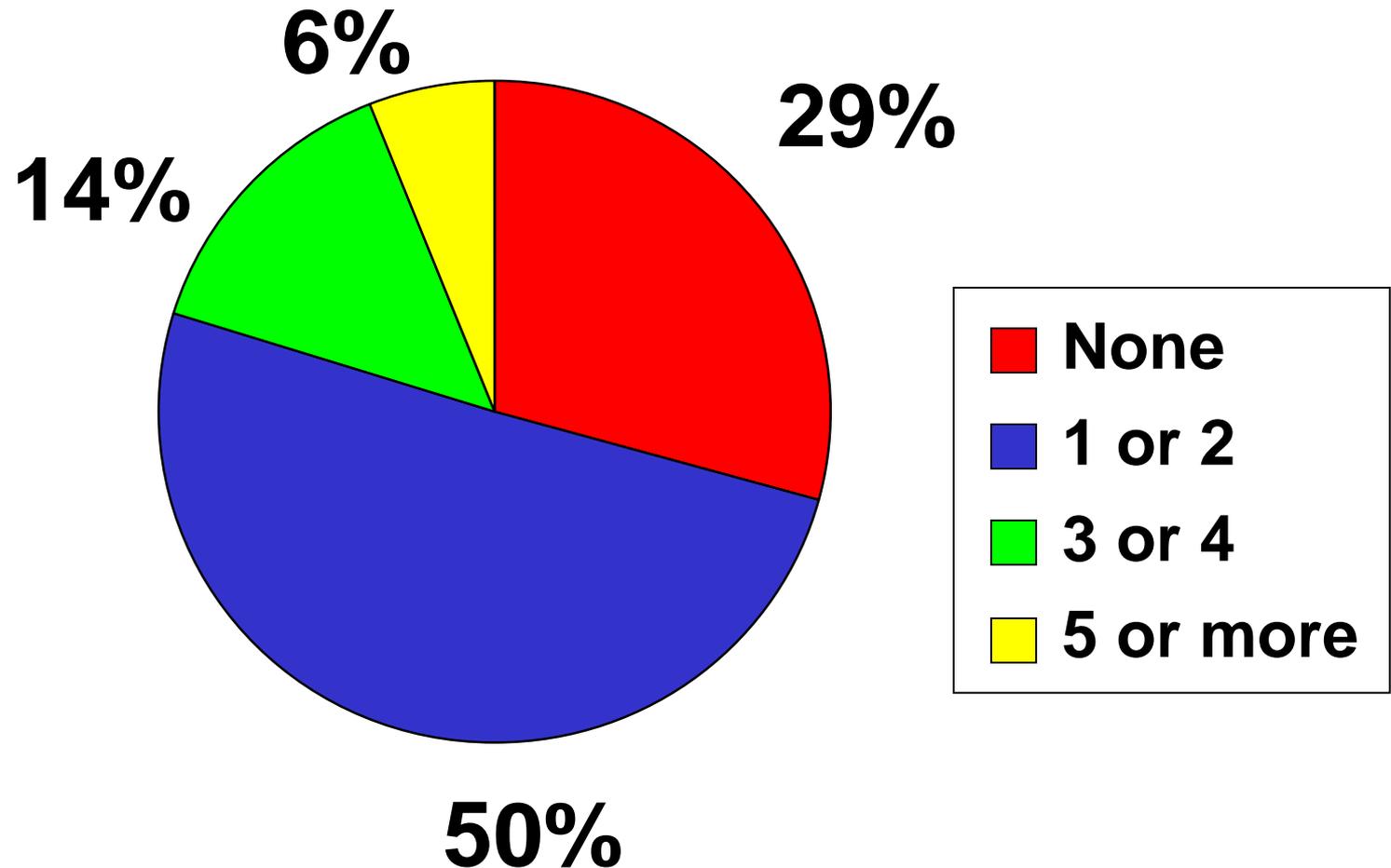


Finding a New Congregation

Why did you come here for the first time?

- Someone I knew attends here: 33%
- Actively looking for a church: 32%
- Easy to get to: 26%
- Liked people I had met: 18%
- Heard about sermons/activities: 11%

Number of Churches Visited





Who Invites Others?

Worshippers who:

- Feel worship helps them with life
- Feel inspiration and joy in worship
- Feel spiritual needs are met there
- Feel they belong there
- Participate in small groups there
- Hold leadership role





Who Invites Others?

