

Congregational Conversation

6/24/2018

Session 1

What does our world look like?

What is it becoming?



Large Group Time

Not Top Discipleship Moments

- [Luk 9:12-13, 44-46, 49-50, 52-55 ESV]
- 12 Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place." 13 But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish--unless we are to go and buy food for all these people."
- ... 44 "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." 45 But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying. 46 An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest.
- ... 49 John answered, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us." 50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you."
- ... 52 And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. 53 But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" 55 But he turned and rebuked them.

Devotion

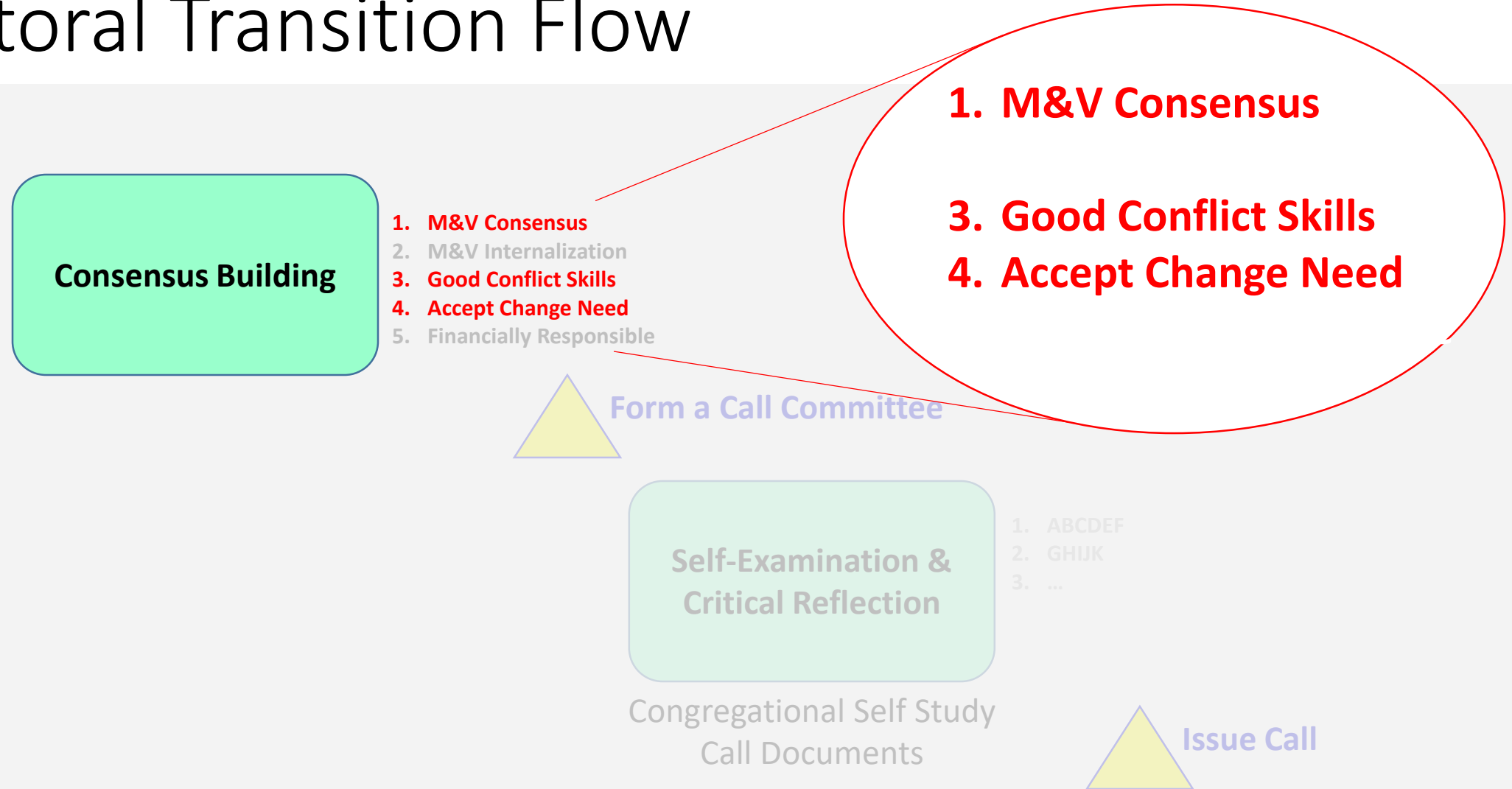
[Luk 10:1-3, 17 ESV] 1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. **2** And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. **3** Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ... **17** The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!"

