

Acts 2:42-47

1

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching** and to **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and to **the prayers**.

⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many **wonders and signs** performed by the apostles.

⁴⁴ All the believers were **together** and had everything in common.

⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to **give to anyone who had need**.

⁴⁶ Every day they continued to **meet together** in the temple courts.

They broke bread in their homes and **ate together with glad and sincere hearts**,
⁴⁷ **praising God** and enjoying the favor of all the people.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Measuring Churches

2

- *The mark of a great church is not how many people come but how many people live differently as a result of coming.*

Greeting Stories

3



"Welcome to our church—even though
you're sitting in our family pew . . ."

Spectrum of Atmospheres

4

Не сидите во время
богослужения!
DO NOT SIT DURING
SERVICES!

HOLY ASCENSION
ORTHODOX CHURCH
VISITORS ALWAYS WELCOME

5

Evangelization

Words Used By Orthodox Converts to Describe Orthodoxy

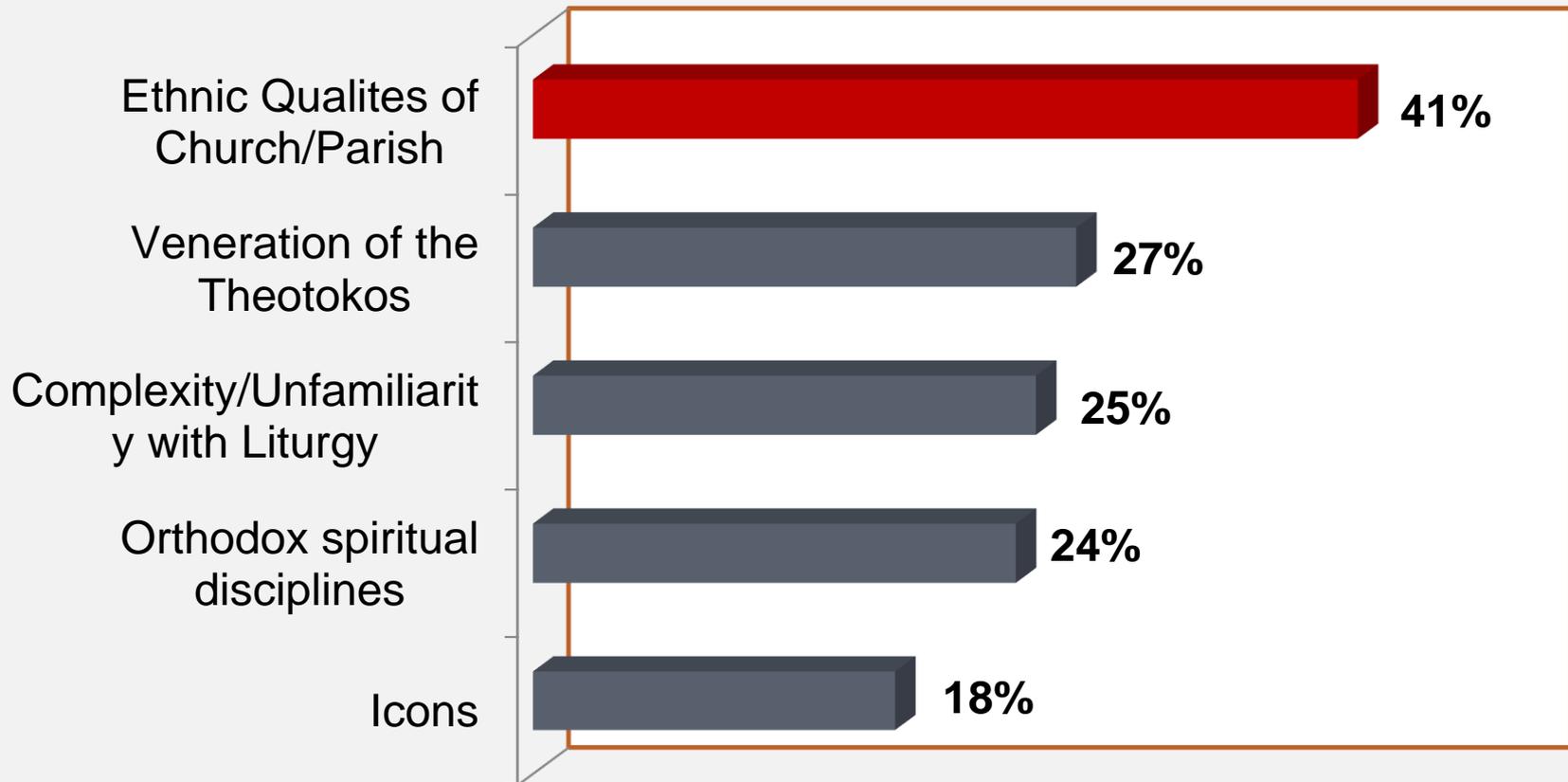
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Difficulties & Differences Experienced By Orthodox Converts

