

2019 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

turning
the page

A stylized graphic of an open book with a blue square overlay containing the text 'turning the page'. The book's pages are depicted as curved, layered lines in shades of blue and white, creating a sense of depth and movement. The blue square is positioned in the center, with the text 'turning' in a light blue font and 'the page' in a white font. To the right of the text, there is a white graphic element resembling a folded page or a stylized 'L' shape.

DECEMBER 9-10 | NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

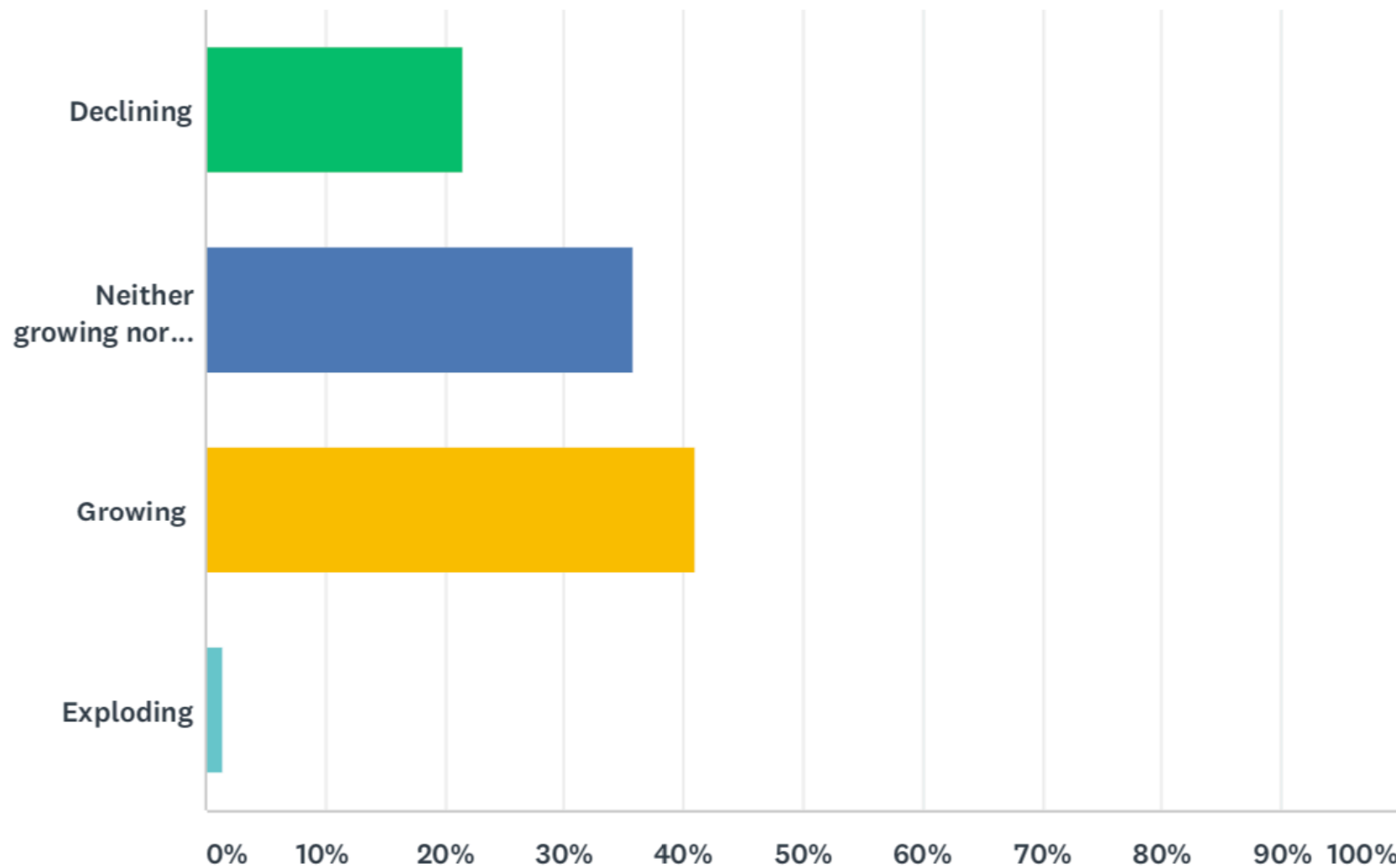


Present Challenges and Future Potential:

Lessons From Hezekiah | 2 Chronicles 28-32

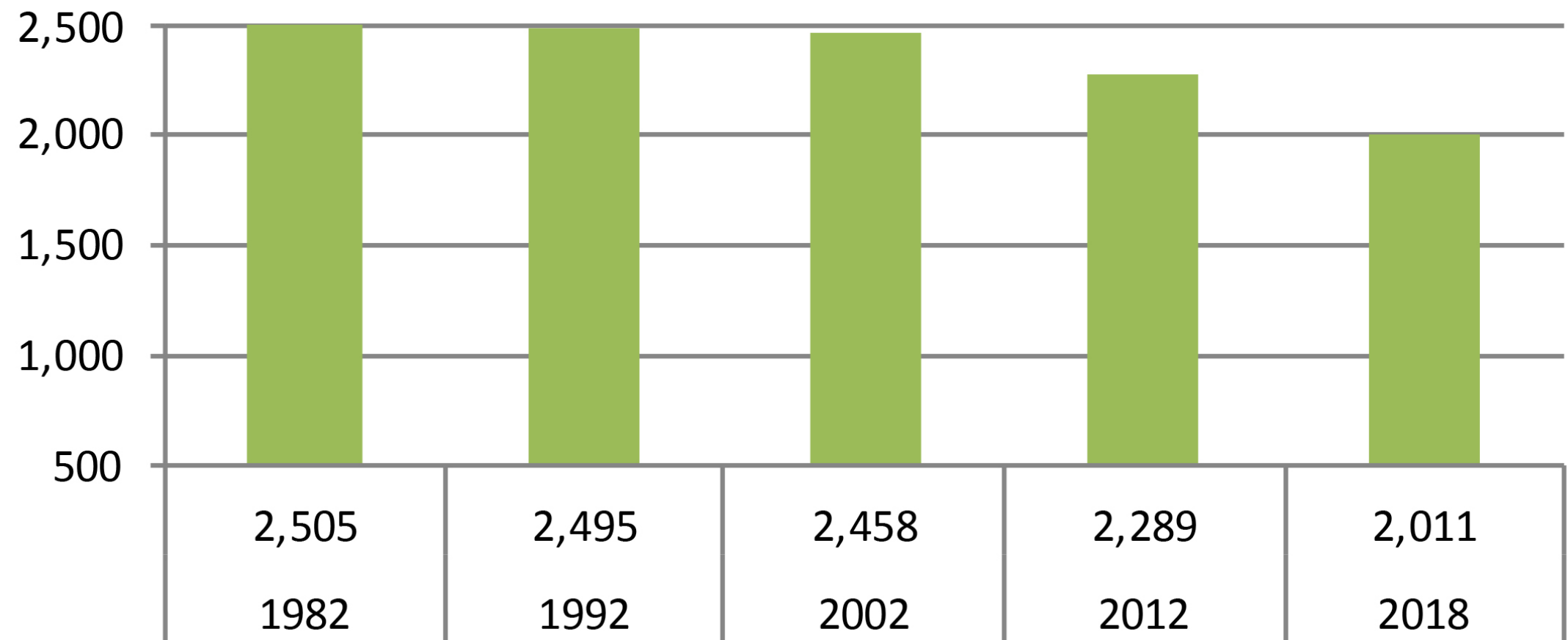
Q18 Which of the following best describes your church?