- Luke 9 precedes this account...not a “Top 10 Highlights of the Disciples” ...pettiness...lack of love...doubt...jealousy
- Luke 10 shows us what we can achieve when we focus on Jesus

Background / Motivation

- LCS is preparing for a pastoral call
- LCS situation today = crossroads
 - Post-Christian culture accelerating
 - Financial resources stretch to meet minimum obligations
 - Mission field easy access in our daily lives
 - LCS = Loving family
 - Skilled & capable members
- LCS called to discern and act on God's will for our ministry
 - Vision must be broadly accepted
 - Mission must be internalized

Pastoral Transition Flow



Near Term Gameplan

2018

Calendarpedia
Your source for calendars

- Consensus Building: 4 meetings
 - **6/24**: What does our world look like, and what will it become?
 - **7/15**: What are we good at, and what do we need to do better?
 - **8/5**: Why are we here? What is our singular purpose?
 - **8/26**: What does victory look like? How will we know?

January							February							March							April							May							June										
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January 1: New Year's Day, January 15: Martin Luther King Day, February 19: Presidents' Day, May 28: Memorial Day, July 4: Independence Day, September 3: Labor Day, October 8: Columbus Day, November 11: Veterans Day, November 12: Veterans Day (observed), November 22: Thanksgiving Day, December 25: Christmas Day

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2019

January							February							March							April							May							June						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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Ground Rules

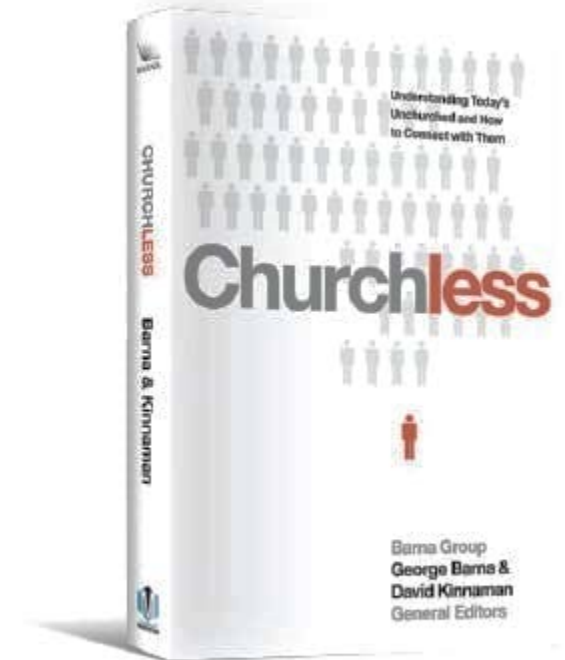
- Pray
 - Everybody
 - Everyday
- We are here in good faith, on the same team, wanting a win for Jesus
- Commit to listening with open heart and mind; speak with courage
- Make sure all have the chance to participate
- Argue ideas, not personalities
- Today, talking about what is
 - Will be tempting to talk about what we should do – **save that for later**

Study Basis is *Churchless*

- By George Barna and David Kinnaman
- 2014
- Full of statistics and anecdotes about the unchurched in America
- We are only getting a fraction of the book in this study