7

Difficulties and Differences Experienced by Orthodox Converts in America

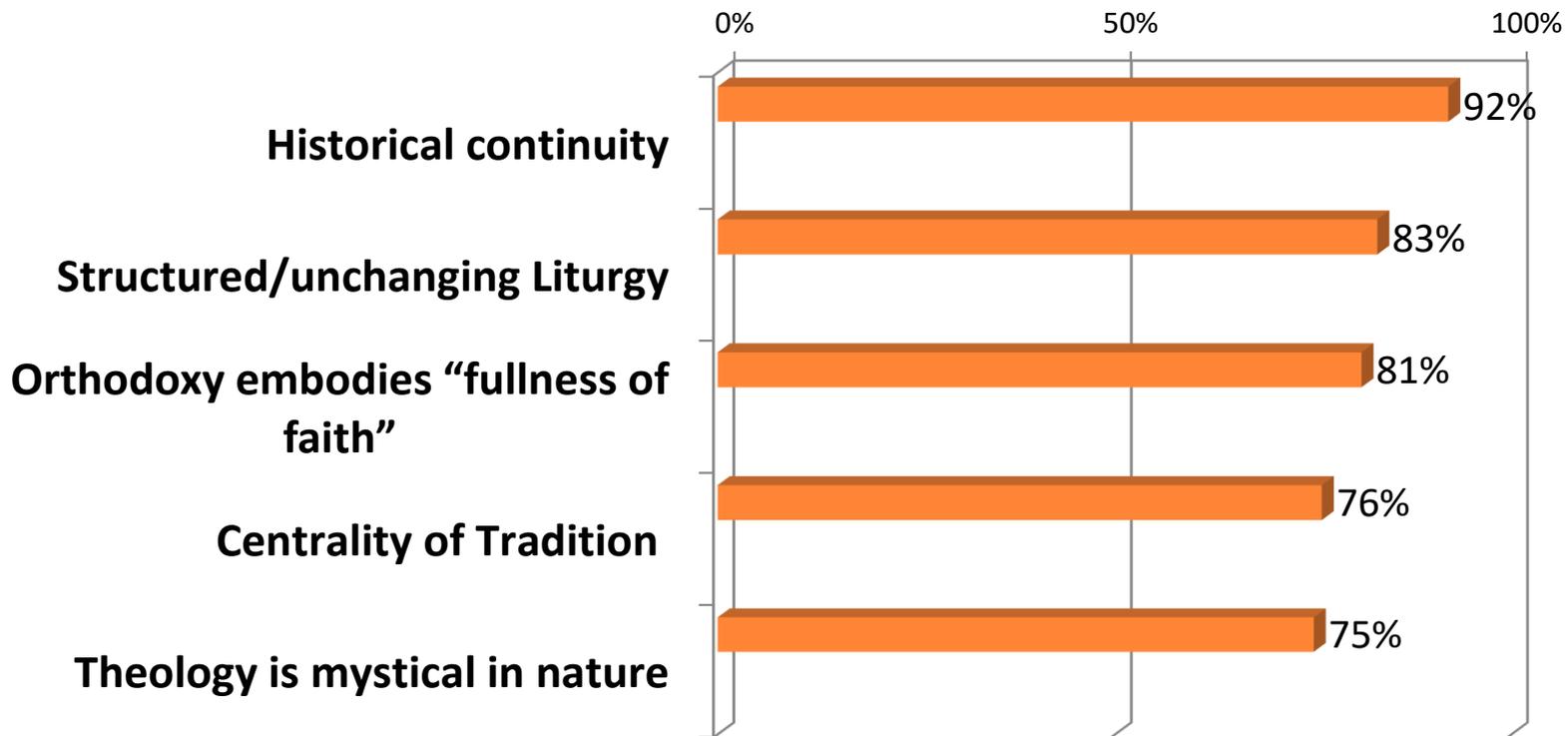


To What Are They Attracted?