Answered: 319 Skipped: 4



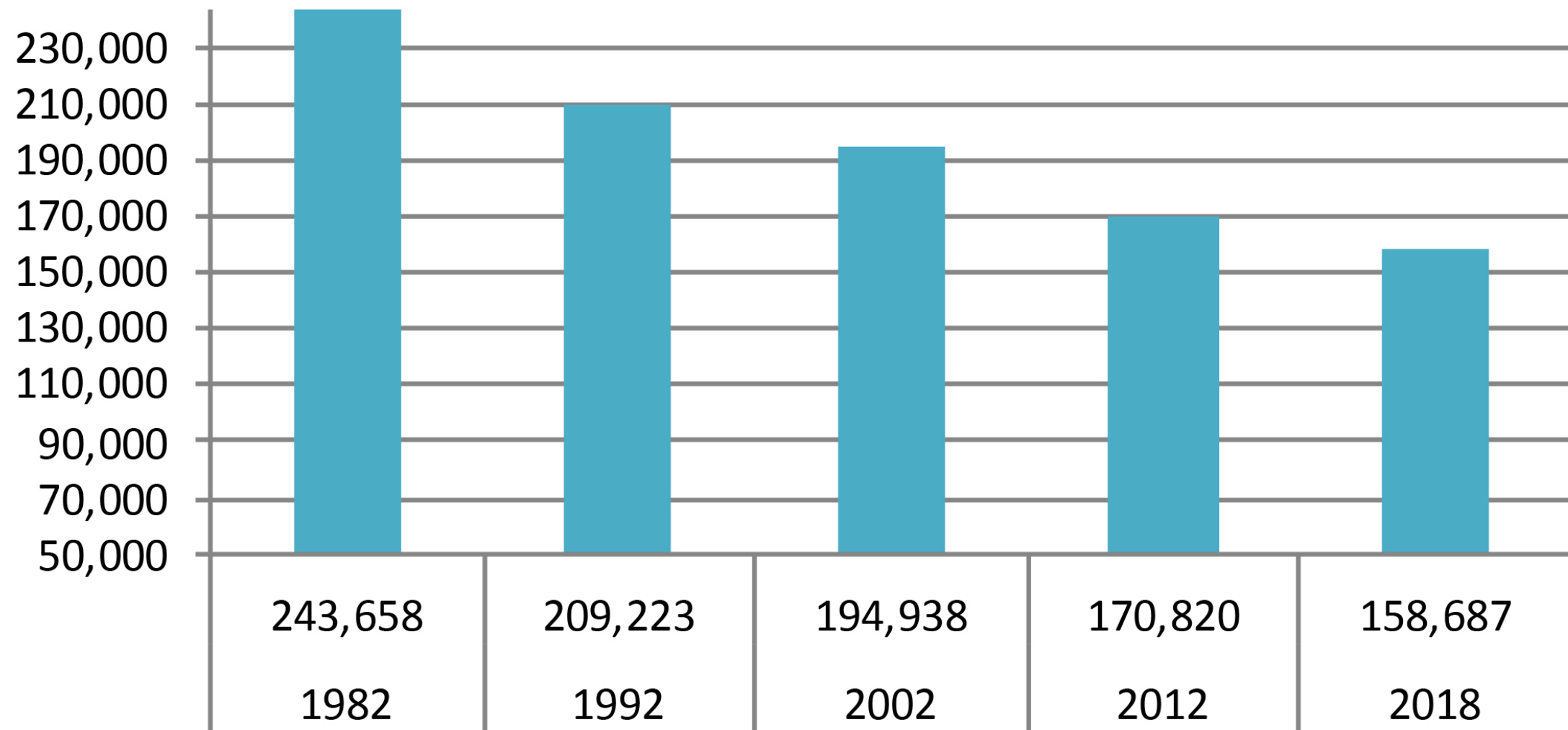
Present Challenges

NAFWB Churches



Present Challenges

NAFWB Membership



Present Challenges



POLITICS APRIL 18, 2019

U.S. Church Membership Down Sharply in Past Two Decades

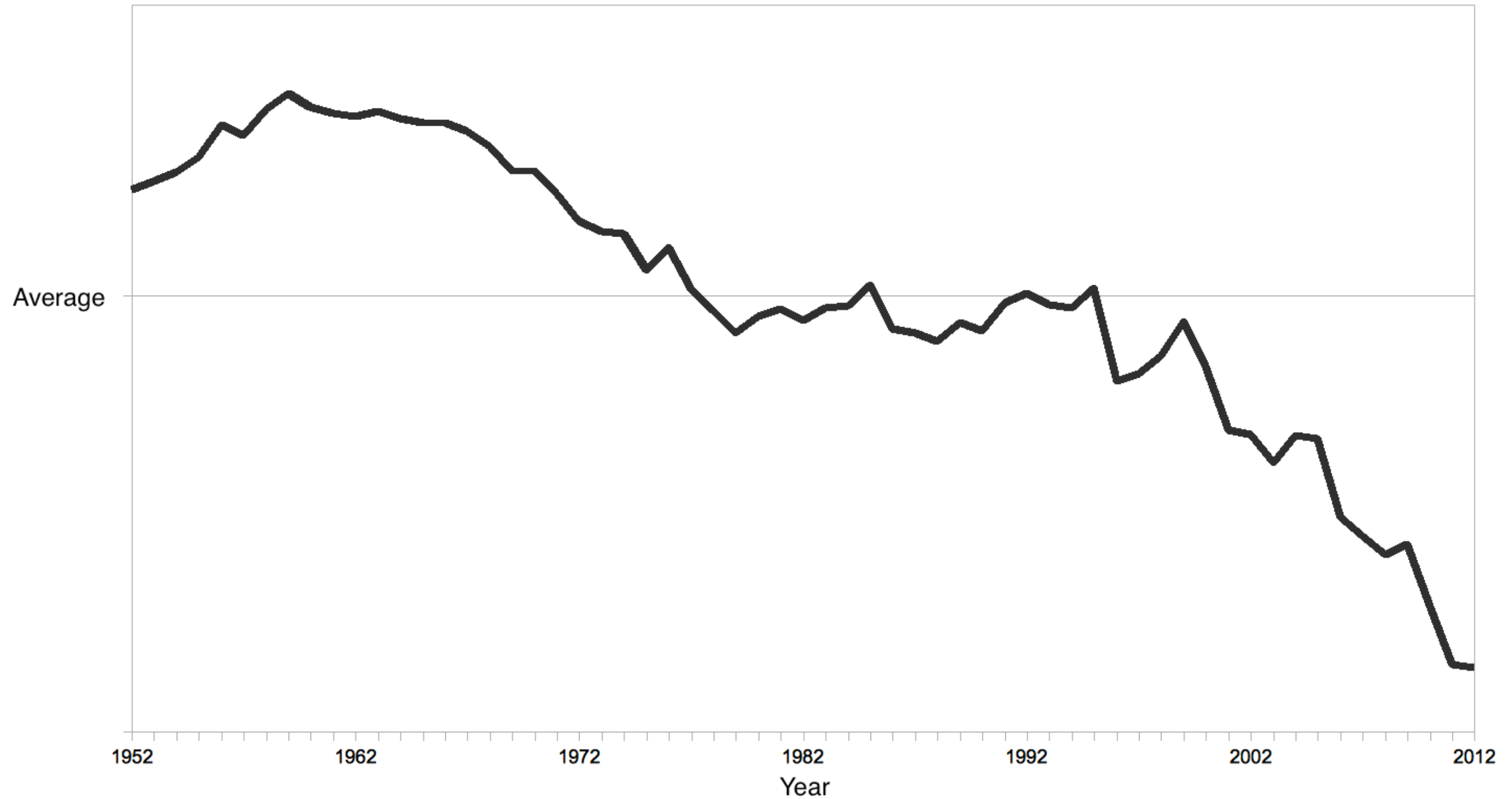
BY JEFFREY M. JONES



STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Half of Americans are church members, down from 70% in 1999
 - Most of the decline attributable to increase in percentage with no religion
 - Membership has fallen nine points among those who are religious
-

The Great Decline: 60 years of religion in America



Graph by Corner of Church & State, a Religion News Service blog
Source: Aggregate Religiosity Index, J. Tobin Grant. *Sociological Forum*.



