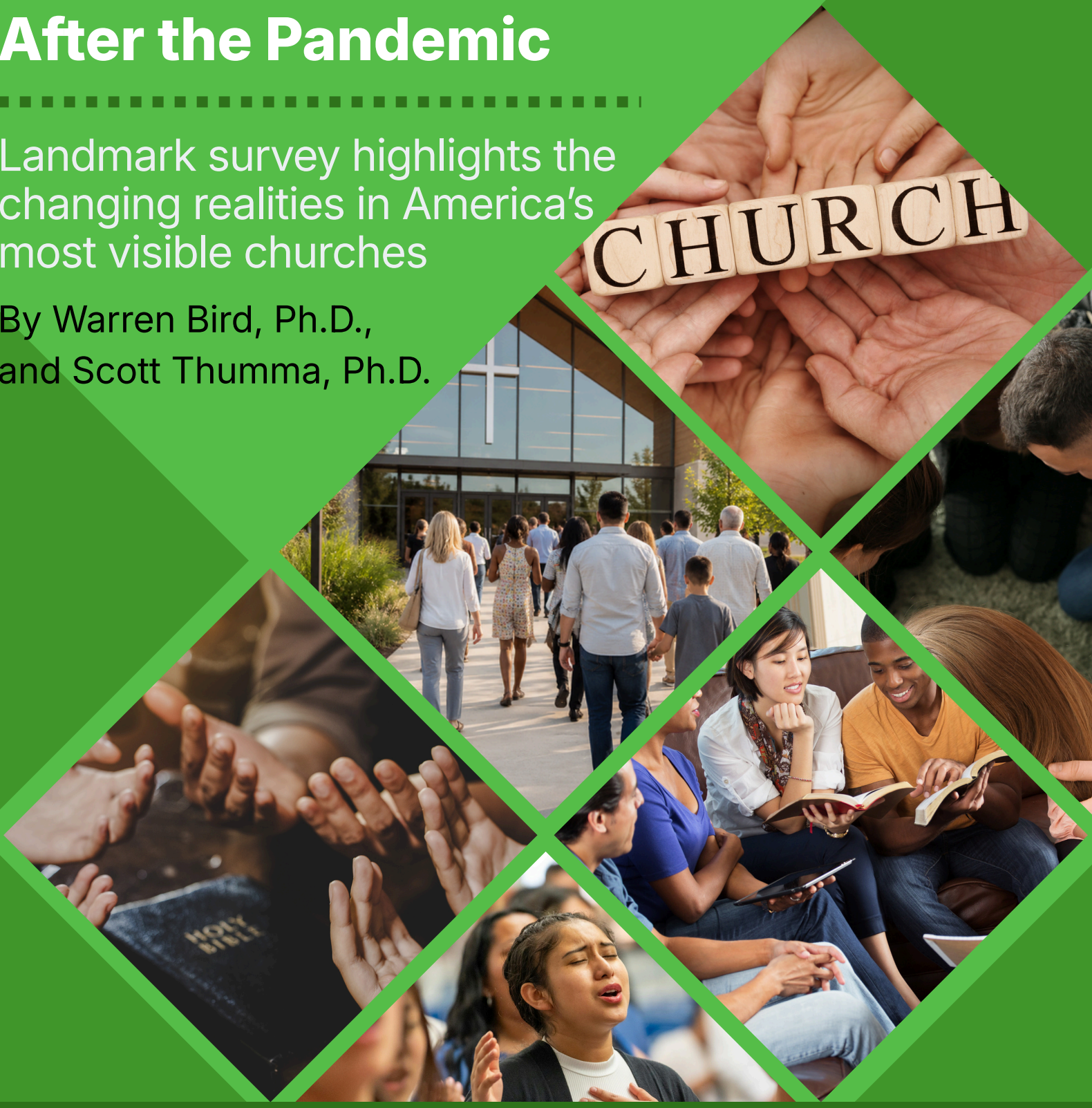
Megachurch Resurgence: How Big-Attendance Churches Rebounded After the Pandemic

Landmark survey highlights the changing realities in America's most visible churches

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and Scott Thumma, Ph.D.



Hartford Institute FOR RELIGION RESEARCH

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Introduction

What is the state of America's biggest-attendance churches today? In 50 short years, the U.S. church landscape has dramatically changed from the rare large-attendance church to today where an **astounding 1 in 3 Protestant churchgoers attend a church that draws 1,000 or more on a weekend**. All signs indicate that this shift will continue to accelerate toward a concentrated, increased numbers of attenders in larger congregations, as big-attendance churches grow, and the gap between larger and smaller congregations continues to widen. (For a focus on congregations of all sizes, see the April 2026 parallel release to this report titled, Signs of Rebound Amid Uneven Recovery[1]).