Worshippers who:

- Began attending in past 5 years
- Are female
- Are ages 25 to 65





REVERSE EVANGELISM WAS DISCOVERED BY REV. DRAKE. UTILISING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY NIGHTCLUBS, HE DISCOVERED THAT TO ATTRACT YOUNG PEOPLE THE CHURCH HAD TO BE VERY DIFFICULT TO GET IN TO.

Myth or Fact?

Denomination is irrelevant
to church seekers.



Importance of Denomination

How important is the denomination of this congregation?

- Very important: 20%
- Important: 34%
- Not very/not at all important: 44%
- Don't recall: 2%



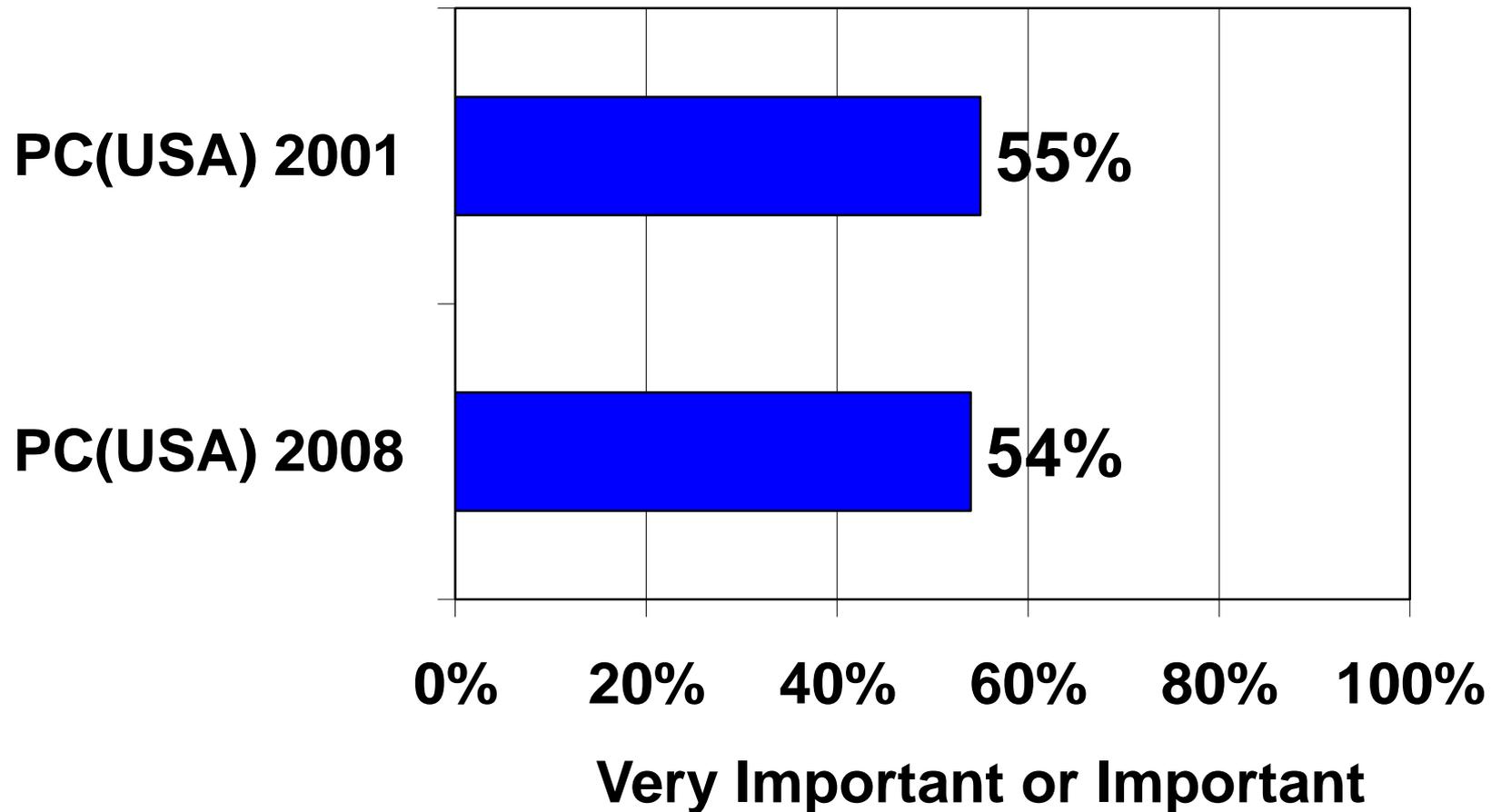
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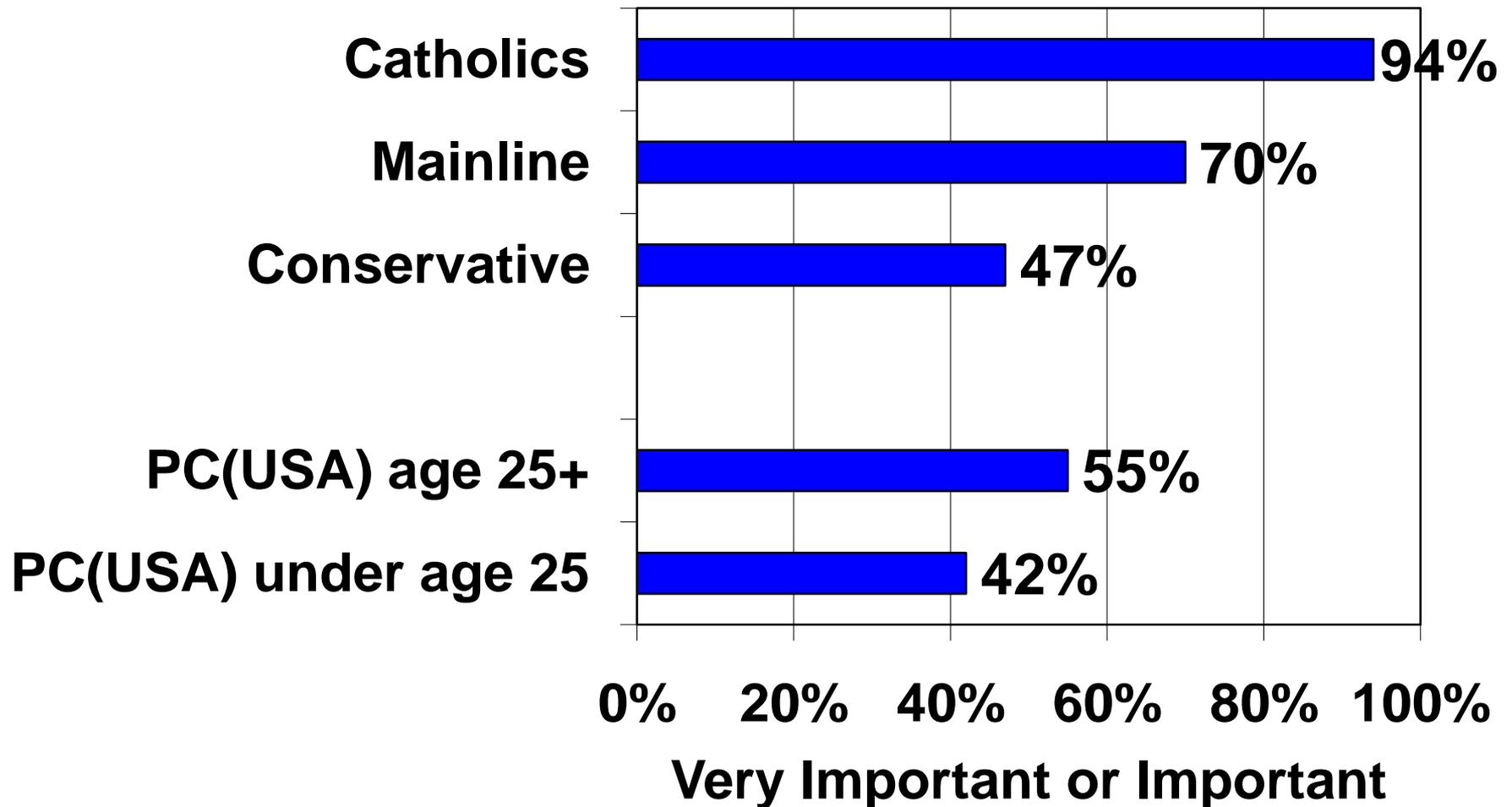
- Very important: 20%
 - Important: 34%
 - Not very/not at all important: 44%
 - Don't recall: 2%
- **54%**



Importance of Denomination



Importance of Denomination



Myth or Fact?

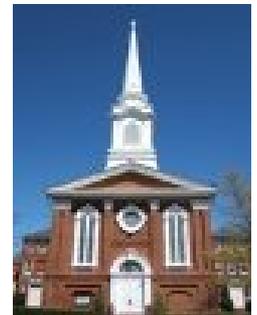
New people usually come back after the first time because of the coffee hour.



