



Grace Chapel

Sharon Whitehead!  
&  
Mark MacDonald!

**1**

Take out your  
phone.

**2**

Enter phone number  
(417) 501-4673

**3**

Text your  
question(s)

Our expectation is that all interactions will be  
characteried by humility and mutual respect.



# OUR TEAM



**Gregg Caruso** – VCM Diagnostic Co-Director & Team Leader

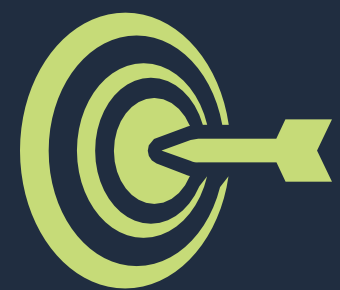
**Garry Abbott** – VCM Executive Director

**Bob Samsel** – VCM Diagnostic Specialist

**Dawn Samsel** – VCM Onsite Administrator



# Mission



## MISSION

To help churches thrive by cultivating clarity, purpose, and hope.





# Areas of Support

We offer three interrelated areas of support for churches:



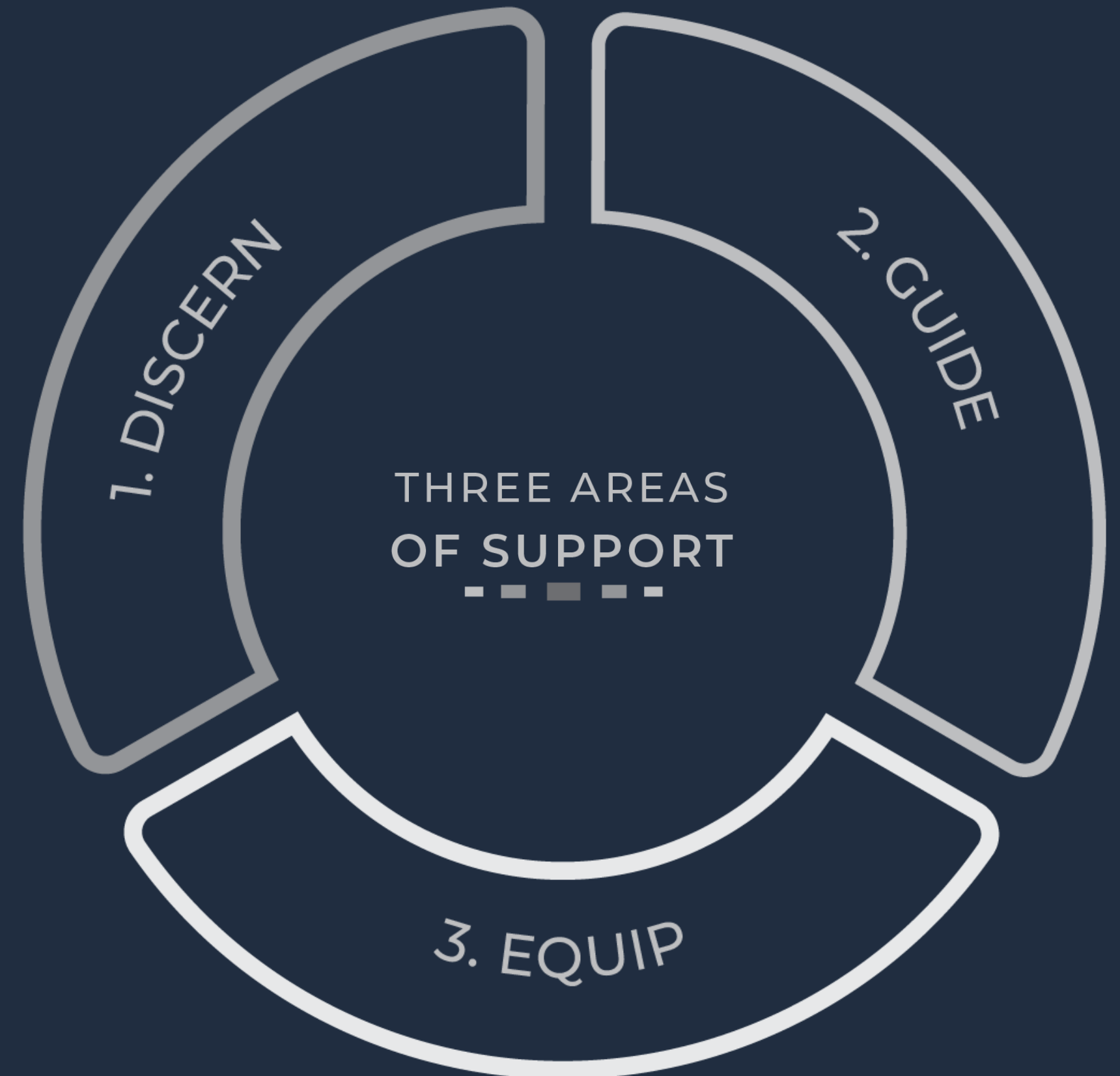
**Discern:** Diagnostic Assessment



**Guide:** Intentional Interim Pastors



**Equip:** Coaching and Resourcing





# Ministry Distinctive

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**We are distinct because we are pastors with pastor-hearts who have come together in our common mission because we care about the vitality and mission of the local church. We seek to facilitate a biblical process of inviting churches into healing.**



# Discern: Diagnostic Assessment

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# Discern: Diagnostic Assessment

We walk alongside churches that are seeking to hear what the Spirit is saying.

We listen to your congregation and provide:



A MIRROR of what your congregation is saying.



A MAP of practical steps to move your church forward towards health.



- **894** adults took the online survey, which produced **147 pages of data**.
- The Discernment Team was able to meet with **203** adults in input sessions including Pastor Emeritus Bryan Wilkerson and former Pastor Joshua Clough.

## Survey response rate of 60%

- Provides an accurate *mirror* of the current reality here at Grace Chapel
- To develop a *map* forward for God's preferred future.



**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

## Tenure Groups (how long people have attended)

- ❖ **New Attenders:** those who have attended your church for 5 years or less.
- ❖ **Intermediate Attenders:** those who have attended your church for 6 to 19 years.
- ❖ **Pioneers:** those who have attended your church for 20 years or more.

## Generational Groups

- ❖ **Gen Z:** people ages 15-28 (3%)
- ❖ **Millennials:** people ages 29-44 (18%)
- ❖ **Gen X:** people ages 45-60 (31%)
- ❖ **Boomers:** people ages 61-79 (43%)
- ❖ **Builders:** people 80+ (5%)



**STRENGTHS**

## 76-year Legacy of God's Faithfulness

"For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
His faithfulness continues through all generations."