The majority of big-attendance churches today have "come back," often eclipsing pre-pandemic levels, to the point that 86% also say they are thriving. These findings come from our 2025 national survey research, and along with 35 graphics, explain how larger churches are led today, how they grow, and how they're changing. Most of the text and figures focus on Protestant churches with weekly **in-person worship attendances of roughly 2,000* or more adults and children—often defined as megachurches** (for comparison purposes across this 25-year survey series, attendances of 1,800 and up were included, as explained in the "About the Survey" section). The running commentary provides additional background on the figures, often including comments about how **very large churches*** compare to their bigger-attendance megachurch counterparts.

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*Please see "About the Survey" on pages 51-52 for an important explanation about the methodology of roughly "2,000-up" for megachurches and roughly "1,000-1,999" for very large churches.

As Figures 0.1 and 0.2 indicate, roughly 335,000 Protestant churches currently exist. Based on various studies by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, the majority of these churches (69%) have an in-person attendance of fewer than 100 people. Further, 90% have an in-person attendance of fewer than 250. By the time a church hits an in-person attendance of 1,000, it's in the 97th size percentile (97%).

Megachurches— those with in-person worship attendances of roughly 2,000 and higher— are in the 99th percentile (99%) of Protestant church size. Yet, even though they represent less than 1% of all such churches, megachurches draw ten million weekly worshippers–or roughly one in six worshippers last weekend. The count of megachurches is just under 2,000, a tiny slice of the total population of 335,000 Protestant churches, yet they represent roughly 17% of total worshippers in the nation's churches.