Returning to the Congregation

What impressed you and made you want to come back?

- Friendliness of people: 55%
- Quality of sermon: 34%
- Overall worship experience: 30%
- Style of the pastor: 16%
- Music during worship: 14%





Returning to the Congregation

How did the congregation follow-up after your first visit?

- No follow-up: 24%
- Pastor sent letter or postcard: 20%
- Member called me: 18%
- Pastor called me: 13%
- Sent materials about church: 11%

HOW WAS THE
NEW CHURCH
DARLING?

GOOD... UM...
THEY'RE VERY
WELCOMING



Myth or Fact?

Growing churches rely exclusively on big church signs and big advertising campaigns.





Attracting New People

| | Growing PC(USA) | PC(USA) |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Send materials to visitors | 97% | 81% |
| Encourage inviting | 88% | 88% |
| Use email | 85% | 72% |
| Distribute flyers/letters | 76% | 70% |
| Other groups use facilities | 76% | 60% |
| Paid ad in newspaper | 73% | 60% |



Attracting New People

| | Growing PC(USA) | PC(USA) |
|---------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Telephone visitors | 72% | 43% |
| Church website | 70% | 71% |
| Ad in phone book | 61% | 40% |
| Visit visitors | 50% | 31% |
| Event to add members | 48% | 41% |
| Event to meet people | 47% | 50% |



Are You Ready for Company?

1. Visibility in the community
2. Promotional materials
3. Telephone welcome
4. Parking and building entrance
5. Building accessibility

Are You Ready for Company?

6. Greeters and ushers
7. Worship bulletin
8. Sermon
9. Before and after worship
10. Prompt follow-up with visitors

M. J. Coyner, *Clergy Journal* (2006)

Myth or Fact?

All congregations do the same things to integrate new people into the congregation.





Integrating New People

| | Growing PC(USA) | PC(USA) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Group for new people | 70% | 46% |
| Invitation to join group | 67% | 49% |
| Invitation to service | 66% | 62% |
| Follow-up visits | 40% | 42% |
| Hospitality | 33% | 20% |
| No planned methods | 3% | 15% |



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HELLO DARLING...
YES, THERE'S A QUESTION
ABOUT THE MAIN REASON
I GO TO CHURCH...
YES... THAT WOULD BE YOU...
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT...
THANK YOU DEAR...

Myth or Fact?

New member integration methods are entirely successful.





Integrating New People

| | New People | Old-Timers |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Attend weekly | 71% | 80% |
| Member of the congregation | 59% | 93% |
| Participate in small group | 56% | 71% |
| Serve in leadership role | 45% | 66% |
| Give 5% or more | 42% | 61% |
| Private devotions weekly+ | 70% | 72% |

Myth or Fact?

Worship services in growing churches offer only contemporary music.





Music in Worship

| | Growing PC(USA) | PC(USA) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Traditional hymns | 89% | 99% |
| Contemporary hymns | 67% | 56% |
| Praise music or choruses | 63% | 46% |
| Classical music | 43% | 51% |

Elements of Worship

| | Growing PC(USA) | PC(USA) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Sermon, singing, offering | 100% | 100% |
| Lord's Supper | 94% | 79% |
| Laughter | 92% | 72% |
| Applause | 77% | 40% |
| Participation by teens | 61% | 30% |
| Drums or electric guitar | 39% | 22% |
| Visual projection equipment | 26% | 22% |

BUT I LIKE IT IN HERE!
I DON'T WANT TO COME OUT.
WHAT'S THIS OBSESSION
WITH CHANGE ANYWAY?!?
GO AWAY AND LEAVE ME ALONE!



Putting it All Together

**What Have
We Learned?**

Strong Congregations:

- Welcome new people
- Encourage participation
- Offer excellent, meaningful worship experiences
- Help people grow spiritually
- Commit to a positive future

Learn More:

www.USCongregations.org

1-888-728-7228 ext. 2040



U.S. CONGREGATIONS

Research Services

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

research@pcusa.org

Questions for Discussion

1. What does your congregation do effectively for evangelism?
2. What is the role of the pastor/head of staff in evangelism? What roles do other staff members play? What roles do members play?
3. How does your congregation help people be effective evangelists—to issue effective invitations to your church?

Questions for Discussion

4. Are there groups within your congregation who could become better evangelists?
5. What types of side door activities are most effective in your congregation (bringing people in to activities other than worship)? Are there any that don't seem to be effective?
6. How does a visitor experience coming to your church for the first time?