--Psalm 100:5

## Multi-generational, Multi-ethnic, Multi-site

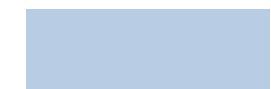
| Generational Pattern of New Attenders |      |      |      |       |        |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|-------|--------|
| Zers                                  | Mill | Xers | Bmer | Build | Totals |
| 14                                    | 84   | 77   | 66   | 3     | 244    |
| 6%                                    | 34%  | 32%  | 27%  | 1%    | 100%   |

- 50 unique cultures and ethnicities are represented across the Grace Chapel community
- Multi-site creates opportunity for intentional leader development, increased sharing of gospel, deeper impact

## The Word of God/Christ-Centeredness



| What do you value most?              | Overall | New | Inter | Pi's | Zer | Mill | Xer | Bmer | Build |
|--------------------------------------|---------|-----|-------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-------|
| Being spiritually fed                | 65%     | 55% | 66%   | 72%  | 36% | 46%  | 62% | 76%  | 76%   |
| Finding a sense of family/fellowship | 21%     | 28% | 21%   | 16%  | 54% | 31%  | 20% | 16%  | 14%   |
| Having my family's needs met         | 7%      | 11% | 6%    | 4%   | 7%  | 16%  | 9%  | 2%   | 2%    |
| Finding a place of service           | 7%      | 6%  | 7%    | 8%   | 4%  | 7%   | 9%  | 6%   | 8%    |

 30-50%

 Over 50%

## The Mission of God

“It is not so much that God has a mission for his church in the world, but that God has a church for his mission in the world.”

--Christopher Wright

## The Mission of God

- 75% feel visitors will feel welcomed (9% above database average)

## The Mission of God

| Assessed Ministry                                       | Rating |  | Participants Rating |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------|--|---------------------|
| Sunday Greeters/Ushers                                  | 82%    |  |                     |
| Nursery (worship services)                              | 81%    |  | 79%                 |
| Hospitality/Café                                        | 81%    |  |                     |
| Welcome Team                                            | 81%    |  |                     |
| Tech Team (Audio/Visual)                                | 81%    |  |                     |
| Elementary (Grades K-5, worship services)               | 79%    |  | 79%                 |
| Global Missions                                         | 78%    |  | 76%                 |
| Care Ministries (AA, Food Bank, Stephen Ministry, etc.) | 75%    |  |                     |

## The Mission of God

- 96% Christians should share their faith, 98% have non-Christian friends
- 88% willing to volunteer, 30% willing to spend 4 hours volunteering
- 71% value and are open to change

Grace Chapel, with a 76-year history of **seeing God's faithfulness**, is currently a:

- ❖ **multi-generational, multi-ethnic, multi-site community that**
- ❖ **values being Christ-centered, and**
- ❖ **rooted in the Word of God**

Grace Chapel, with a 76-year history of **seeing God's faithfulness**, is currently a:

- ❖ **multi-generational, multi-ethnic, multi-site community** that
- ❖ **values being Christ-centered, and**
- ❖ **rooted in the Word of God**

From that foundation, the congregation is willing to put God's word into action to join the mission of God by:

- ❖ **serving others,**
- ❖ **sharing the gospel, and**
- ❖ **opening doors for all kinds of people into welcoming ministry environments**



INTRO



**HINDERING FACTORS**



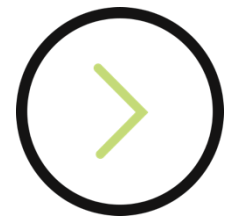
# Taproot & Branch Root Issues

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Taproot and Branch Root Issues identify the current threats to your church's vitality.

We use this language because it is **our intent to identify what we see as systemic issues** as opposed to surface issues.

The VCM Discernment Team, **sees a two-pronged taproot issue** as the primary hindering factor at this time.

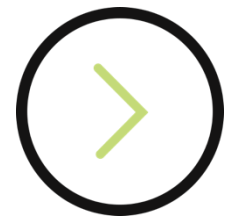


# Taproot Issue



The data and input sessions indicate that Grace Chapel has drifted toward a state of institutionalization including an unhealthy focus and dependence on the Senior Pastor as the primary driving force in expansion. This has resulted in several key areas of church life that require clarity.

*“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.” --Rev 3:20*



# What is Institutionalization?

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Institutionalization in a church occurs when organizational maintenance, traditions, personal preferences, and outdated systems begin to take precedence over the church's original mission.

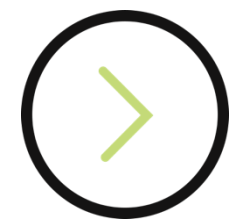


# Taproot Rationale: **The Mirror**

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1. Demographics
2. Priority of Evangelism
3. Low Scores in Spiritual Growth & Discipleship
4. Perceived Lack of Openness to Change
5. Disappointment with the Quality of Fellowship
6. Indicators of a Senior Pastor Focus

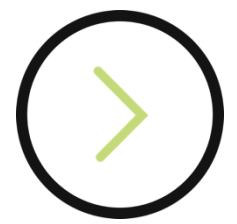


# Demographics 1) Average Age

The average age of survey respondents is 57 years.

Those over the age of 60 make up almost half (48%) of the survey respondents.

| Average Age |    |
|-------------|----|
| Overall     | 57 |
| Lexington   | 58 |
| Wilmington  | 54 |
| Watertown   | 56 |
| Foxboro     | 53 |
| Online      | 65 |