Figure 0.1

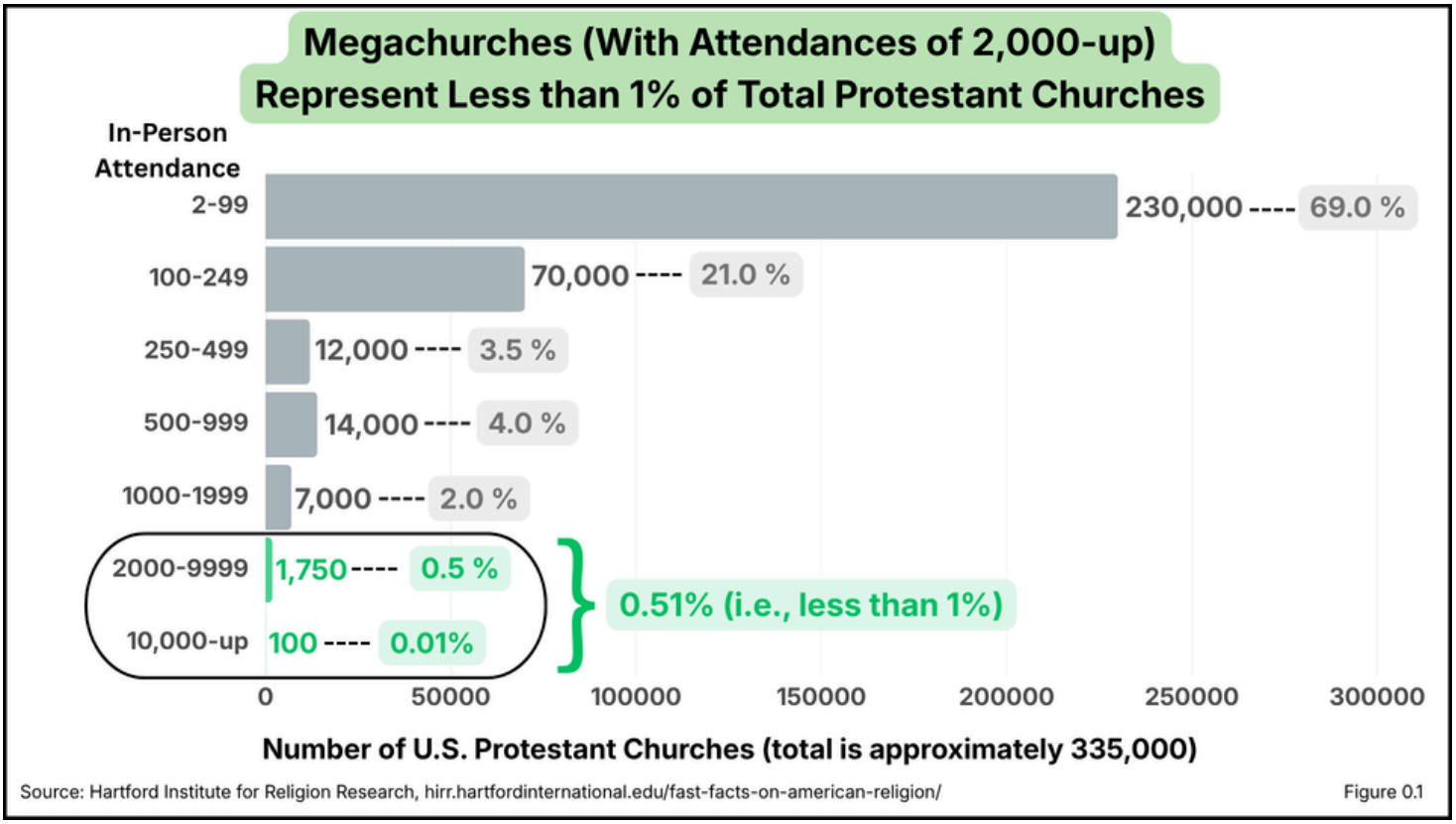
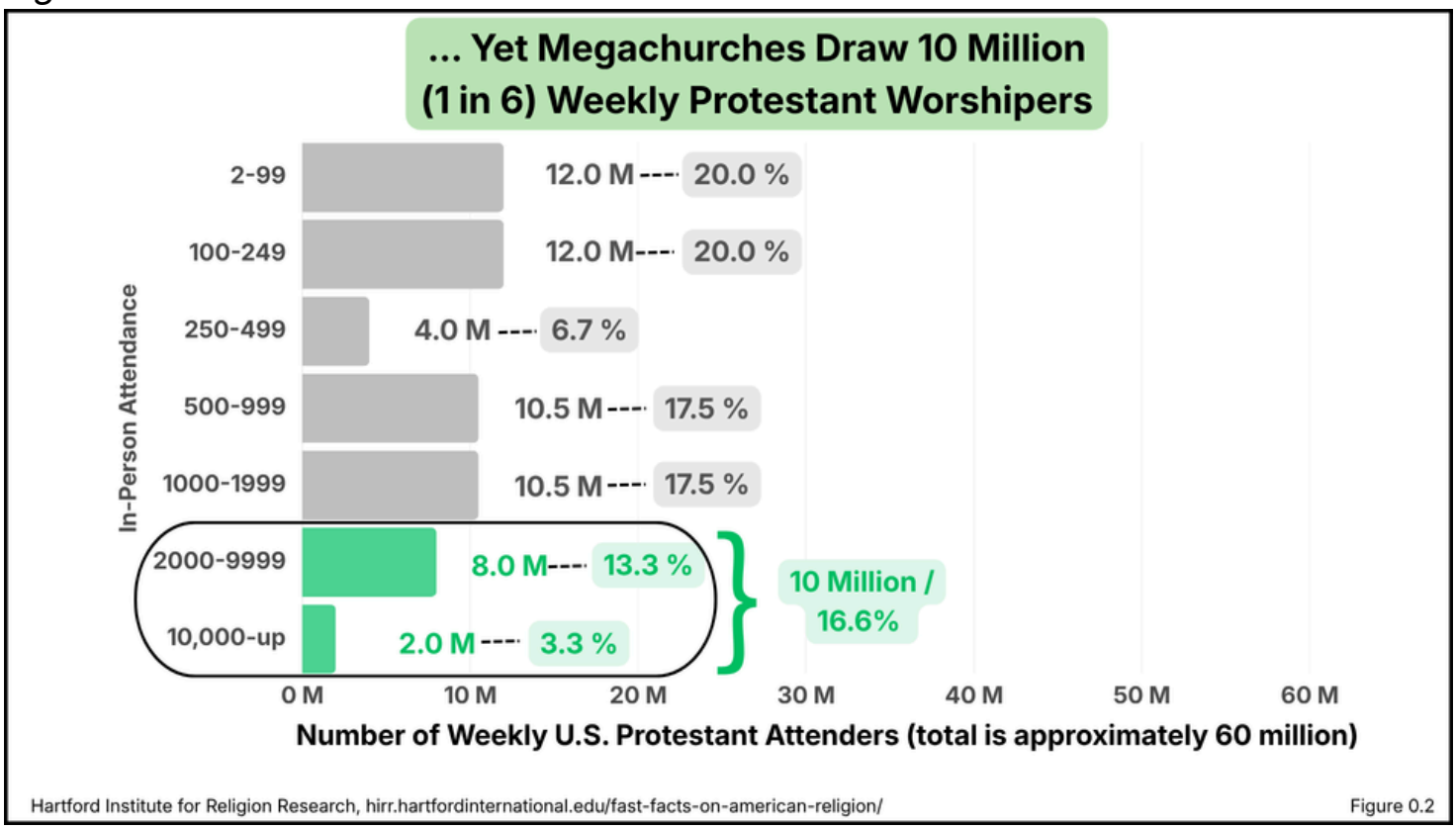


Figure 0.2



Figures 0.3 and 0.4 offer an overview of megachurch age, attendance, leadership, participants, structures by which they grow, and finances. Many of these characteristics will be unpacked later in this report, along with comparisons to churches in the 900-1,799* range, which this report is labeling as very large churches. In general, these potentially "future megachurches" share many parallel distinctive characteristics to their larger counterparts, often just with less intensity.