**Present Challenges
and Future Potential:**

Lessons From Hezekiah | 2 Chronicles 28-32

Embrace **Orthodoxy**

He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

2 Kings 18:4

RELIGION

United Methodists edge toward breakup over LGBT policies

Under one scenario, many centrists and liberals would leave en masse to form a new denomination – a potentially complex endeavor.

April 20, 2019, 10:45 PM CDT

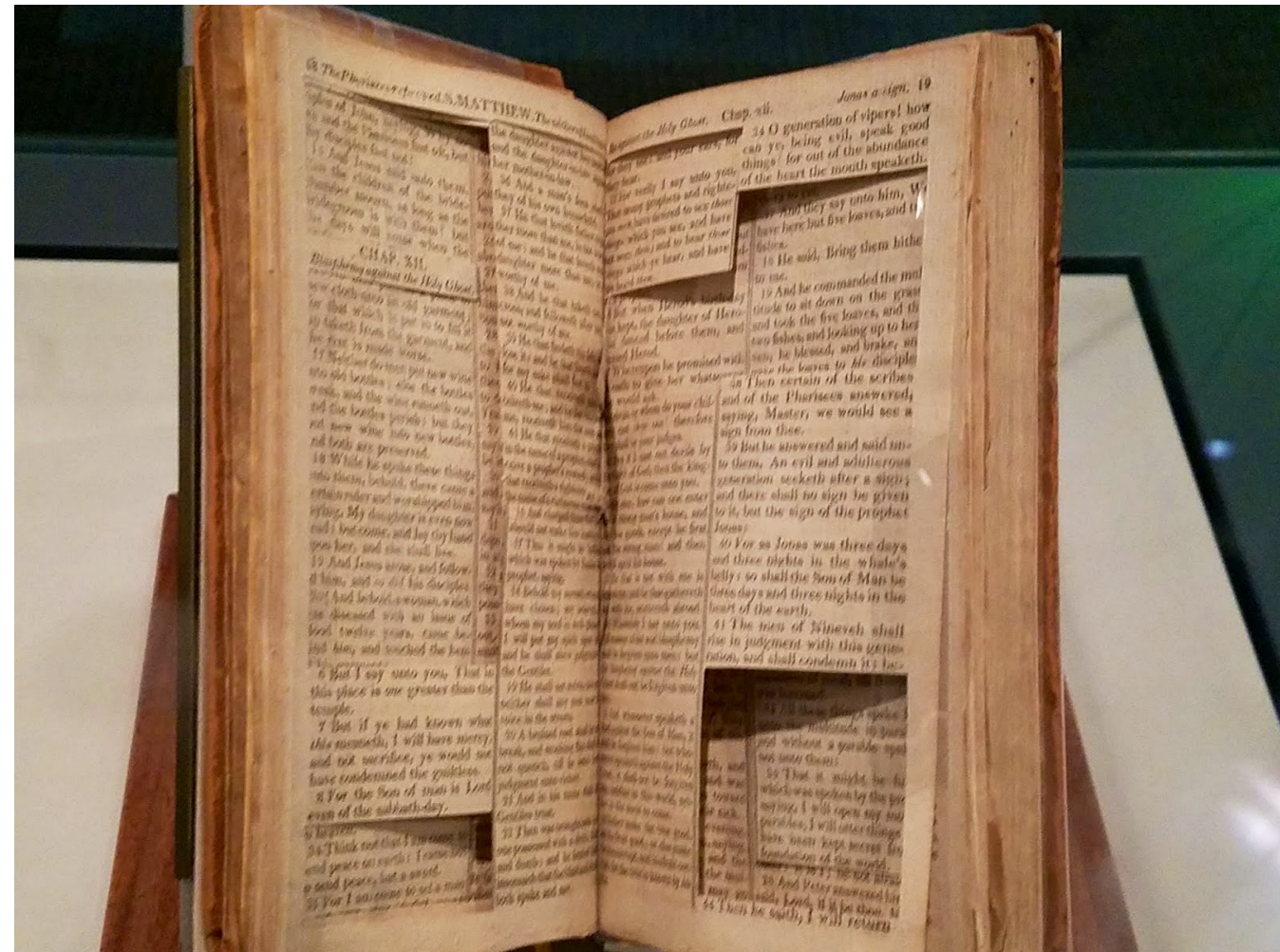
By The Associated Press

NEW YORK – There's at least one area of agreement among conservative, centrist and liberal leaders in the United Methodist Church: America's largest mainline Protestant denomination is on a path toward likely breakup over [differences on same-sex marriage](#) and ordination of LGBT pastors.