# Demographics 1a) Tenure Analysis



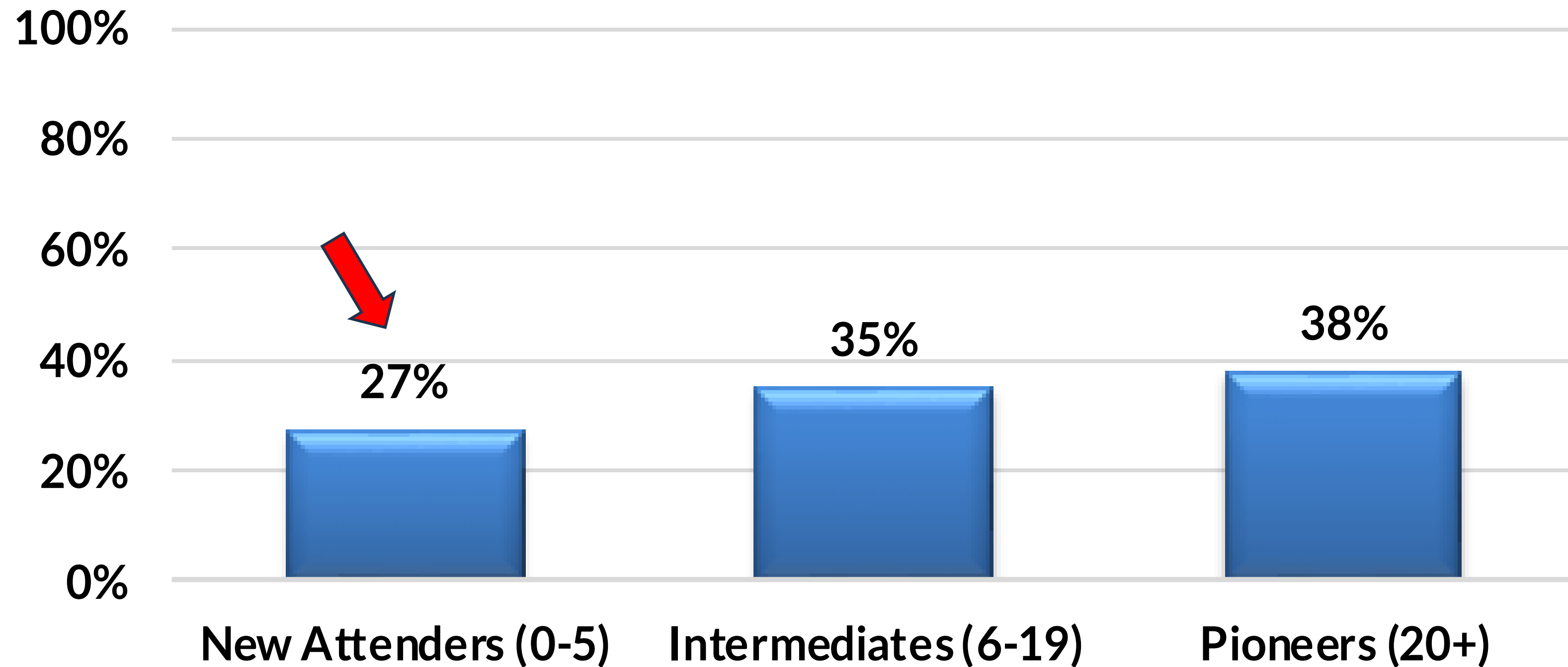
- ❖ **New Attenders** have attended 0-5 years
- ❖ **Intermediates** have attended 6-19 years
- ❖ **Pioneers** have attended 20+ years

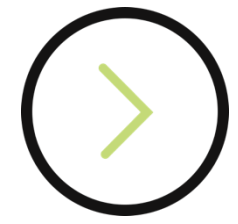
| Interpretive Guidelines                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><u><i>New Attenders</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 40% plus generally indicates a growing church</li><li>● Should be the largest of the three groups</li><li>● 30-39% usually indicates a plateaued church</li><li>● Less than 30% usually indicates a declining church</li></ul> |
| <p><u><i>Intermediate Attenders</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Ideal--smaller than New Attenders but larger than the Pioneer Group</li><li>● A low figure usually indicates a pattern of poor assimilation or history of strife especially if the smallest of the 3 groups</li></ul> |
| <p><u><i>Pioneer Group</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Ideal--less than 25% and smallest of the three groups</li><li>● Probable serious pathology if 40% or more</li></ul>                                                                                                            |



# Demographics 1b) Tenure Analysis

## Tenure Groups





# Priority of Evangelism

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# Priority of Evangelism

|                                                                                         | All | New | Inter | Pi's | Zer | Mill | Xer | Bmer | Build |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-------|
| Number who were not Christians when they came                                           | 57  | 11  | 17    | 29   | 5   | 3    | 15  | 30   | 4     |
| Still Seeking                                                                           | 5   | 3   | 1     | 1    | 1   | 0    | 2   | 2    | 0     |
| Number currently attending who came with their parents and have since become Christians | 7   | 0   | 1     | 6    | 2   | 1    | 2   | 2    | 0     |
| Net conversions from the world                                                          | 45  | 8   | 15    | 22   | 2   | 2    | 11  | 26   | 4     |
| Rate of Evangelism                                                                      | 5%  | 3%  | 5%    | 7%   |     |      |     |      |       |



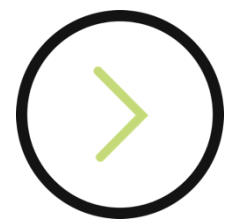
**Overall, the Rate of Evangelism is 5% and only 3% over the last five years.**

What the data reveals is that with each passing decade evangelism has become less of a priority. **This is one of the most significant indicators of encroaching institutionalization.**



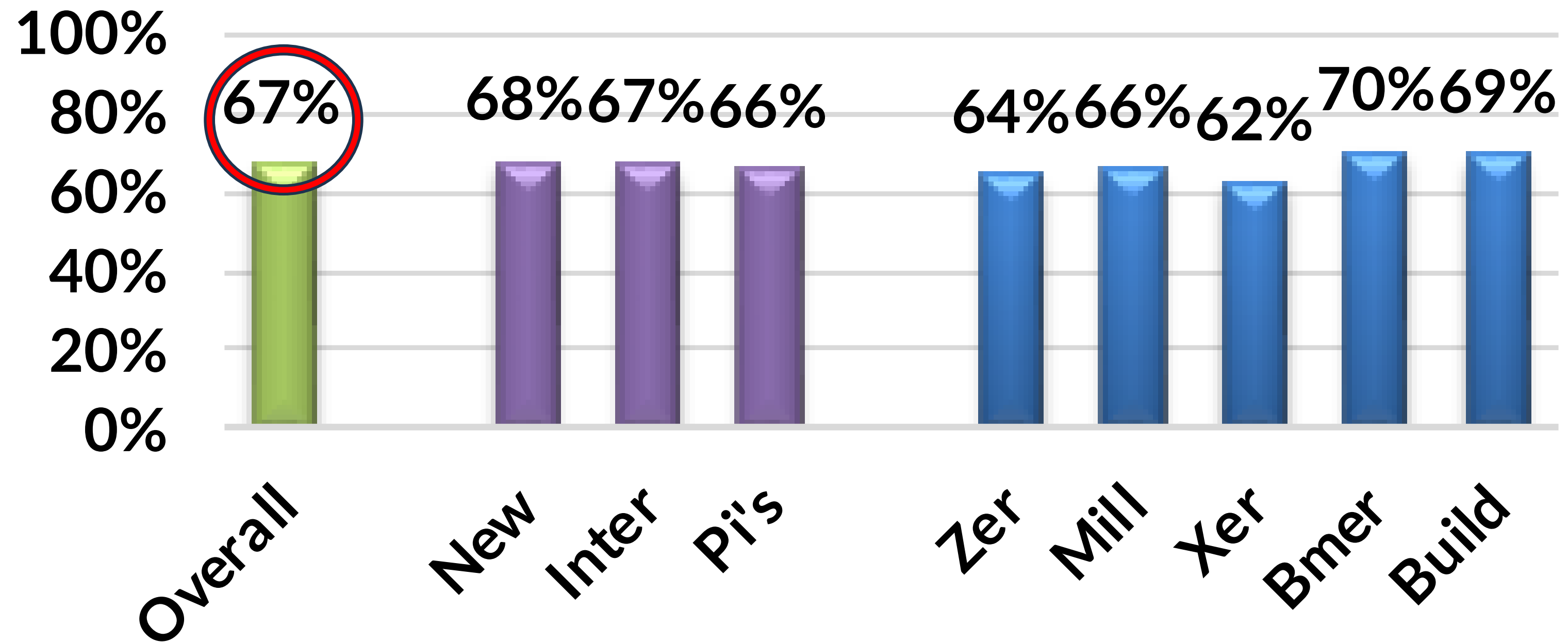
# Low Scores in Spiritual Growth

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# Low Scores in Spiritual Growth