Characteristics of Orthodox Converts

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Attractive Attributes of Orthodox Christianity as Cited by 194 Orthodox Converts ~ 2008



Who Has Been Attracted to Orthodoxy?

Characteristics of Orthodox Converts

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Survey of 194 Orthodox Converts

60% Male

88% - some college

29% -switched more than once

Previous reading about Orthodoxy (web)

Faith background

29% “multiple”

20% Roman Catholic

9% Episcopal

34% Other Protestant

8% Non Christian

Almost entirely
Caucasian

**Most found Orthodoxy
– not invited.**

Not a Good Tactic

10



Report: 92% Of Conversions Occur After Heated Facebook Argument

Personal Narrative

11

The most powerful tool you have is an Authentic Faith.
How do you explain that “this” is real for you?

- ▣ What does God mean to me?
- ▣ Why do I have faith/why do I believe?
- ▣ Why am I an Orthodox Christian?
- ▣ Why do I attend church regularly?
- ▣ Why do I attend (this) parish?
- ▣ Use for...
 - ▣ Small group, adult education, Bible study group discussion
 - ▣ Advent, Lenten, or other
 - ▣ Confession with the parish priest.
 - ▣ Website testimonials

How Youth (and Many Adults) Conceptualize God

Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

12

- A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
- God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
- The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
- God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
- Good people go to heaven when they die.

In Other Words...

God is something like a combination Divine Butler and Cosmic Therapist: he is always on call, takes care of any problems that arise, professionally helps his people to feel better about themselves, and does not become too personally involved in the process

Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton

Take Your Faith Seriously

13

- Equipping Not Entertaining
- 48 of 52 weeks



After 12 Years Of Quarterly Church Attendance, Parents Shocked By Daughter's Lack Of Faith

14

Parish Structure

Size Transitions in Parishes --Fr John Reeves

15

- Family
 - ▣ Short Stay/Part Time Pastors
 - ▣ "Family Owned/ Family Operated"
 - ▣ Unifying Force - Patriarch sets tone
 - ▣ Sanctioning of belonging
 - ▣ Programs - non existent or absolute essentials.
- Pastoral
 - ▣ Pastor centered
 - ▣ Friendly but..
 - ▣ Organization AWOL
 - ▣ Stretched thin
 - ▣ Intimacy challenged - 7 degrees

Type	Size	Relationship Style	Leadership Structure
Family	1-50	L	Family matriarchs and patriarchs make decisions. Pastor (part time, retired?) functions as chaplain. Board conducts business and ministries in support of matriarchs and patriarchs. Other staff—usually a musician—is part-time and performs a limited but essential function.
		L	
		E	
		C	
Pastoral	51-150	E	Pastor is the hub of the wheel, master coordinator, chief minister. Board members are short-term task-doers, micro-decision makers. Ministry coordinators are permanent task-doers who value close working relationship with the pastor. Other staff—usually a musician and a secretary—is part-time and performs limited but essential functions.
		L	
		G	
		N	
Program	151-350	S	Program groups/teams/committees have their own empowered lay leaders and plan and implement programs and activities. Board members are managers, policy-makers who oversee but do not lead program groups/teams/committees. Pastor functions as the executive. Other staff (one or more ordained) includes full- and part-time assistants to pastor, program resources.
		I	
		M	
		E	
Corporation	351+	R	Pastor is chief executive officer, with mythic qualities. Staff (several ordained) includes full-time executives in charge of program areas. Program groups/teams/committees with virtual autonomy operate programs as almost independent organizations. Board functions as board of directors.
		T	
		L	
		M	

Size Transitions in Parishes

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□ **Family to Pastoral Obstacles**

- Patriarchs/matriarchs often unwilling to accept losing influence. Pass leadership to the priest w/o loss of face?
- Ability, experience & skill of priest in handling negative reactions to his efforts to effect transitions in established social order.
- The reluctance of parish to subdivide. Every event won't include everybody.
- Financial feasibility of having a full time or at least expanded time priest.