The differences have simmered for years, and [came to a head in February at a conference in St. Louis](#) where delegates voted 438-384 for a proposal called the Traditional Plan, which strengthens bans on LGBT-inclusive practices. [A majority of U.S.-based delegates opposed that plan](#) and favored LGBT-friendly options, but they were outvoted by U.S. conservatives teamed with most of the delegates from Methodist strongholds in Africa and the Philippines.



The
Life and Morals
of
Jesus of Nazareth
Extracted textually
from the Gospels
in
Greek, Latin
French & English.



Do we believe what the Bible says about conflict?

He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.

Proverbs 18:17

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

Matthew 18:15

Do we deal with talebearers biblically?

**He that goeth about as a talebearer
revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not
with him that flattereth with his lips.**

Proverbs 20:19

**A wicked doer giveth heed to false
lips; and a liar giveth ear to
a naughty tongue.**

Proverbs 17:4

Do we obey the “one another” passages?

**24 And let us consider one another to
provoke unto love and to good works:**

**25 Not forsaking the assembling
of ourselves together, as the manner
of some is; but exhorting one
another: and so much the more, as
ye see the day approaching.**

Hebrews 10:24-25

Free Will Baptist Church Covenant

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for church conferences, public worship, and the observance of the ordinances of the Gospel; nor fail to pay according to our ability for the support of the church, of its poor, and all its benevolent work.

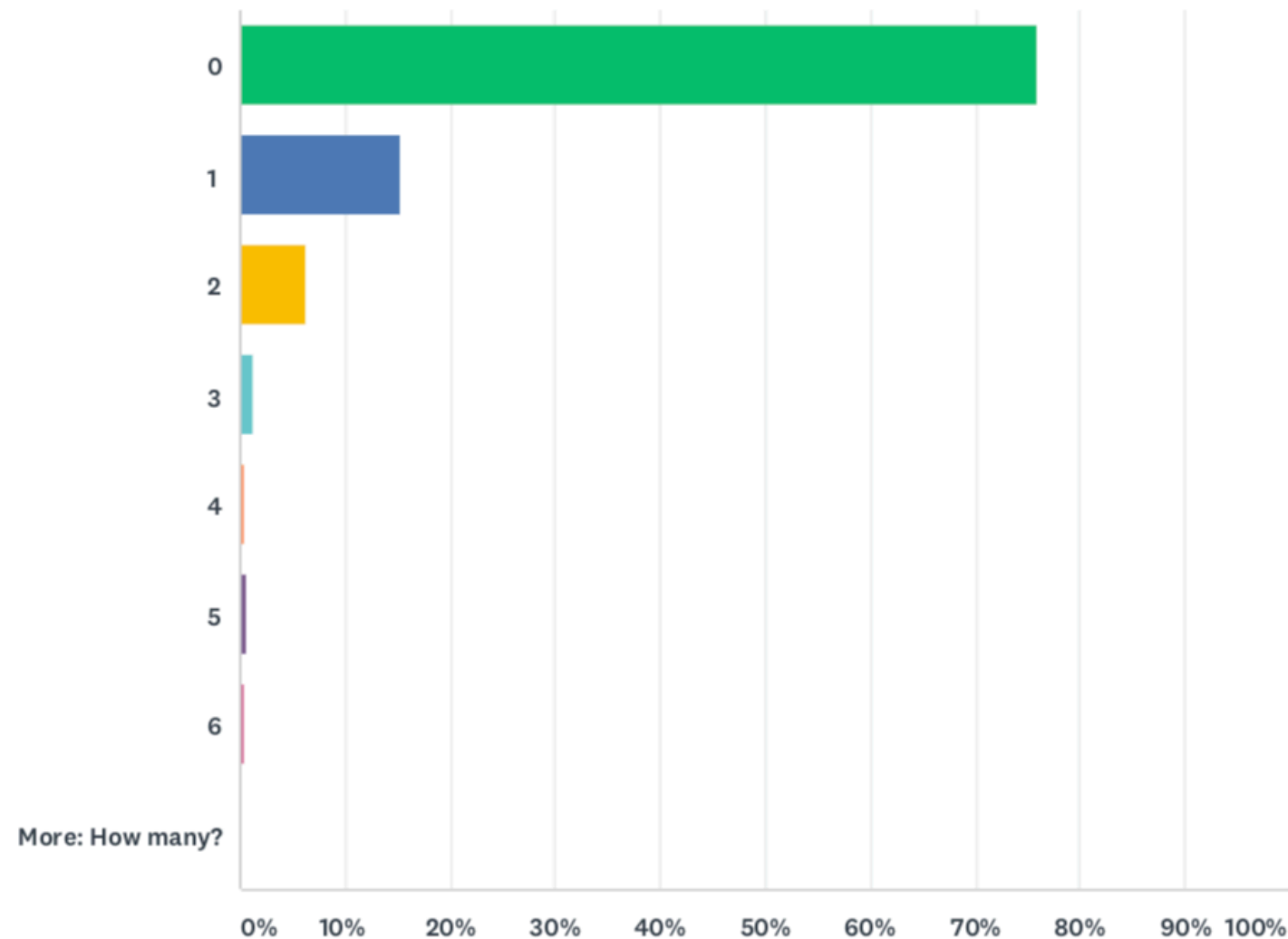
Free Will Baptist Church Covenant

We agree to accept Christian admonition and reproof with meekness, and to watch over one another in love, endeavoring to “keep the unity of the Spirit” in the bonds of peace, to be careful of one another’s happiness and reputation, and seek to strengthen the weak, encourage the afflicted, admonish the erring, and as far as we are able, promote the success of the church and of the Gospel.

2019 Free Will Baptist Church Survey

Q71 How many men/boys are in your church who have answered the call to preach who are not licensed to preach or ordained?

Answered: 316 Skipped: 7



Present Challenges

Do we believe what the Bible says about the criteria for pastors?

- 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife,
having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.**
- 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of
God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to
wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;**
- 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men,
sober, just, holy, temperate;**
- 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been
taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both
to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.**

Titus 1:6-9

5 He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.

6 For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses. 7 And the Lord was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.