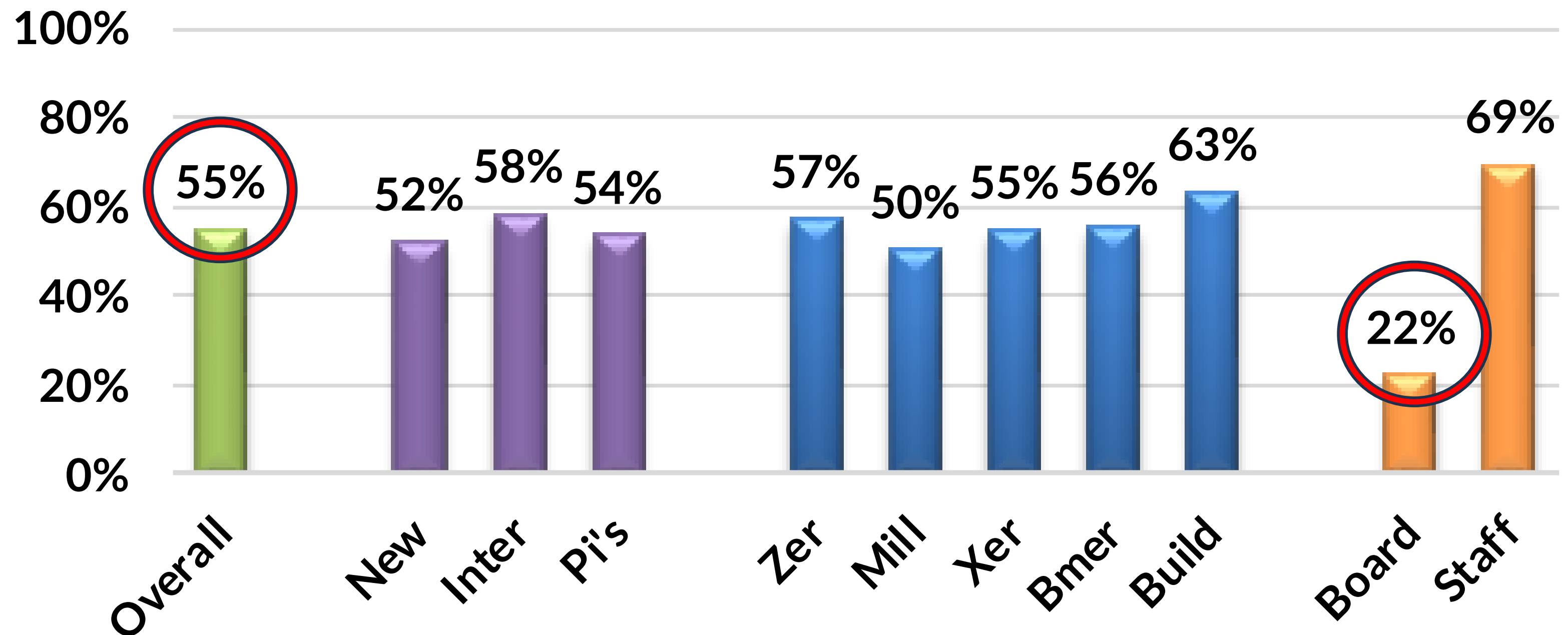
## Growing Spiritually





# Low Scores in Discipleship Awareness

## Intentional Discipleship





# Perceived Lack of Openness to Change

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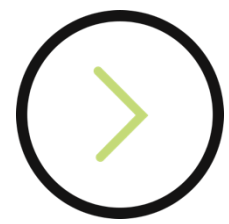




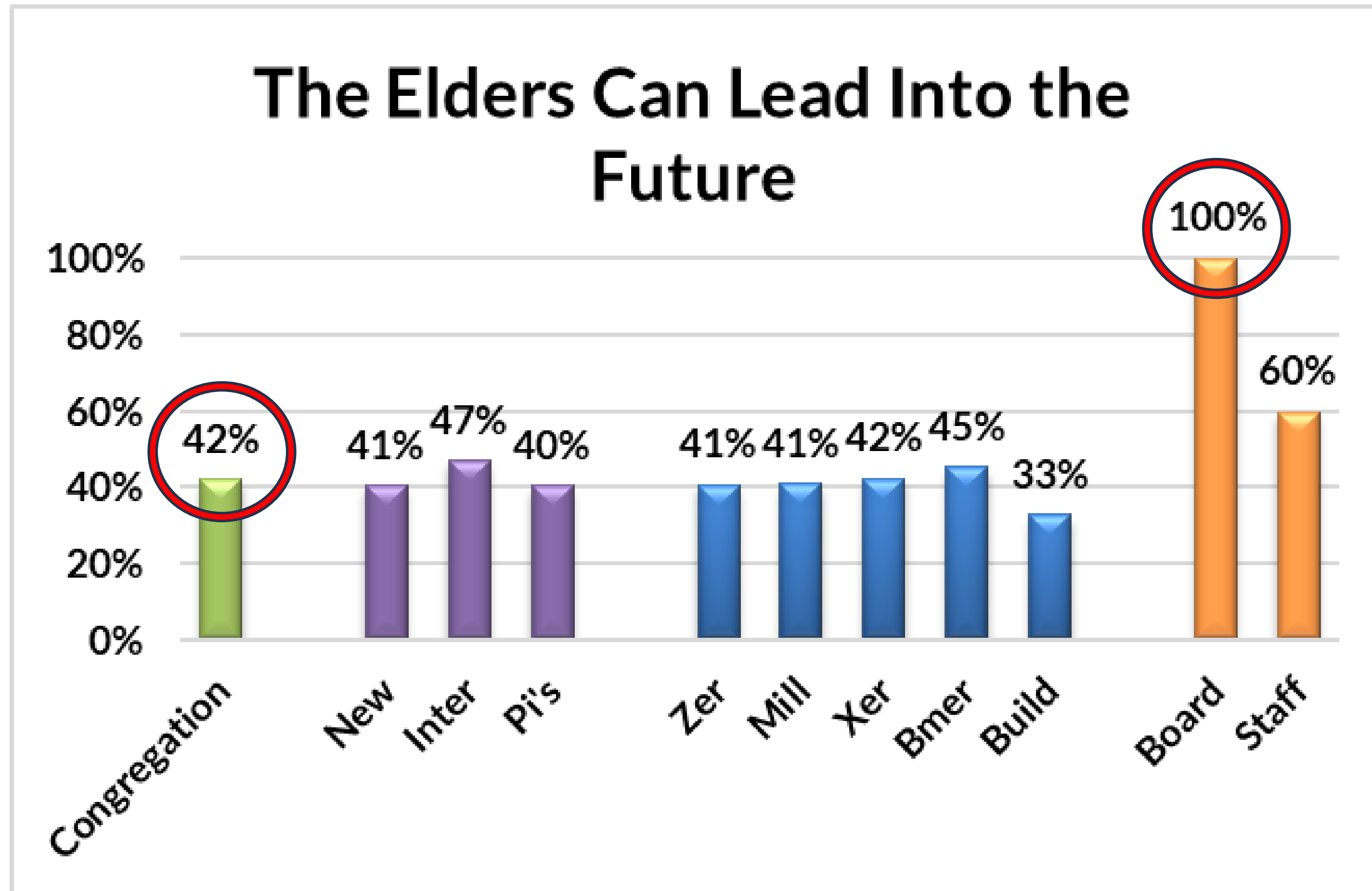
# Elders Open to Change?