Size Transitions in Parishes

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□ Pastoral to "Program" Obstacles

- Clergy hold on a to need be connected in depth with all active members.
- Laity unwilling to have personal spiritual needs met by other than head pastor.
- Clergy and lay leaders are unable to conceive (and fund) meaningful parish structure that can effectively handle more persons. Still OK to borrow chairs for family reunion? Is parish hall available to anyone? Need for coordination.
- Laity, desiring to retain a sense of intimacy, resist vision of either planting new community (allowing growth while remaining small) or structuring to embrace additional people.
- Facilities may become stretched.

Size Transitions in Parishes

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□ **Downsizing Obstacles**

- Loss of self esteem. Smaller size seen as an embarrassment or a clear death knell.
- To jettison activities we've always done but are no longer needed or critical mass unavailable.
- Getting most from those left. Discerning gifts.
- Ignoring changes in size. Burying head in the sand.
- Fail to pick up on advantages of the smaller size. Priest can now have regular conversations with more people. Attending every graduation party.
- The church nave may need some reorganization to avoid looking empty. Remove a couple of pews. Move the choir downstairs

Dunbar's Number

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunbar's_number

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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Dunbar's number is a suggested cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain stable social relationships. These are relationships in which an individual knows who each person is and how each person relates to every other person. This number was first proposed in the 1990s by British anthropologist Robin Dunbar, who found a correlation between primate brain size and average social group size. By using the average human brain size and extrapolating from the results of primates, **he proposed that humans can comfortably maintain only 150 stable relationships.**

Proponents assert that numbers larger than this generally require more restrictive rules, laws, and enforced norms to maintain a stable, cohesive group. It has been proposed to lie between 100 and 250, with a commonly used value of 150. (*A desirable target parish size? JK*)

Dunbar's number does not include the number of people known personally with a ceased social relationship, nor people just generally known with a lack of persistent social relationship.

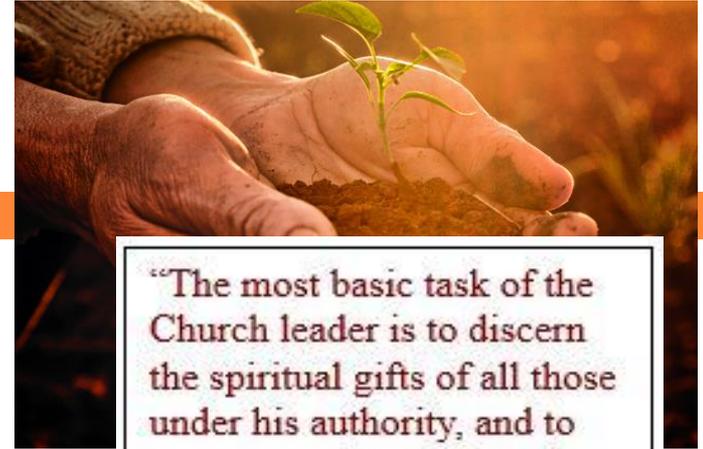
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Miscellany

Increasing Participation/ Building Leaders

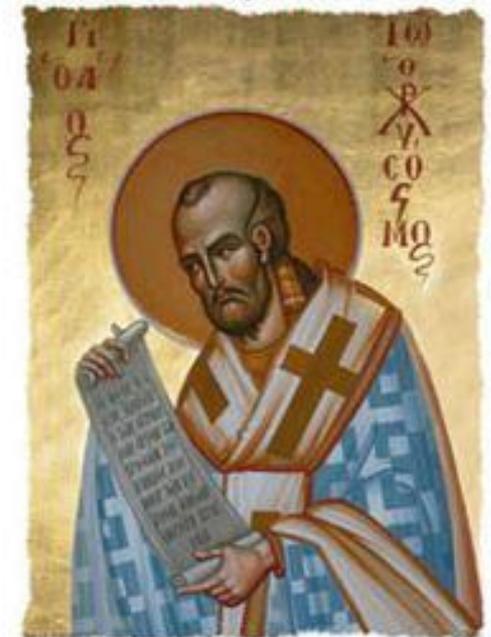
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- How do you recruit or volunteer
- Willing to replace yourself?
- Mentor
- Culture of “Yes” & “Thank you:
- Empowerment
- New people on a path of engagement
- Not for life
- Joyful
- Giftedness
- Intrinsic Motivation:
 - ▣ Autonomy, Mastery, Purpose