2 Kings 18:5-7

Pursue Excellence

**My sons, be not now negligent:
for the Lord hath chosen you to stand
before him, to serve him, and that
ye should minister unto him,
and burn incense.**

2 Chronicles 29:11

**And in every work that he began in
the service of the house of God,
and in the law, and in the
commandments, to seek his God,
he did it with all his heart,
and prospered.**

2 Chronicles 31:21



**And the rest of the acts
of Hezekiah, and all his
might, and how he
made a pool, and a
conduit, and brought
water into the city, are
they not written in the
book of the chronicles
of the kings of Judah?**

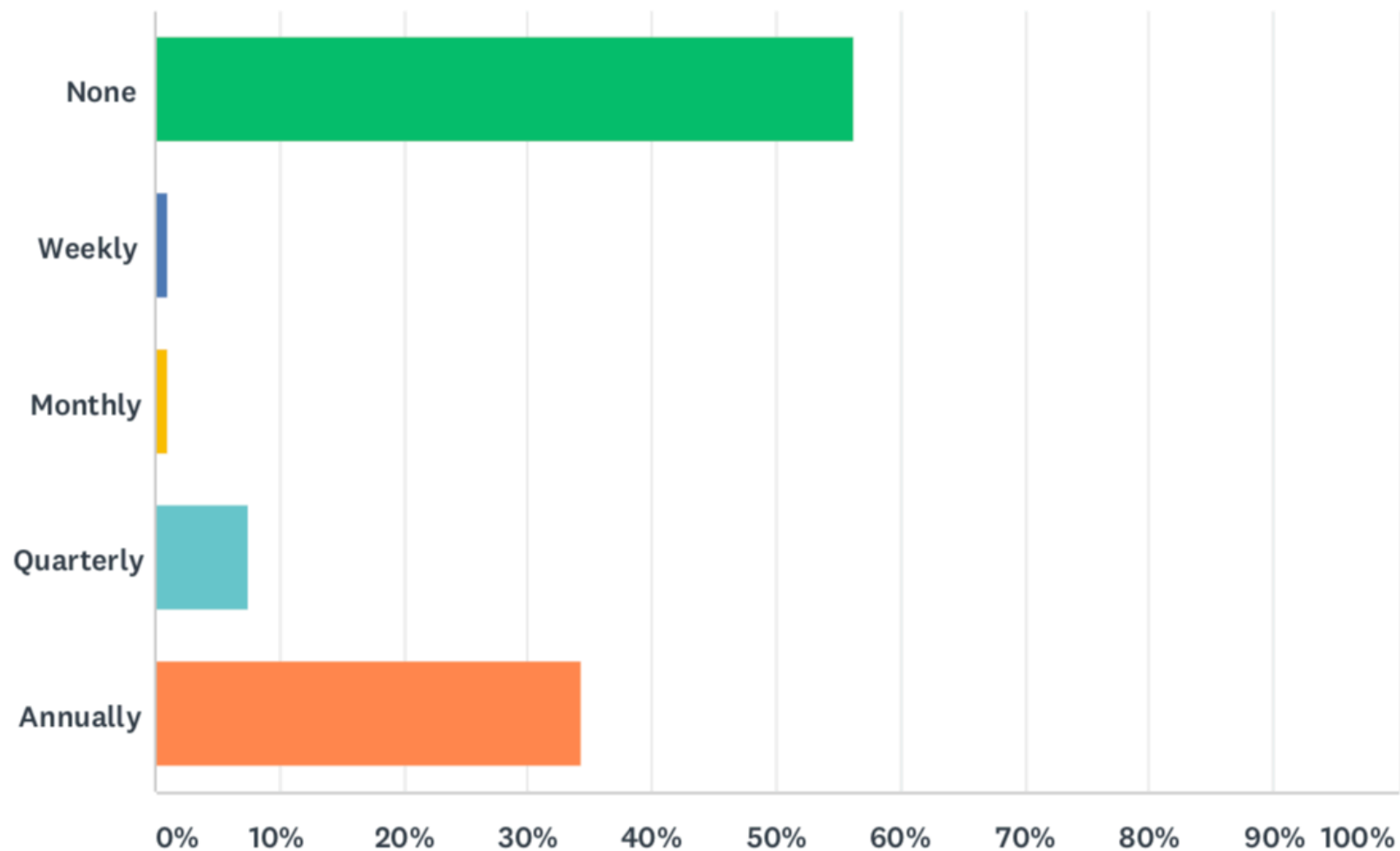
2 Kings 20:20

**Hezekiah's Tunnel
Daniel Wong, Newark, CA USA**

2019 Free Will Baptist Church Survey

Q35 How often does your church provide training for teachers and volunteers?

Answered: 318 Skipped: 5



Present Challenges

Future Opportunities

**11 And he gave some,
apostles; and some,
prophets; and some,
evangelists; and
some, pastors and
teachers;**

**12 For the perfecting
of the saints, for the
work of the ministry,
for the edifying of the
body of Christ.**

Ephesians 4:11-12





**1 After these things, and the establishment thereof,
Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered
into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities,
and thought to win them for himself.**

**2 And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib
was come, and that he was purposed to fight
against Jerusalem,**

**3 He took counsel with his princes and his mighty
men to stop the waters of the fountains which were
without the city: and they did help him.**

**4 So there was gathered much people together, who
stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran
through the midst of the land, saying, Why should
the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?**

2 Chronicles 32:1-4

SOMETIMES, CHURCHES
NEED A CHANGE...

REFRESH

All churches need periodic renewal, fresh faith, new focus, and sometimes, a complete overhaul. Together, the Executive Office and North American Ministries offer help to **REFRESH** struggling churches through:

Future Opportunities

**Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give
over yourselves to die by famine and by
thirst, saying, The Lord our God shall deliver
us out of the hand of the king of Assyria?**

2 Chronicles 32:11

**Then they cried with a loud voice in
the Jews' speech unto the people of
Jerusalem that were on the wall, to affright
them, and to trouble them; that
they might take the city.**

2 Chronicles 32:18

20 And for this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven.

21 And the Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword.

22 Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all other, and guided them on every side.

2 Chronicles 32:20-22

24 In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the Lord: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign.

25 But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 32:24-25

**Howbeit in the business of the
ambassadors of the princes of
Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire
of the wonder that was done in the
land, God left him, to try him, that he
might know all that was in his heart.**

2 Chronicles 32:31



Hezekiah showing off his wealth to envoys of the Babylonian king, oil on canvas by [Vicente López Portaña](#), 1789

And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

2 Kings 20:13

14 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.

15 And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

2 Kings 20:14-15

Focus on the Future

16 And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord.

17 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord.

18 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

19 Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?

2 Kings 20:16-19

Choose **Wisely**



Hezekiah showing off his wealth to envoys of the Babylonian king, oil on canvas by [Vicente López Portaña](#), 1789

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[2 Kings 20:13](#)

Know the importance of seemingly unimportant decisions.



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[2 Kings 20:14-15](#)

Nancy T. Ammerman

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[Curriculum Vitae](#)

BIO AND RESEARCH

Nancy T. Ammerman is Professor of Sociology of Religion in the Sociology Department of the College of Arts and Sciences and in the School of Theology.

Dr. Ammerman is at work on a book developing a sociological theory of "lived religion." It builds on a growing body of research, including her 2013 book, *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes: Finding Religion in Everyday Life*, (Oxford University Press), which documents the way religion and spirituality operate across the many domains of daily lived experience, as well as her edited 2006 book *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives* (Oxford University Press).