|                 |                                                                                               | Congregation | Board | Staff |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------|-------|
|                 | Progressive Total                                                                             | 49%          | 100%  | 38%   |
| Radicals        | Eager to try a variety of new things                                                          | 11%          | 33%   | 7%    |
| Progressives    | Likely to ask if the change will bring new ministry opportunities that should not be missed   | 38%          | 67%   | 31%   |
| Conservatives   | Likely to be concerned how the change will affect the good things the church currently enjoys | 36%          | 0%    | 43%   |
| Traditionalists | Likely to ask, "Is this change necessary?"                                                    | 15%          | 0%    | 19%   |
|                 | Conservative Total                                                                            | 51%          | 0%    | 63%   |





# Elders Lead Into the Future?





# Disappointment w/ Quality of Fellowship

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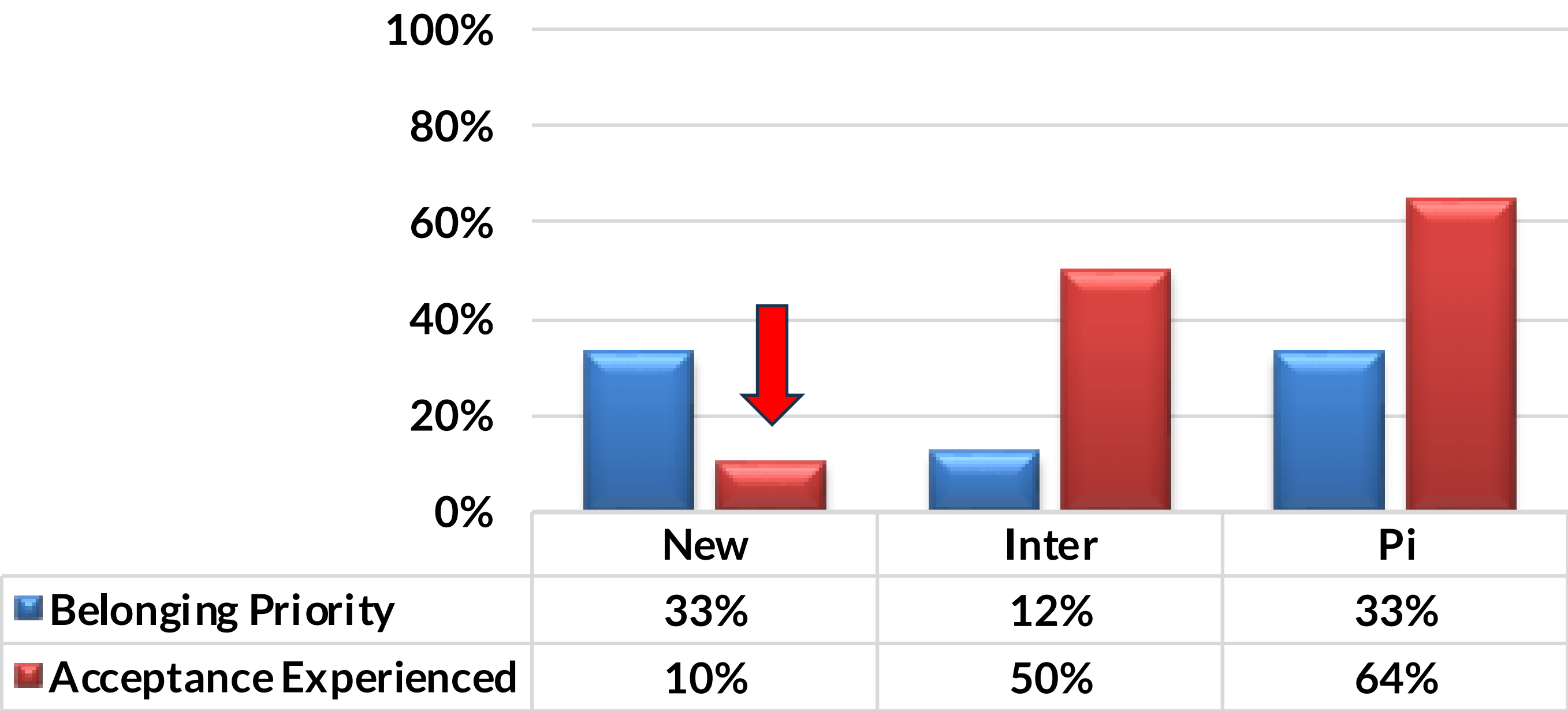