It is also instructive to compare these overview numbers with identical questions that were asked in 2020 and also with 2025 data from congregations of all sizes. For example, the 2025 median megachurch in-person weekly attendance of 2,805 is only slightly (1%) above the 2020 median of 2,779. By contrast, the total number of regular in-person attenders ("once a month or more") has significantly increased (by 18%) to a median of 5,000 in 2025, up from 4,200 in 2020.

Stated another way, the participant-to-attendance ratio in 2025 was .60 while in 2020 it was .68. This translates to more participants but roughly the same number of weekly attenders. Thus a larger crowd is present, but it is likely coming less frequently. (See more in the commentary for Figure 1.5.)

The pattern is similar for very large churches (i.e., those in roughly the 1,000-1,999 range), with a 2025 median attendance of 1,250 and a median total of regular in-person attenders ("once a month or more") of 2,000, for a participant-to-attendance ratio of .63. **In stark comparison, for all Protestant churches in the U.S. the 2025 median in-person attendance is 66** and a median total of regular in-person participants ("once a month or more") of 75, for a participant-to-attendance ratio of .88.

Racial diversity also continued to increase. In 2025, 66% of megachurches were multiracial–defined as 20% or more minority representation as compared to the majority race of that church. In 2020 it was 58%.

Figure 0.3

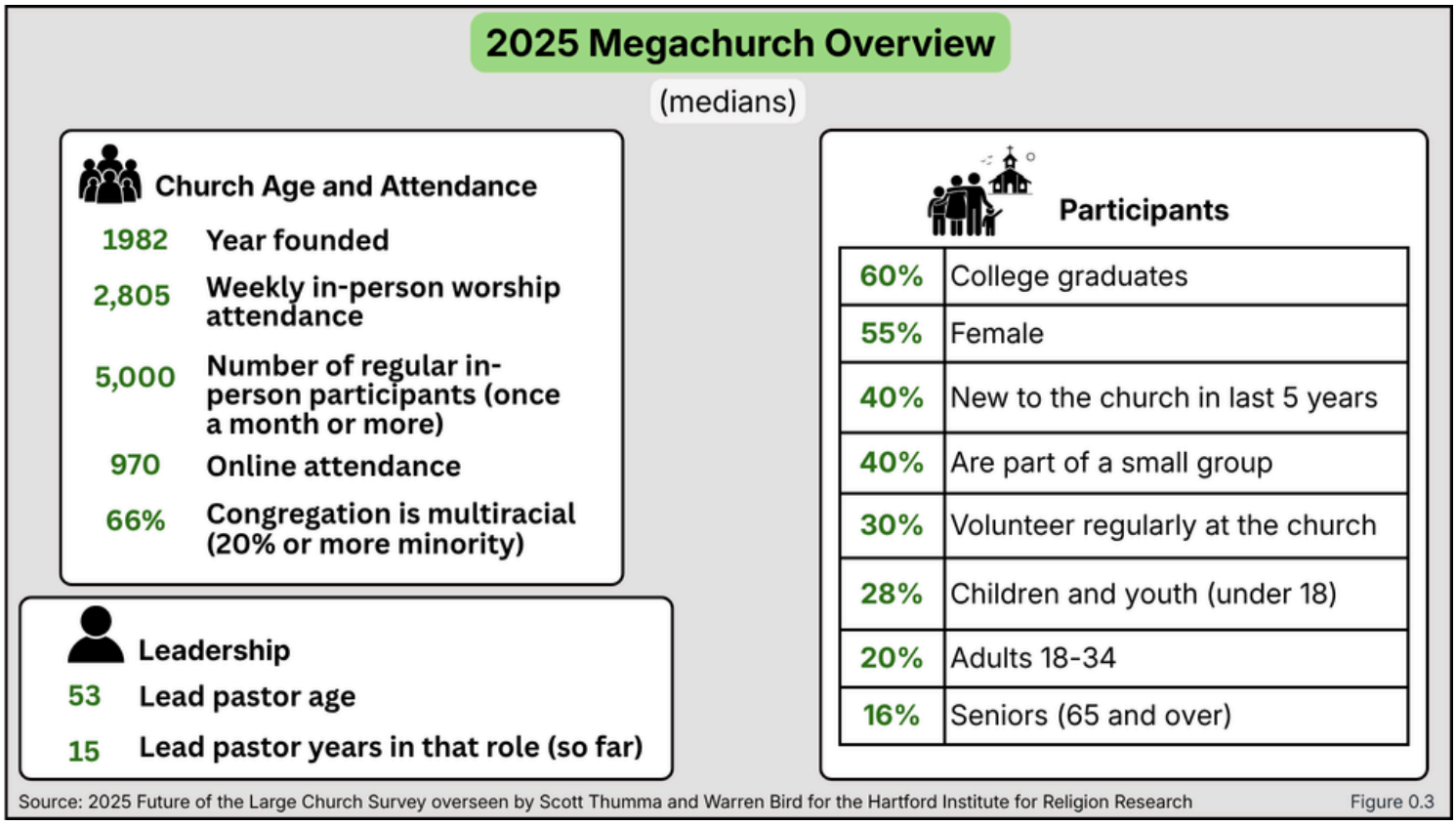


Figure 0.4

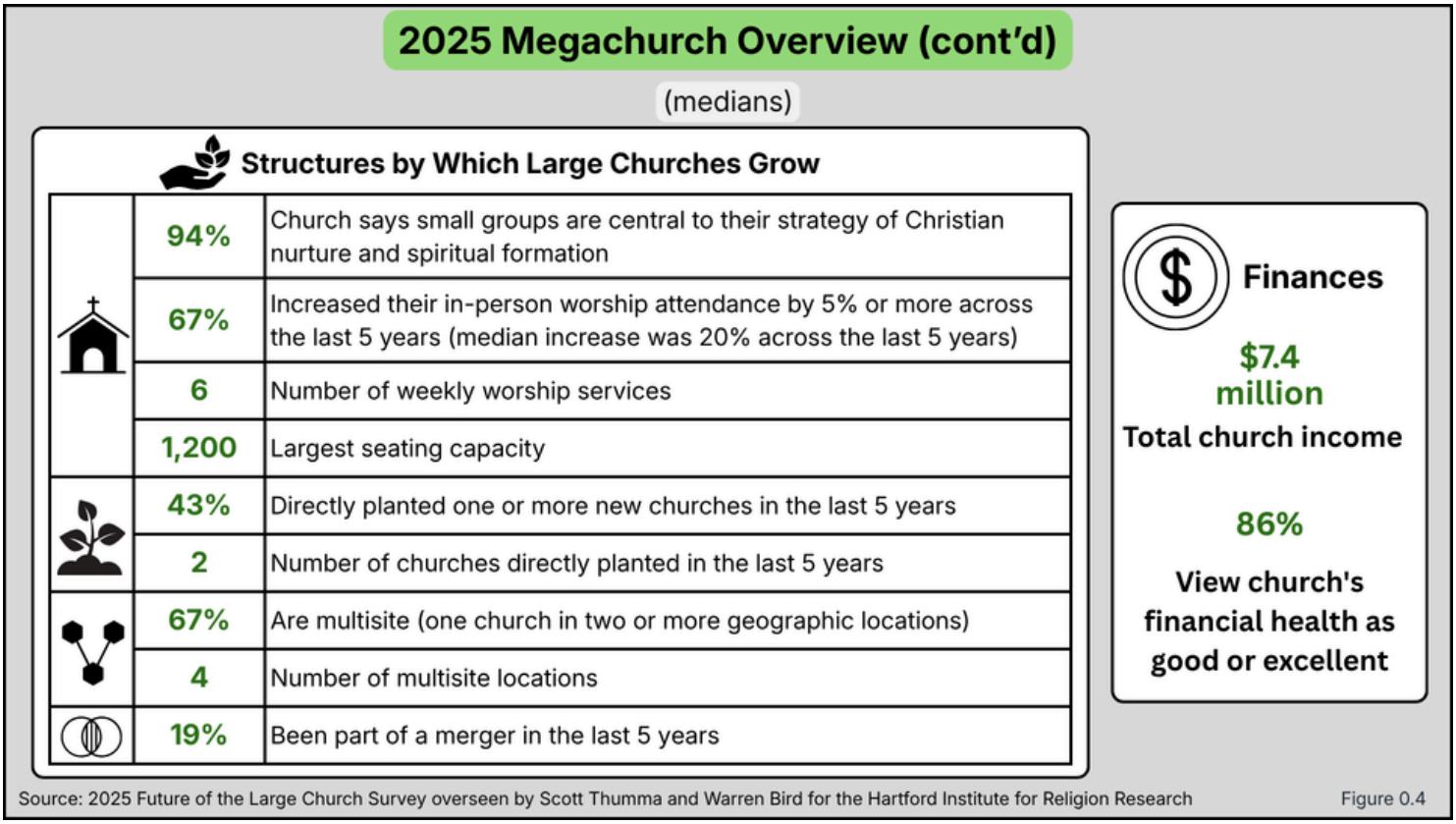


Figure 8.1 (below) traces the growth back to the year 2000, and Figure 8.2 examines racial diversity by various sizes of large churches, from an attendance of roughly 1,000 upward.