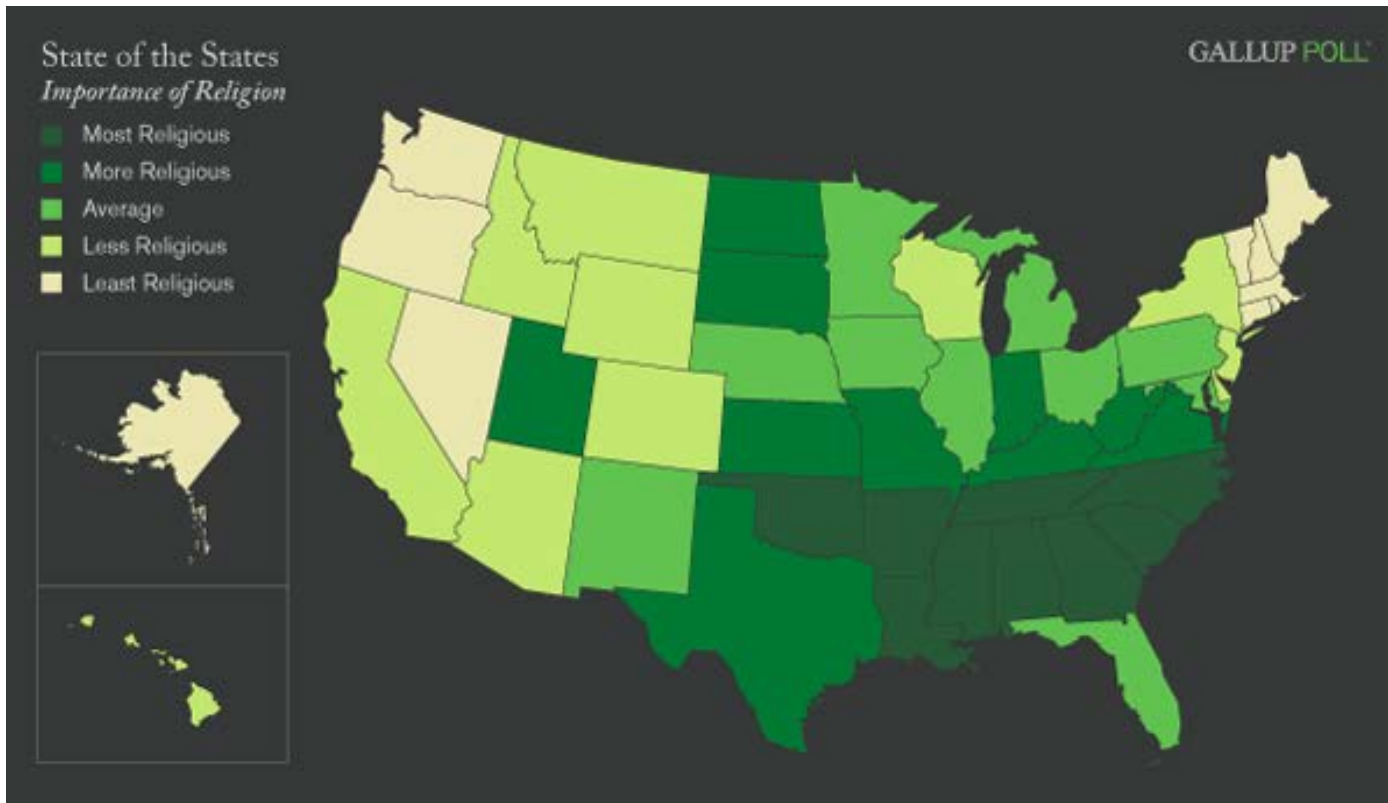
This is a sociological study, not a Bible study

Barna, George, and David Kinnaman. *Churchless: Understanding Today's Unchurched and How to Connect with Them: Based on Surveys by Barna Group*. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2014.



What Does our World Look Like?