# Disappointment w/ Quality of Fellowship



## Experienced Acceptance and Belonging Among Tenure Groups (percentiles)

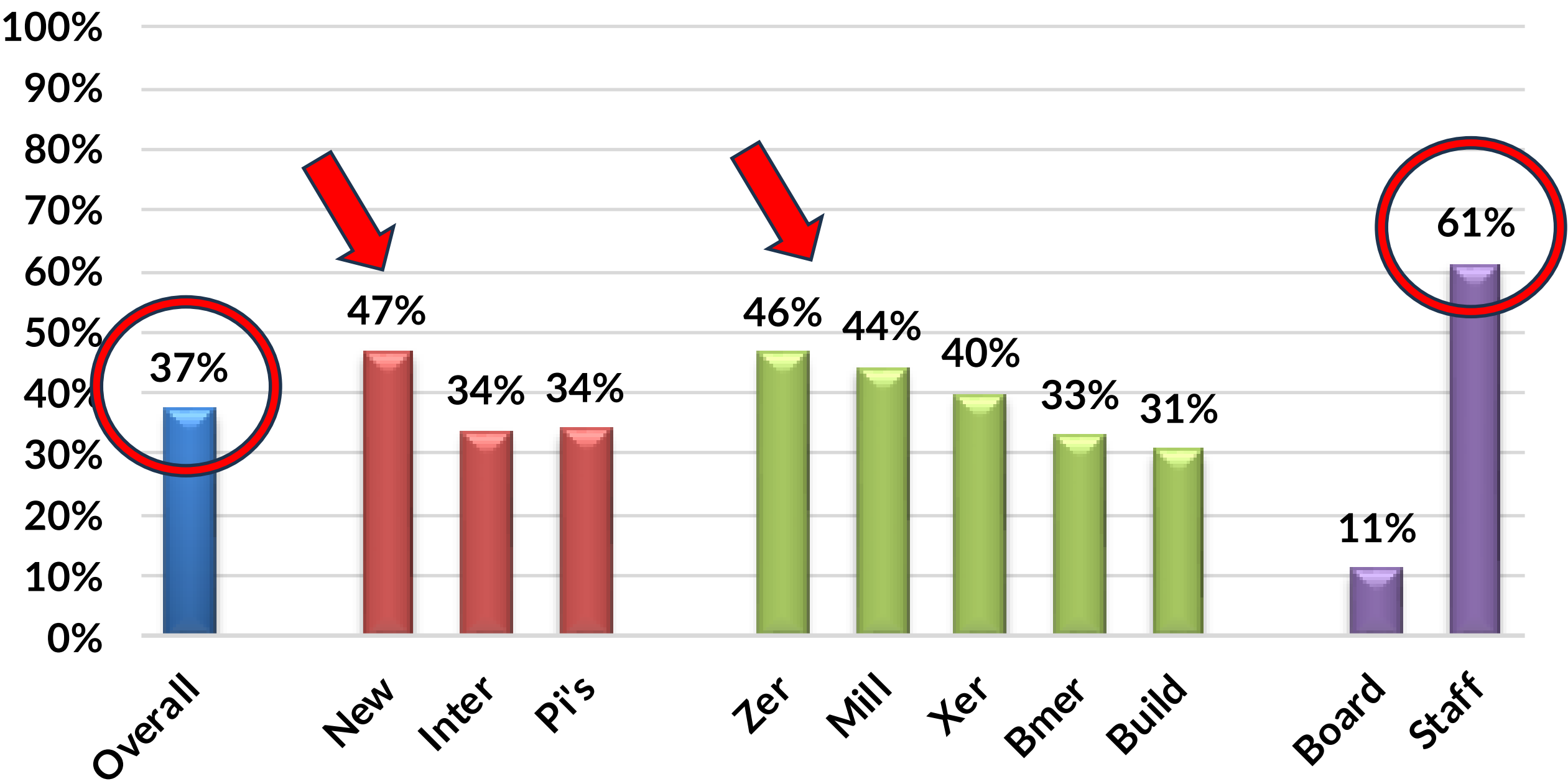


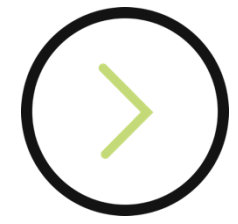


# Disappointment w/ Quality of Fellowship



## Disappointment in Experienced Quality of Fellowship





# Indicators of a Senior Pastor Focus

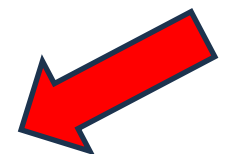
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# Indicators of a Senior Pastor Focus

| Keeps You Coming | Sermons | Fellowship |
|------------------|---------|------------|
| Overall          | 49%     | 25%        |
| Lexington        | 50%     | 22%        |
| Wilmington       | 48%     | 30%        |
| Watertown        | 48%     | 27%        |
| Foxboro          | 33%     | 40%        |
| Online           | 68%     | 16%        |





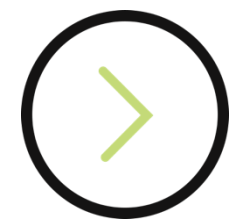
**A MAP FORWARD**



# A Map Forward

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- ❖ We've showed you a **MIRROR** of six indicators of encroaching institutionalization.
- ❖ We will now show you some key areas that will need further clarity.
- ❖ We will also attach **RECOMMENDATIONS** in order to disrupt institutionalization and boost church-wide vitality.
- ❖ We call this a **MAP** forward...



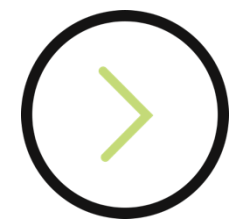
# The Call for Clarity

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“Clarity isn’t everything, but it changes everything.”

--Will Mancini



# Key Areas Needing CLARITY

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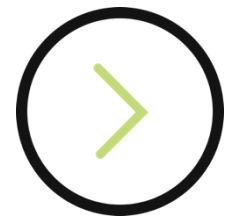
1. Leadership CLARITY
  - a. Staff Care and Development CLARITY
  - b. Elder Role CLARITY
2. Evangelism Strategy CLARITY
3. Communication CLARITY
4. Campus Strategy CLARITY



# 1. Leadership Clarity

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# 1. Leadership Clarity

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A very encouraging datapoint regarding leadership is that almost half (48%) of the survey respondents would welcome leadership training.

Therefore...

**Recommendation #1: Develop a Leadership Pipeline.**



# 1a. Staff Care & Development Clarity

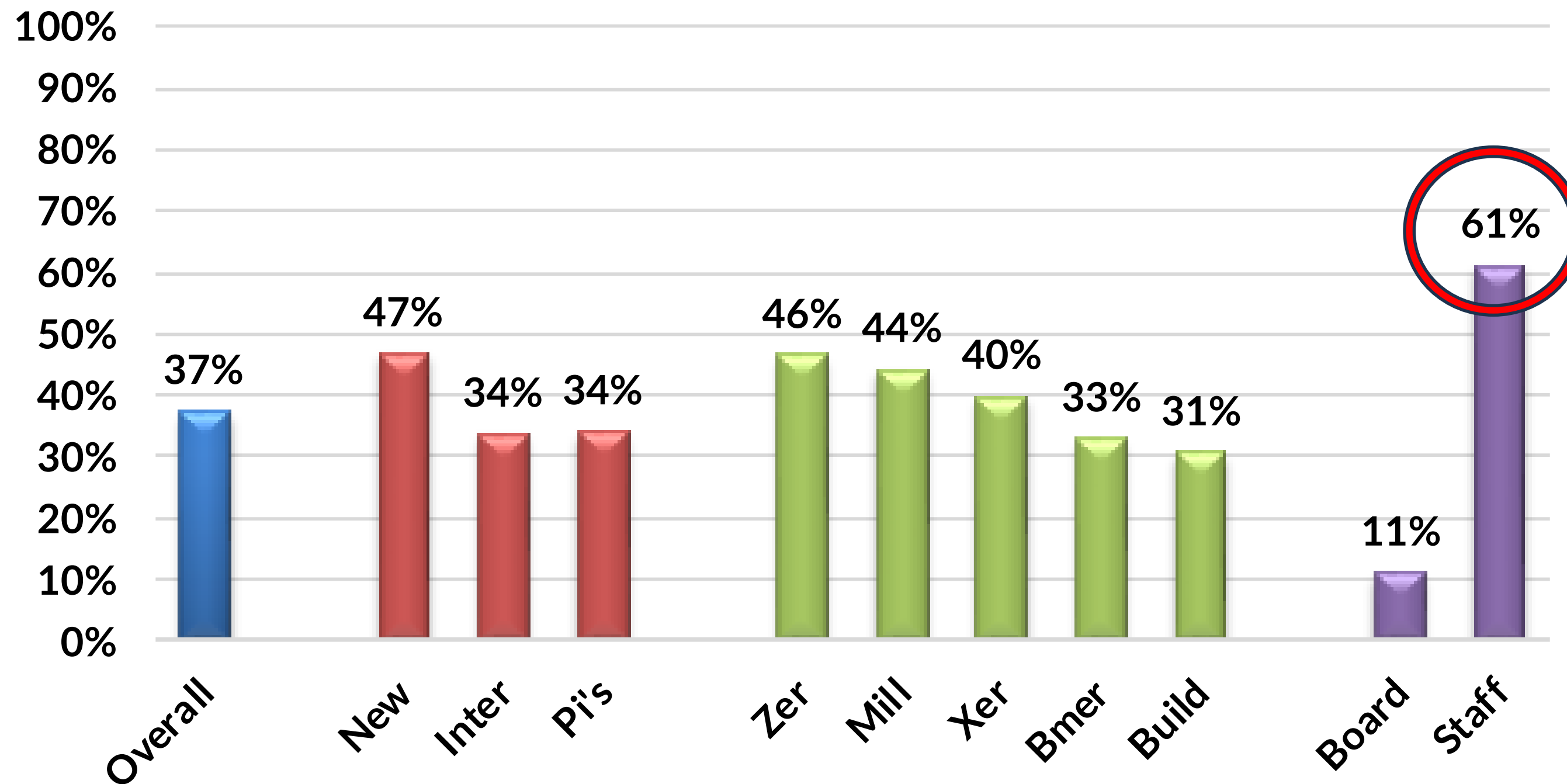
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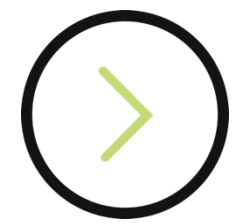