“The most basic task of the Church leader is to discern the spiritual gifts of all those under his authority, and to encourage those gifts to be used to the full for the benefit of all.”

~ Saint John Chrysostom



EXAMPLE! – ILLUSTRATING STEWARDSHIP METHOD CHANGE

A. Challenge/ Problem

Serious shortage of \$ to operate parish

D. Goal

Have 100% of parish budget funded by donations – July 2018

E. Guiding Team

• Sally • Bob • John • Fr Andrew

B. BEFORE --What we do today... and how we respond to it:

What we do today..

- Dues plus modest donations
- 85% < \$1000 K /year
- 25% of budget from fund raising
- Continually ask; Little response
- Look for things to sell; “help us help us”
- Cut budget >> Sense of scarcity

C. AFTER -- Target Outcomes

How would we like to be as a community in the future

- No dues/minimum
- Broader view of membership
- 25% above \$2500/yr
- Increase % of budget toward charity
- Decrease fund raising as % of budget

F. Attitude Force Field



Attitudes that drive us forward ?

Dire need • Sense of future • We have an opportunity to do this right. • Love of God • Want parish cared for • Opportunities for ministry need \$ • New people expect this. • ‘Not available for fund raising’



Attitudes that hold us back?

Habit” • Fear lost dues \$ • Don’t understand stewardship • Lack trust - God will provide • “Church spends too much” • Secret ploy by priest to get more \$ • ‘Bad investment’; ‘prolonging the inevitable’ • “We’re getting by” (real or imagined) • Incessant special collections; OD’d on \$ • Fear negative reaction to asking; • “I give my time” • Small vocal opposition

G. Capability belief

- Our people don’t have \$
- Orthodox people not well off
- Current system too ingrained; impossible to change

H. Context beliefs

- Awful Economy
- Depressed region

I. Short Term Wins

- Attendance at parish stewardship small group info sessions
- Get parish council to buy, pledge first & make meaningful increases in giving. In
- Increase use of fund raising for charity

Parishes Can Become More Vibrant

Excerpt from Parish Warden Report

23

“Today we think and act differently as a parish community.

No longer are we **focusing on our existence** as a parish, but instead on **what kind of a parish we should be**.

Father ____ made the observation that we **no longer spend a day selling cookies** to help our finances but **now spend two days to provide a weeks worth of groceries** and gifts to over 200 families.

We now think less in terms of what we have accomplished but instead are thinking of how much more we can do. Can we support food efforts for 300 families, 400 families or more?”

The parish grew by 22 persons between 2007 and 2011.

Good Stewardship Practices

24

1. Ask good questions
2. Limit fund raising
3. Ask effectively
4. Need a method
5. Thank often
6. Council commitment
7. Stewardship ministry
8. Forward vision
9. Tailor communication to motivation
10. Start “new” and young
11. Personal contact
12. Identity >> Trust >> Gratitude >> Love

“Potential members will quickly perceive in a church whether they are wanted merely to keep a leaking ship afloat or whether they are being invited to join the crew of a ship that is on a course & pursuing an important mission.”

David Ray *“Small Churches are the Right Size”*

Communicating Your Parish – Ten Tips

25

Premise...

*“Just as individuals benefit from learning listening skills for personal relationships & speaking skills for oral communication, **parishes benefit from considering implications of how and what they are they are communicating.***

In age of rapidly proliferating communication technologies, this task of evaluation is more urgent.”