Data from 2009



Top 10 Least Religious States

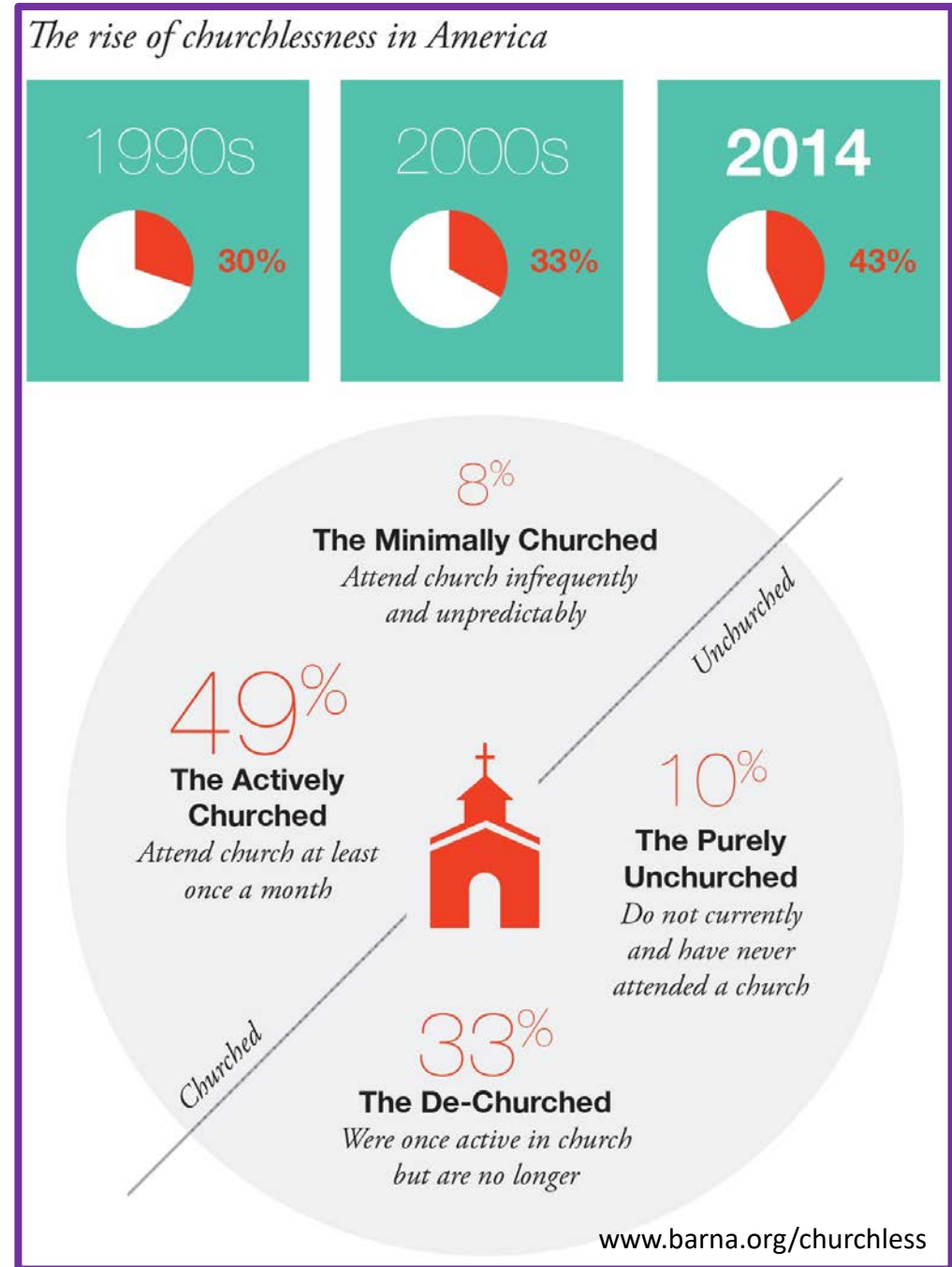
Is religion an important part of your daily life?

State	% Yes
Vermont	42
New Hampshire	46
Maine	48
Massachusetts	48
Alaska	51
Washington	52
Oregon	53
Rhode Island	53
Nevada	54
Connecticut	55

<http://news.gallup.com/poll/114022/state-states-importance-religion.aspx>

What Does our World Look Like?

- The De-Churched are the fastest growing segment of the populations represented
- Today's Unchurched are much less likely to come from church background than ever
- Cultural trends
 - Secularization rising
 - Distraction and information overload
 - Increasing loneliness
- Attitudes
 - Churchgoing no longer mainstream
 - Skepticism toward church contributions to society
 - Different expectations of church involvement
 - Less openness to the idea of church
 - Churchgoing is not valuable



What Does our World Look Like?