Small group use saw continued growth in 2025. Although the median percentage of "regularly participating adults … who are part of a small group"–at 40% in 2025–is roughly the same as in 2020, the church's adoption rate of small groups as "central to our strategy of Christian nurture and spiritual formation" reached 94%, compared to 90% in 2020. (See more in the commentary for Figure 1.4.) Similarly, for very large churches, 40% are part of a small group.

The median growth rate over 5 years (2020-2025) was 20%, the same percentage as the 2020 research identified for the 5 years before that (2015-2020). By contrast, for very large churches, the median change over the last 5 years (2020-2025) was an increase of only 9%–from 1,151 to 1,250, while for Protestant churches of all sizes the change was flat, 0% growth overall.

In 2025, 67% described themselves as multisite–one church in two or more geographic locations–with an additional 9% "thinking about it," and 5% who were multisite at one time but went back to being a single site. These numbers are down from 2020's frequency of 70% that were multisite, with an additional 10% "thinking about it," and 3% who were multisite at one time but went back to being a single site. (See more in the commentary for Figure 9.1.)

The median megachurch income of $7.4 million is up from $5.3 million in 2019, a growth rate that exceeded the rate of inflation, affirming that **giving is up**–as Figure 5.1 will depict, based on a different question. For very large churches, the 2025 median income of $3.0 million is up from $2.0 million in 2019.

Some megachurch characteristics did not change from 2020 to 2025. For example, the total number of weekly in-person worship services was 6 both years. The largest seating capacity–the number of seats in a church's largest facility–was 1,200 both years. For very large churches, maximum seating was 800.

For a comparison of these overall characteristics against the typical U.S. congregation (all sizes, all faiths), see Figure 1 of the above-named 2026 report, *Signs of Rebound.*

Although it was not listed in Figures 0.3 and 0.4, the theological self-classifications between the survey years were similar among megachurches: In 2025, 67% label themselves as evangelical, 12% as missional, 12% as charismatic/Pentecostal, 4.5% as moderate/progressive, and 4.5% as seeker. In 2020's survey, 65% labeled themselves as evangelical, 12% as missional, 12% as charismatic/Pentecostal, 7% as moderate/progressive, and 4% as seeker. (See Figure 10.3 for a visualization of the 2025 categories.)

Survey Methodology

Unless otherwise noted, the data in this report comes from a late 2025 survey that drew participation from 589 U.S.-based Protestant churches with in-person weekly worship attendances of 900 and higher. The survey was conducted between August 20 and November 13, 2025, and is part of a 25-year project sponsored by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research where big-attendance churches have been surveyed every 5 years plus other occasional intervals. For more methodology details, see the "About the Survey" section.