1. Website is front door –not Facebook- act (on website and in church) like you expect visitors!
2. 2 audiences –external & internal
3. Keep it up to date
4. Basics easy to find
5. Limit “parish history”
6. Avoid insider lingo
7. Use Photos – people; Don’t show empty church
8. Deal with stereotypes
9. “For inquirers...”
10. Locate on map

Strengths Can Be Weaknesses

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“The strong commitment of members to one another, to kinfolk’s ties, to the meeting place and concept of one big family with modest program emphasis **tend to reinforce the single cell nature of the church.** When combined with the intergenerational nature of a small church these forces tend to enhance the caring nature of fellowship *at the cost of potential growth.*”

These unifying principles tend to make the small church exclusionary. This tends to make it hard for small church to reach, attract and assimilate new members (unless they have kin). The more closely knit the fellowship the more difficult it is to achieve growth.”

Lyle Shaller

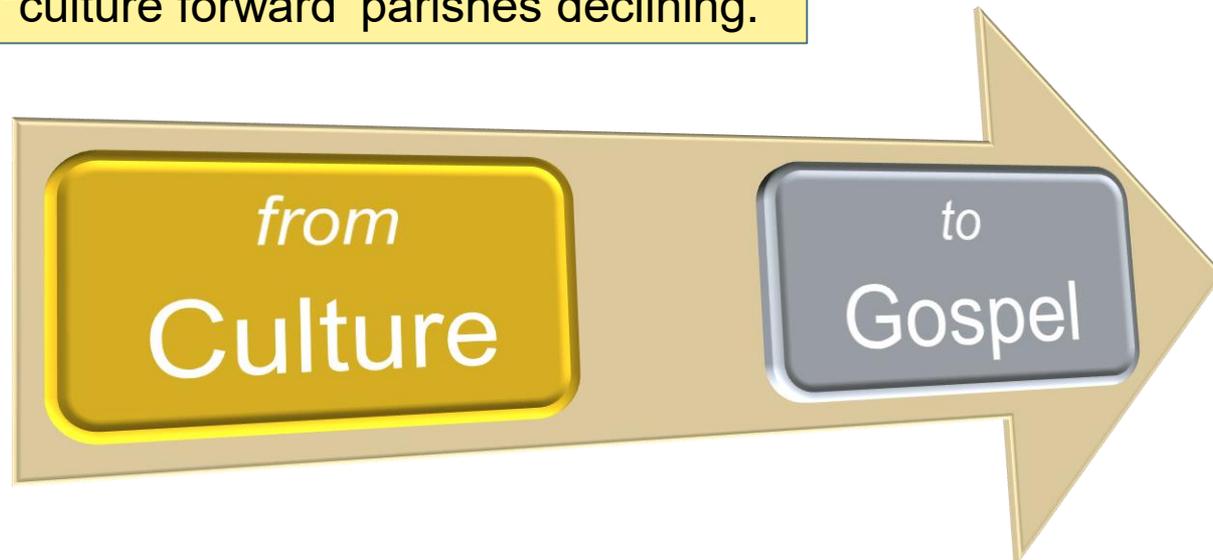
The Small Church is Different

1982

The Transition

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- Culture lasts 1-3 generations
- ‘Culture first’/ “culture forward’ parishes declining.



“Acquiring a vision of life as a vibrant parish rather than a recycle of previous experiences. Overcoming old attitudes about why they exist.”

A priest's description of key parish challenge

The greatest danger is the illusion that all is well.” *C.S. Lewis*

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Drivers of Growth are Under Your Control

29



The Future of Religion in a Secular Age...

30

“..if you are looking for a message, an inspirational idea, some top-up fuel for your intellectual receptacle—well, there are entire cultural industries happy to provide that. Why would you need the church? You can watch Ellen or Oprah or a TED talk.

But what might stop people short—what might truly *haunt* them—will be encounters with religious communities who have punched skylights in our brass heaven. **It will be “traditional” Christian communities—drawing on the wells of historic, “incarnate” Christian worship**, with its smells and bells in all its Gothic strangeness — who embody a spirituality that carries whiffs of transcendence that will be strange and therefore all the more enticing. I make no claims that such communities will be large or popular mass movements. But they will grow precisely because their ancient incarnational practice is an answer to the diminishing returns of “excarbate” spirituality.”

From an Interview with author *James KA Smith*