- Cultural trends

- Secularization rising

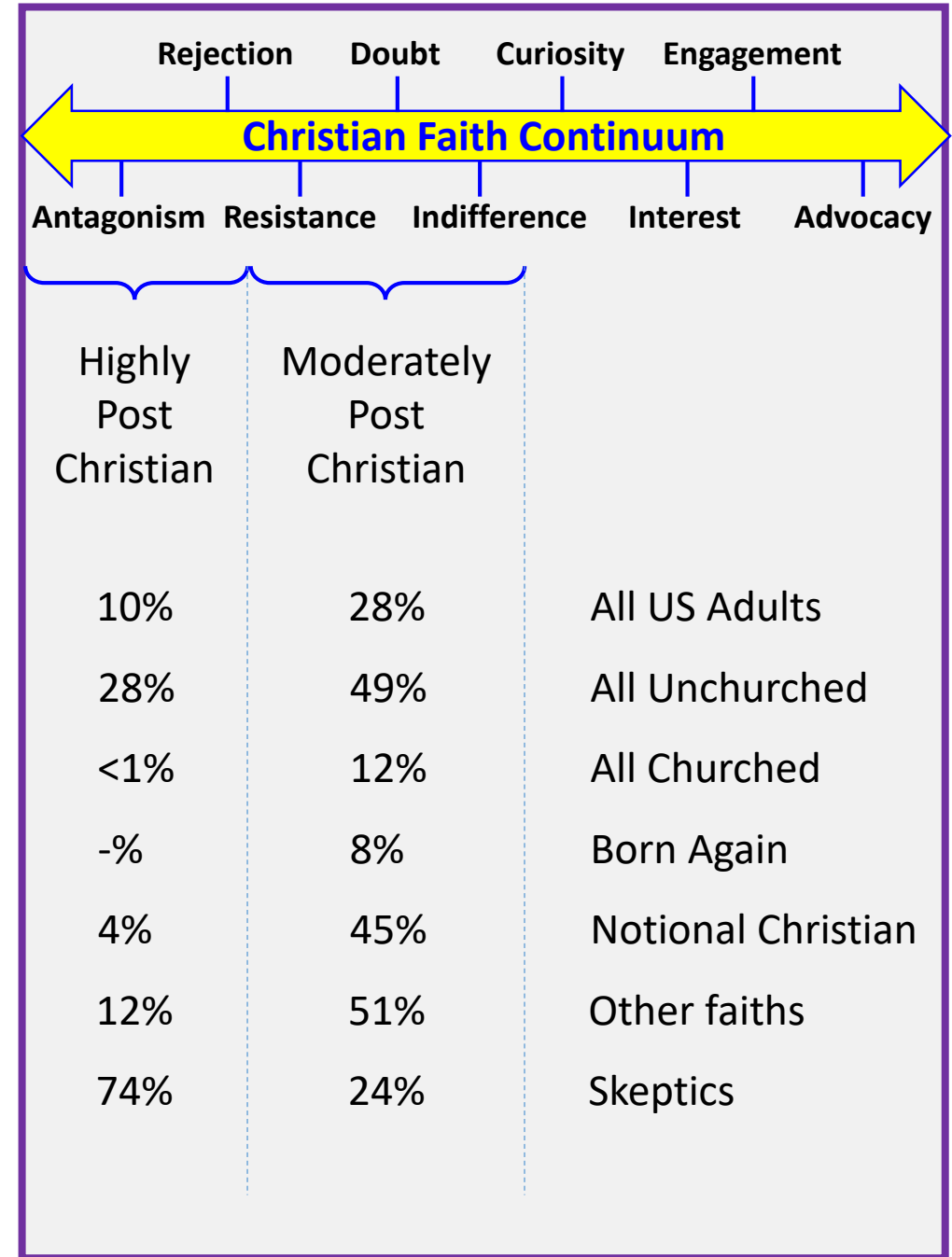
- Jan 2013: US pop. assessed against 15 measures of belief, practice or commitment
 - Younger = more post-Christian
 - 48% Mosaics (b. 1984-2002)
 - 40% Busters (b. 1965-1983)
 - 35% Boomers (b. 1946-1964)
 - 28% Elders (b. prior to 1945)