# 1a. Staff Care & Development Clarity

## Disappointment in Experienced Quality of Fellowship





## 1a. Staff Care & Development Clarity

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Therefore...

### Recommendation #2: Initiate Next Level Staff Care and Development.

Recognizing and investing in their pivotal roles will yield significant benefits including fostering an environment where staff feels seen, heard, valued, and supported.



## 1b. Elder Role Clarity

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## 1b. Elder Role Clarity

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As noted earlier, 42% believe the elders can lead into the future. There are two likely reasons for this:

1. The elders could be taking on congregational liability for the recent short-term pastorate.
2. There is, like in the vast majority of churches, the need for continuous improvement in church-wide communications.



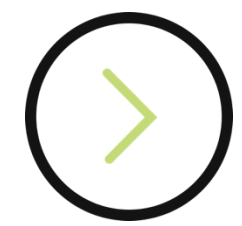
## 1b. Elder Role Clarity

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Therefore...

### Recommendation #3: Update Your Governance Structure.

This would be especially helpful before you conduct a search. The Elders will need to proactively strengthen the confidence in their leadership.



## 2. Evangelism Strategy Clarity

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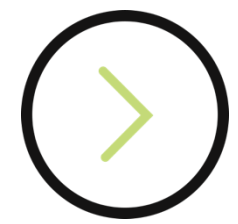


## 2. Evangelism Strategy Clarity

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As mentioned, the overall adult evangelism rate for survey respondents is **only 3%** over the last five years and **only 5% over the last 20+ years.**

Additionally, conversions at GRACE have steadily declined over the last 20+ years. Church Growth Proponents indicate that a 5% per year rate of evangelism is an excellent target.



## 2. Evangelism Strategy Clarity

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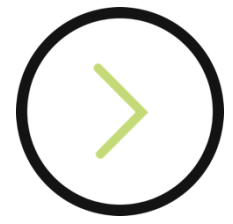
Therefore...

**Recommendation #4: Update GRACE's Evangelism Strategy to Reach Unchurched and De-Churched People.**



# 3. Communication Clarity

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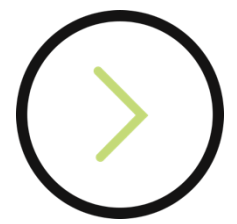


## 3. Communication Clarity

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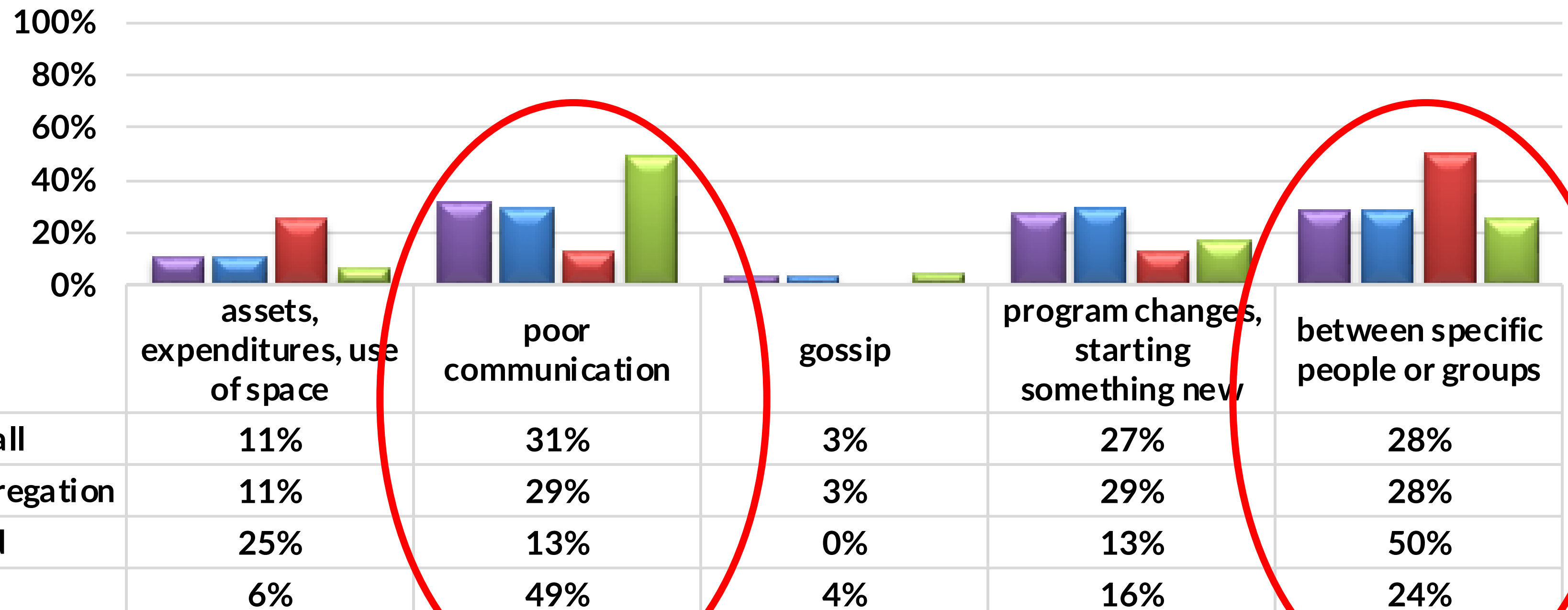
The vast majority of the churches served by VitalChurch desperately need to upgrade their communication strategy—and GRACE is no exception.