Earlier in her career, Dr. Ammerman spent many years studying congregations. Her 2005 book, *Pillars of Faith: American Congregations and their Partners* (University of California



Professor Nancy T. Ammerman

THE Christian Century New life for denominationalism

by Nancy T. Ammerman

ON THE CUSP of the 21st century, a strange thing is happening. Congregations—not all, but a noticeable number—are choosing to highlight their denominational particularities. While for some this might not seem so strange, for much of the 20th century highlighting denominational differences has been considered by many to be somewhat suspect. Early in the century, H. Richard Niebuhr wrote, "Denominationalism thus represents the moral failure of Christianity. . . . Before the church can hope to overcome its fatal division it must learn to recognize and to acknowledge the secular character of its denominationalism." Despite whatever good sectarian revivals may do at renewing the church, he condemned divisions based on denomination because the denominations were laden with ethnic, racial and class-based divisions.

Perhaps out of repentance, and perhaps out of ecumenical idealism, many 20th-century Protestants were moved to join Niebuhr in portraying denominationalism as an evil to be overcome. Ironically, at the same time that formidable denominational bureaucracies were being constructed, the theological, ritual and social practices that sustain a distinct religious tradition were being eroded.

That erosion was coming both from within and from without. Not only were theologians and preachers often

sponding to last summer's concordat between Episcopal and Lutheran churches, he treated his radio audience to an extended ballad on Lutheran culture.

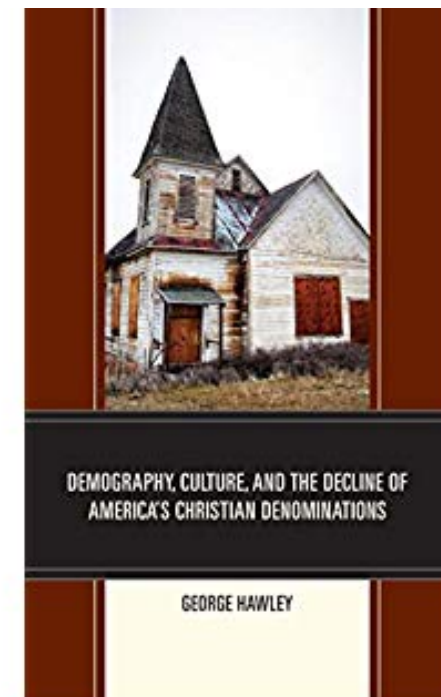
I was raised in Iowa, went to Concordia,
Swedish, I'm proud to say.
Got a job at Lutheran Brotherhood,
And I never was sick one day.

We sit in the pew where we always sit,
And we do not shout Amen.
And if anyone yells or waves their
hands,
They're not invited back again.

We've got chow mein noodles on tuna
hotdish
And Jello with cottage cheese,
And chocolate bars and banana cream
pie,
No wonder we're on our knees.
This is the church where we sing Amen
At the end of every song.
The coffee pot is always on
Cause the meetings are three hours
long.

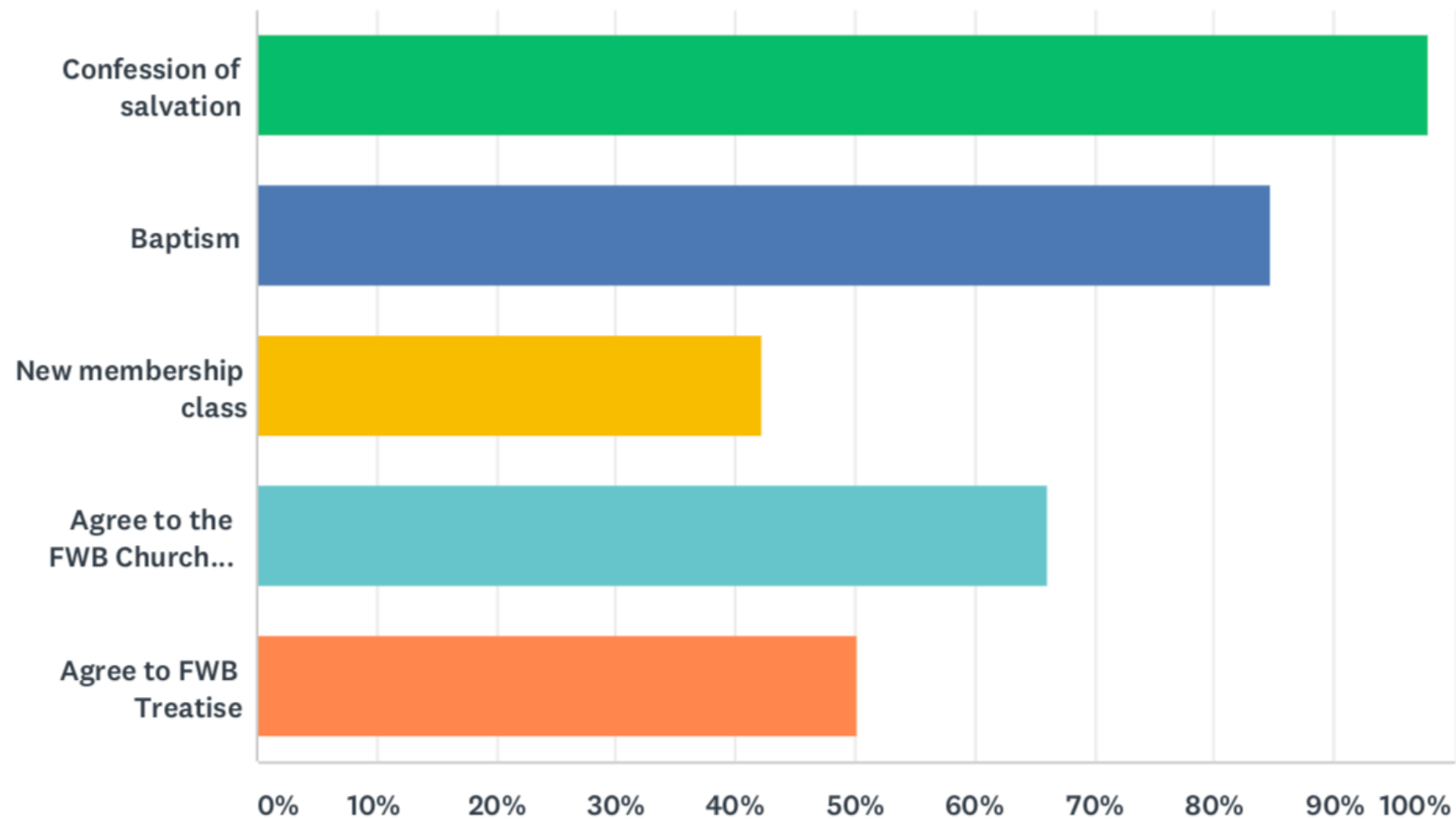
I'm a Lutheran, a Lutheran, it is my belief,
I am a Lutheran guy.
We may have merged with another church