- Distraction and information overload

- “Epidemic of distraction”
 - Expectation to contribute

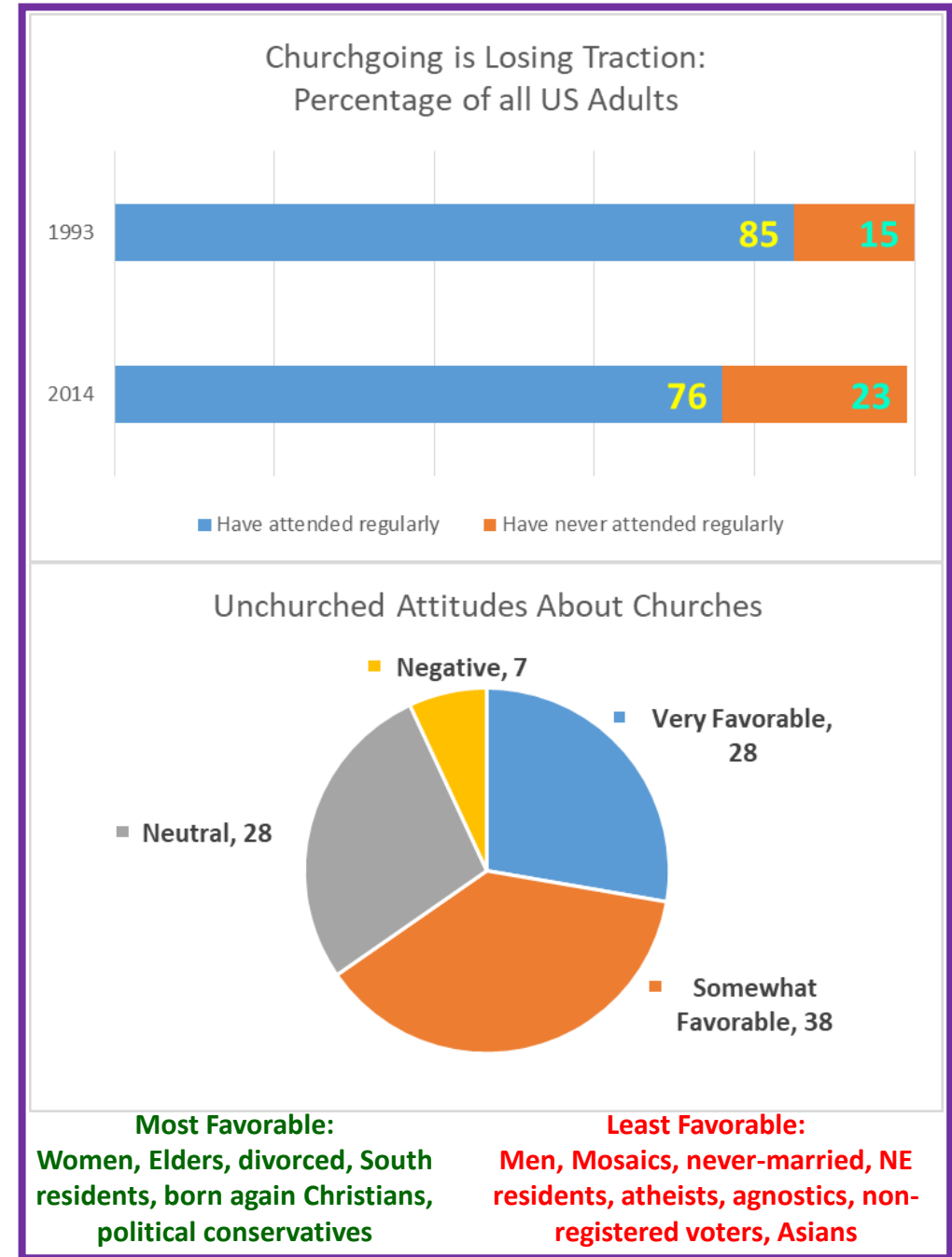
- Increasing loneliness

	Today	10 years ago
• I am happy	82%	92%
• I am lonely	20%	12%
• I am stressed	35%	29%
• I am worried about the future	35%	29%



What Does our World Look Like?