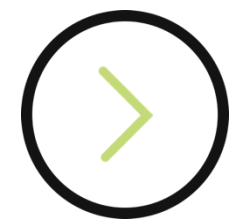
Without communication clarity, GRACE will be subject to unhelpful conflicts.



## 3. Communication Clarity

### Conflict Is Usually About ...





## 3. Communication Clarity

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Therefore...

### Recommendation #5: Continue to Enhance Church-Wide Communication.

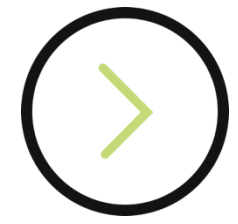
A) Communication enhancement will involve several strategic approaches to ensure clarity, consistency, and engagement across all levels of the organization and with the congregation.

B) Another area of church-wide communication...



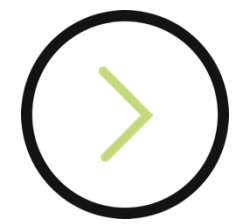
## 3. Communication Clarity

The **Grace Chapel Bylaws** (Rev. 2021, Article 2, Section 2.2): “To this end, Grace Chapel shall be constituted as a church, wherein all of those who love Jesus Christ and desire to serve Him may join in one common effort. Those elements that have caused confusion and division in the past within the Church of Jesus Christ shall not be permitted to destroy the unity of the body. To this end, this church shall be sympathetic and tolerant in spirit with respect to those areas of fellowship with the body of Christ in which Bible believing Christians have held different points of view. The Statement of Faith (Article 3) to which this church adheres finds its general expression in all of the great confessions of the true Church of Jesus Christ.”



## 4. Campus Strategy CLARITY

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## 4. Campus Strategy CLARITY

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Multiple verbatim responses indicate the satellite campuses do not feel that they have “equitable” support and attention from the Central Ministry Team, creating an “us and them” distinction.



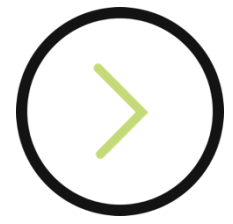
## 4. Campus Strategy CLARITY

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Therefore...

### Recommendation #6: Continue to Cultivate Your Multisite Strategy.

Ensure that each phase of your multisite campus strategy is guided by a clearly articulated and well communicated philosophy of reproducibility, consistency, and stewardship—empowered by the Central Team to multiply high-quality, intimate church environments across the diverse locations.



## Recommendation #7: Double Down on a Season of Extended Prayer as a Congregation.

The VitalChurch Discernment Team would invite you, as a congregation, to take a deep look inside yourselves through entering a season of listening prayer with fasting, repentance as needed, and planning (See Nehemiah 1).

Seek God's face for a fresh infusion of God's grace and vision for the future.



# Review of Recommendations

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**Recommendation #1: Develop a Leadership Pipeline.**

**Recommendation #2: Initiate Next Level Staff Care and Development.**

**Recommendation #3: Update Your Governance Structure.**

**Recommendation #4: Update GRACE's Evangelism Strategy to Reach Unchurched and De-Churched People.**

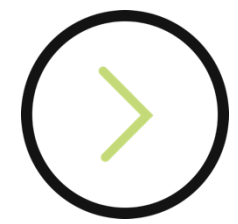
**Recommendation #5: Continue to Enhance Church-Wide Communication.**

**Recommendation #6: Continue to Cultivate Your Multisite Strategy.**

**Recommendation #7: Double Down on a Season of Extended Prayer as a Congregation.**



**ONLINE SURVEY PASTORAL PROFILE**



# Online Survey Pastoral Profile Synopsis

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During the survey process questions were asked regarding pastoral preference, and a detailed report of those findings will be included in the final report.

Across all campus and online groups, there is **a clear, consistent picture** of the ideal Senior Pastor.



# Online Survey Pastoral Profile Synopsis

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- ❖ Key spiritual gifts valued include, **Leadership, Teaching, Wisdom, Faith, Pastoring, and Discernment**
- ❖ The most desired trait is someone who **inspires the congregation**
- ❖ The most preferred interest being **a heart for helping people**
- ❖ Strong leader with **excellent people skills** and **a heart for helping others**
- ❖ Preaching should be **practical** and grounded in **systematic, biblical teaching**



**IMMEDIATE ACTION STEPS**



# Immediate Action Steps

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1. Remind each other Jesus Christ as the Senior Pastor and Chief Shepherd of Grace Chapel and ask Him to lead, guide, protect, and give his Spirit to you (John 15:5)



# Immediate Action Steps

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1. Remind each other Jesus Christ as the Senior Pastor and Chief Shepherd of Grace Chapel and ask Him to lead, guide, protect, and give his Spirit to you (John 15:5)
2. Celebrate the strengths that need to be reinforced and built upon (Philippians 4:8)



# Immediate Action Steps

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1. Remind each other Jesus Christ as the Senior Pastor and Chief Shepherd of Grace Chapel and ask Him to lead, guide, protect, and give his Spirit to you (John 15:5)
2. Celebrate the strengths that need to be reinforced and built upon (Philippians 4:8)
3. Dialogue with one another regarding this report. Be openhanded with your personal preferences as you consider what God has for the future of Grace Chapel.



# Immediate Action Steps

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1. Remind each other Jesus Christ as the Senior Pastor and Chief Shepherd of Grace Chapel and ask Him to lead, guide, protect, and give his Spirit to you (John 15:5)
2. Celebrate the strengths that need to be reinforced and built upon (Philippians 4:8)
3. Dialogue with one another regarding this report. Be openhanded with your personal preferences as you consider what God has for the future of Grace Chapel.
4. Choose to accept, prioritize, and implement the recommendations



# Immediate Action Steps

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1. Remind each other Jesus Christ as the Senior Pastor and Chief Shepherd of Grace Chapel and ask Him to lead, guide, protect, and give his Spirit to you (John 15:5)
2. Celebrate the strengths that need to be reinforced and built upon. (Philippians 4:8)
3. Dialogue with one another regarding this report. Be openhanded with your personal preferences as you consider what God has for the future of Grace Chapel.
4. Choose to accept, prioritize, and implement the recommendations
5. Pray, pray, pray

**1**

Take out your  
phone.

**2**

Enter phone number  
(417) 501-4673

**3**

Text your  
question(s)

Our expectation is that all interactions will be  
characteried by humility and mutual respect.



Grace Chapel