**Denominational
traditions
are alive
in many places,
where people
are working
consciously
to make it so in
worship, mission
and education.**



Q15 Which of the following are required for new church members? (Check all that apply)

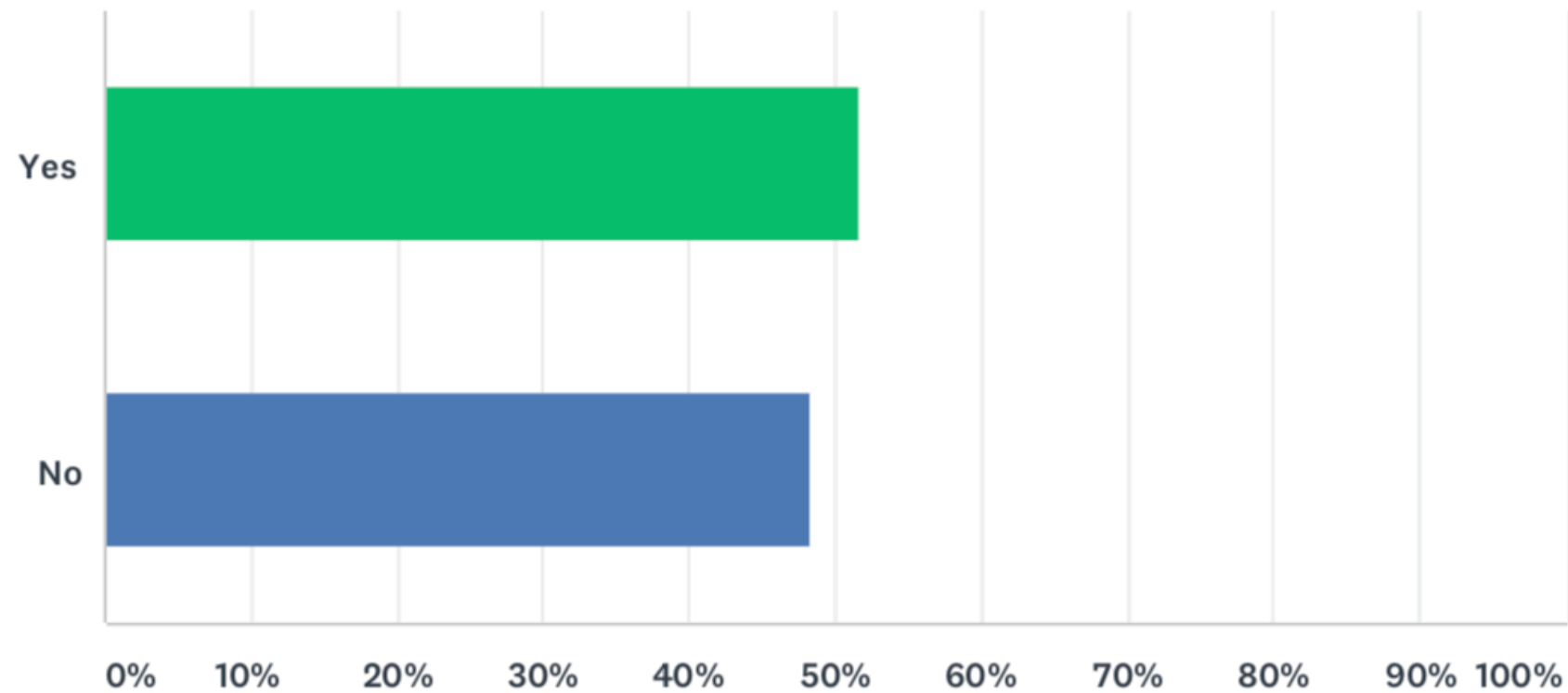
Answered: 319 Skipped: 4



2019 Free Will Baptist Church Survey

Q16 Does your church offer a class for new/potential members?

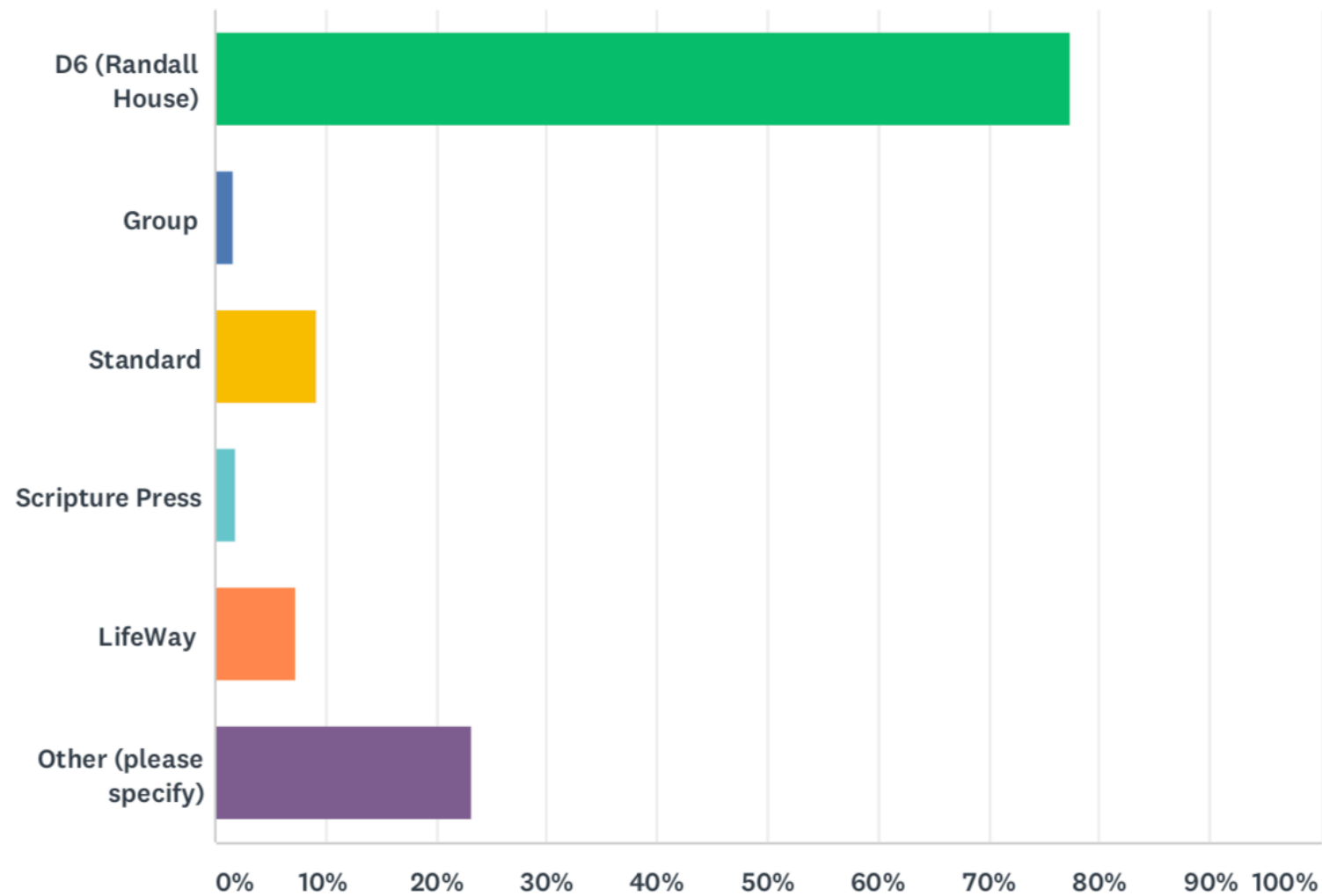
Answered: 319 Skipped: 4



2019 Free Will Baptist Church Survey

Q34 What Sunday School curriculum publisher does your church use for each of the following age groups?