- Churchgoing is no longer mainstream
 - Church is increasingly unfamiliar
 - Churchless are still largely De-Churched
 - Vast majority of unchurched have some personal experience in a church
- Skepticism of church contributions to society
 - Unchurched
 - 49% cannot identify a single favorable impact of Christian community
 - 37% cannot identify a negative impact
 - Of those who ID'd a favorable impact
 - 22% serving poor
 - 10% bolstering values
 - 8% helping belief in God
 - Of those who ID'd a negative impact
 - 18% violence in name of Christ
 - 15% against gay marriage
 - 13% sex abuse scandals
 - 10% political involvement



What Does our World Look Like?

- Different expectations of church involvement
 - Unchurched Sunday worship interest
 - Early 1990's: ~70% most interested in attending Sunday worship
 - Today: 57%
 - Unchurched (hypothetical) church loyalty
 - Early 1990's: multiple churches 8%
 - Today: 16%
- Less open to idea of church
 - Unchurched becoming less responsive to church efforts to connect
 - Twenty years ago: 2/3rds open to being invited to church by a friend
 - Today: less than half
 - Same trends for all other connection attempts
 - Invites by friends still the top rated connection

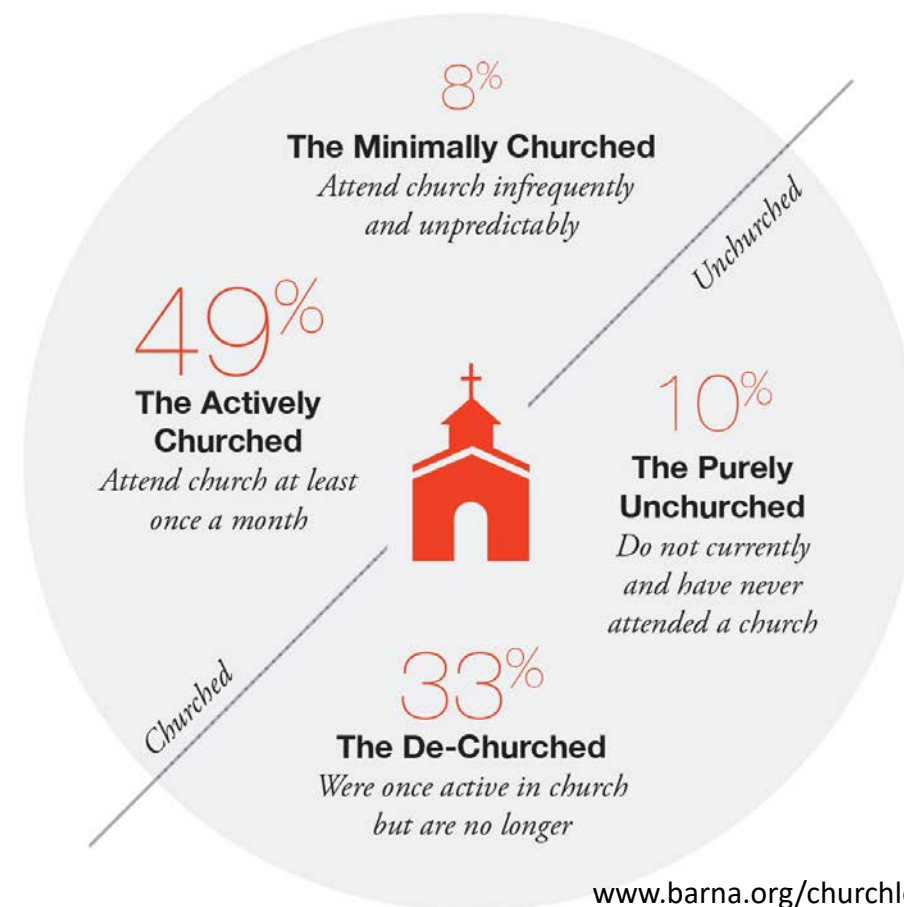
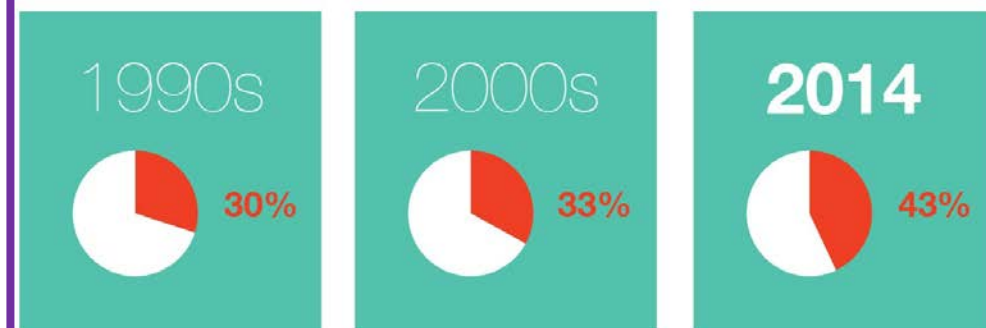
There are many different ways a church in your community might let you know more about their church and their services. Let's talk about churches you have never visited before. Would each of the following make you more or less interested in visiting that church?

	1993 %	2011 %
A friend of yours invited you to attend a local church	65	47
A pastor or a member of a church came to your home to tell you about the church, and invited you to attend	34	27
Someone from a church in your community called you on the phone to tell you about the church, and invited you to attend	34	24
A representative of the church came to your home, conducted a survey about your church attendance and interests, then invited you to attend their church	25	21
You knew the church had a significant online social web presence	NA	18
You saw or heard advertising for a church on TV, in a newspaper, or on the radio	20	18
You received information about a church through the mail	24	16
You saw advertising for the church on a billboard in your community	21	14

What Does our World Look Like?

- Unchurched self-identification:
 - 21% born again Christian
 - 21% Pentecostal or charismatic Christian
 - 23% “absolutely committed” to Christianity
 - 26% currently on a quest for spiritual truth
 - 34% describe themselves as “deeply spiritual”
 - 41% “strongly agree” religious faith is very important in their life today
 - 51% are actively seeking something better spiritually than they have experienced to date
 - 62% consider themselves Christian
 - 65% consider themselves “spiritual” people
- Not “Christophobics”
 - More than 40 million unchurched in US interested in Christianity
 - Many similarities to churched people, except they don’t go to church

The rise of churchlessness in America



What Does our World Look Like?

- Unchurched perception of church **value**
 - Boring
 - Not a place of meaningful community
 - A group sharing space at a public event
- Less than 1 in 10 can remember something valuable, insightful, helpful, or memorable from their most recent church service
- Perceptions of Lutherans
 - 79% aware
 - 13% very favorable
 - 28% somewhat favorable
 - 11% unfavorable
 - 27% aware, no opinion
 - 21% not aware

Reasons the Unchurched Avoid Church	
Not interested; it's too boring	15
No particular reason; just lazy; not sure	13
Too busy; have other obligations	11
I am not a Christian	10
I don't believe in God/Jesus	10
Christians are hypocrites; they're not genuine	9
I can worship/pray/practice faith from home	6
I'm disillusioned with organized religion	5
I have different (Christian) beliefs than they do	4
All churches want is my money	4
I haven't found one I like/am comfortable with	3
They're too controlling/judgemental	3
I am limited by health issues	3



Small Group Time

Small Group Discussions

- In the question, “what does our world look like?”: what does “world” mean? Define what is the LCS ministry “world”.
 - Geographic?
 - Demographic?
 - Cultural?
 - Other?
- What stands out to you most about the cultural changes we have discussed today? Is it good or bad?
- How much of what we heard in the large group session applies to our “world” specifically? What did we hear that does not describe our “world” well?



Large Group Integration Time

Group 1

- Define what is the LCS ministry “world”
- What stands out most about the cultural changes we have discussed today? Good or bad?
- How much applies to our “world” specifically? What does not describe our “world” well?

Homework

- Pray
- Digest
- Talk
- Recruit our brothers and sisters to join these conversations
- Make a personal attempt to refine your “world” definition
 - You are defining the context for your ministry
 - Understanding for whom you are called to serve and interact will better equip you to influence and shape our church’s ministry
 - God gives you vision, but community gives you verification