Answered: 315 Skipped: 8



Disciple/Prepare Your Replacement

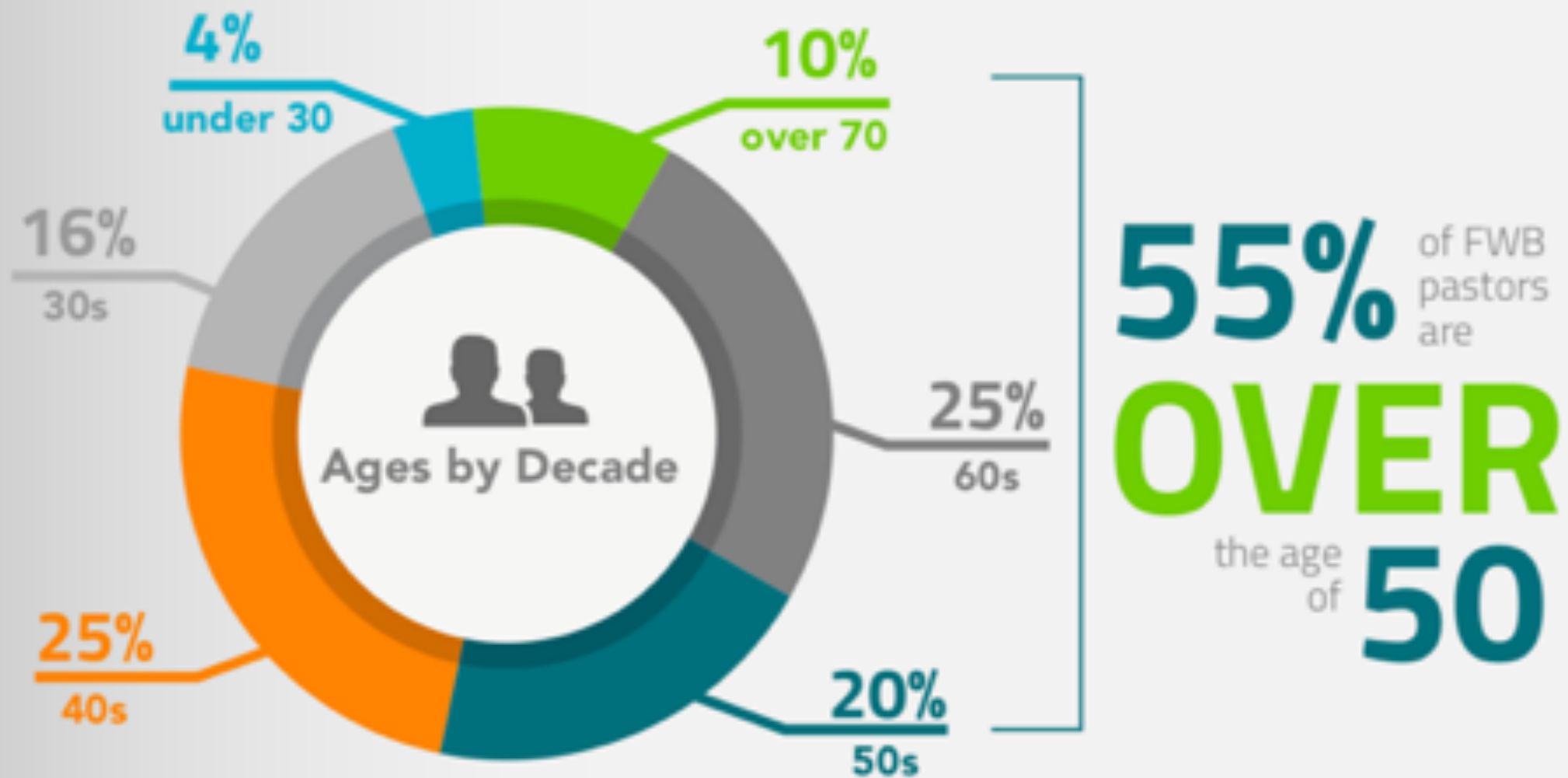
And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

2 Kings 20:6

1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah. 2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.

2 Kings 21:1-2

AGE DISTRIBUTION



Present Challenges

**But the priests were too few, so that they
could not flay all the burnt offerings:
wherefore their brethren the Levites did
help them, till the work was ended, and
until the other priests had sanctified
themselves: for the Levites were more
upright in heart to sanctify themselves
than the priests.**

2 Chronicles 29:34

Future Potential

HOPE!

14 And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord.

15 And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

2 Kings 19:14-15

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POLITICS
APRIL 18, 2019

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BY JEFFREY M. JONES

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

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- Most of the decline attributable to increase in percentage with no religion
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2019 Free Will Baptist Church Survey

Q18 Which of the following best describes your church?

Answered: 319 Skipped: 4

Church Status	Percentage
Declining	22%
Neither growing nor declining	36%
Growing	41%
Exploding	1%

NAFWB Churches

Year	Number of Churches
1982	2,505
1992	2,495
2002	2,458
2012	2,289
2018	2,011

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age Group	Percentage
under 30	4%
30s	16%
40s	25%
50s	20%
60s	25%
over 70	10%

55% of FWB pastors are **OVER 50** the age of

**Now therefore, O Lord our
God, I beseech thee, save
thou us out of his hand, that
all the kingdoms of the earth
may know that thou art the
Lord God, even thou only.**

2 Kings 19:19

Free Will Baptist Church Covenant

We will everywhere hold Christian principle sacred and Christian obligations and enterprises supreme; counting it our chief business in life to extend the influence of Christ in society, constantly praying and toiling that the kingdom of God may come, and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

**I will build my church; and
the gates of hell shall not
prevail against it.**

Jesus, Matthew 16:18b



**Present Challenges
and Future Potential:**
Lessons From Hezekiah

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BETTER TOGETHER PODCAST

Launching January 6
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