1. Comeback
Big-attendance churches have made a strong post-pandemic rebound.

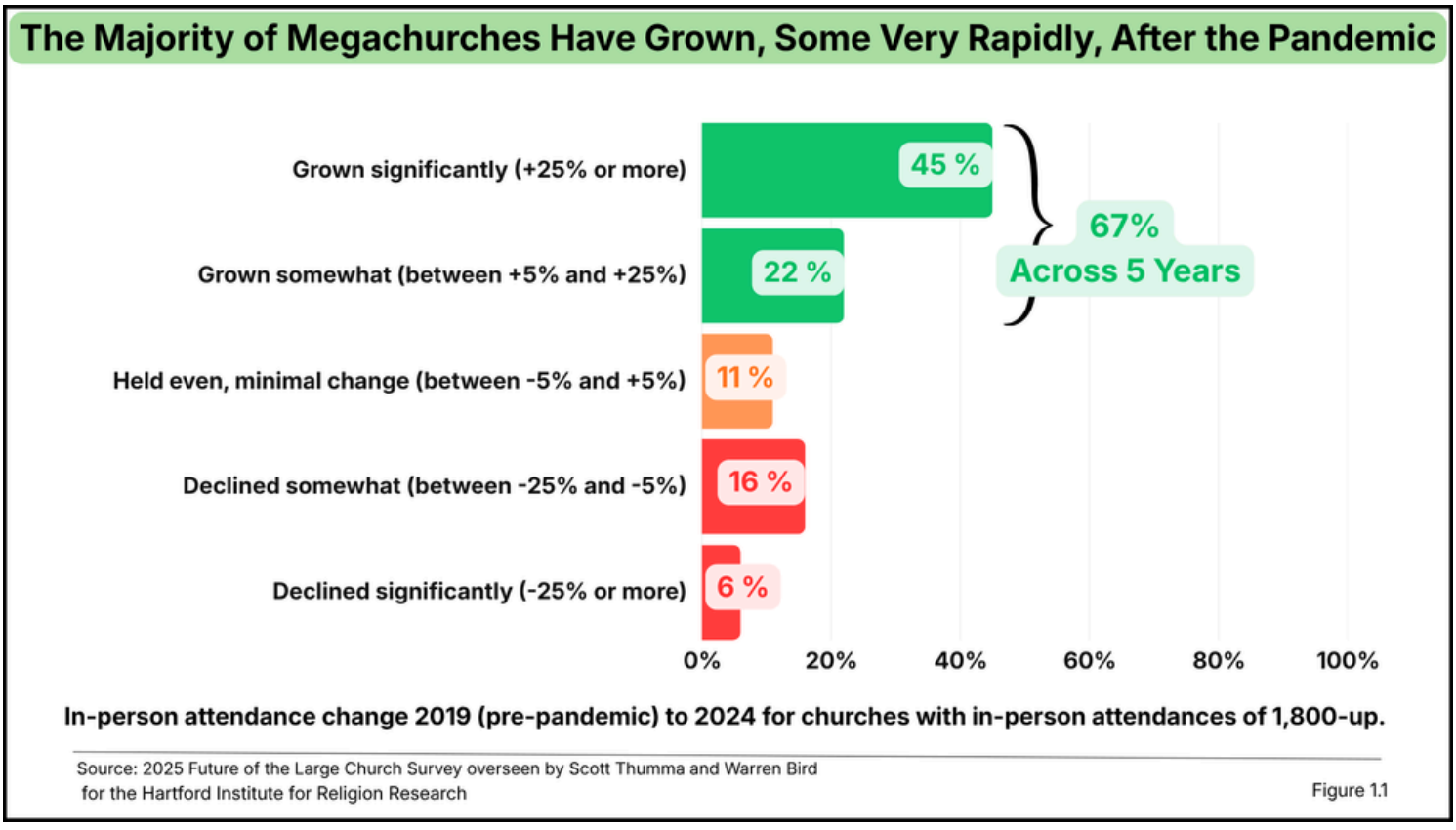
The COVID-19 pandemic shut down the country in late March 2020. During those subsequent months, **88% of megachurches stopped meeting in person due to the pandemic**, and 94% of very large churches stopped meeting.

Other studies have provided clear evidence of diminished attendance in the initial one to two years of the pandemic.[2] During that time, there was also an increase of switching[3], or "churn," and "transfer growth," as one pastor put it.

During those pandemic years, 71% of megachurches got a PPP loan, as did 64% of very large churches. Interestingly, obtaining a PPP loan didn't improve those churches' financial situation in 2025 in any significant way but perhaps it helped them pay their staff during this time.

By five years after the pandemic (fall 2025), all of these large churches had reopened and were rebuilding. As seen in Figure 1.1, 22% of megachurches were still 5% or more lower in attendance than they were before the pandemic.

Figure 1.1



However, **67% of megachurches increased their attendance from before the pandemic until 2025**, many of which had grown significantly–by a total of 25% or more. As noted above, very large churches did not rebound quite as rapidly.

This rebuilding is particularly noteworthy compared to the 0% rate of rebound in congregations of all sizes, with 43% growing by 5% or more, and 46% in decline by 5% or more. Across all churches, the longer a congregation disrupted their normal pattern of worship, the more detrimental it was to their eventual flourishing. The smaller the church, the more likely it was to stay open during the pandemic; the larger the church, the slower it was to restart its corporate ministries. However, these largest churches had their services disrupted a median of five months compared to a six-month average for congregations of all sizes.

Not only are these largest churches more likely to be growing, the greater their growth rate, the stronger the correlation with the following characteristics. Large growing churches are more likely to be described as follows:

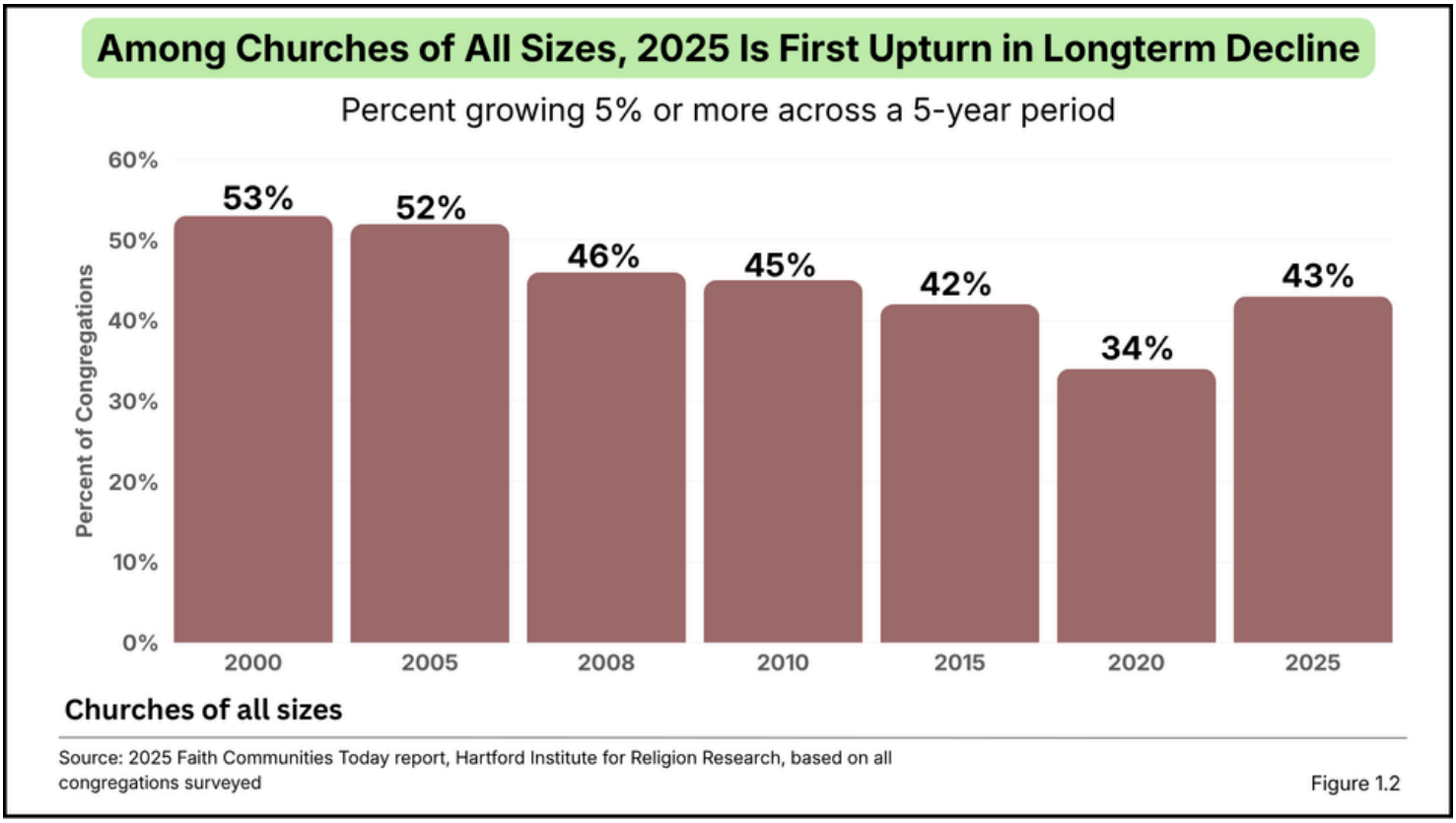
- Are spiritually vital
- Are willing to change
- Have innovative worship
- Increased efforts on evangelism
- Emphasize talking about one's faith with others– "a lot" (49%)
- Include a higher percentage of participants who are "quite a lot" involved in recruiting new people (see more in the commentary on Figure 1.3 below)
- Place greater emphasis on young adults' spiritual interests
- Include a higher percentage of 18-35 young adults
- Include a higher percentage of new people in last 5 yrs
- Be good at incorporating new people
- Include a higher percentage of regular volunteers
- Put greater emphasis on training to make disciples
- Place more intentional focus on member discipleship
- Emphasize regular worship attendance–a lot 59%
- Have the "pastor of growth" leading

This survey series, now in its 25th year, has tracked churches across the entire size spectrum–with the vast majority being smaller-attendance congregations. Every five years, the relevant report would review growth over the previous five years.

Sadly, at each increment through 2020, **the proportion of growing congregations has steadily declined,** as Figure 1.2 depicts. That is, **it's becoming more rare for churches to be growing.**

However, for 2025, we note a surprising rebound (as Figure 1.2 also depicts), with an uptick in the percentage of congregations showing a five-year pattern of growth in their in-person attendance. (For further attendance breakdown of congregations of all sizes, see Figure 3 of the above-mentioned *Signs of Rebound*.)

Figure 1.2

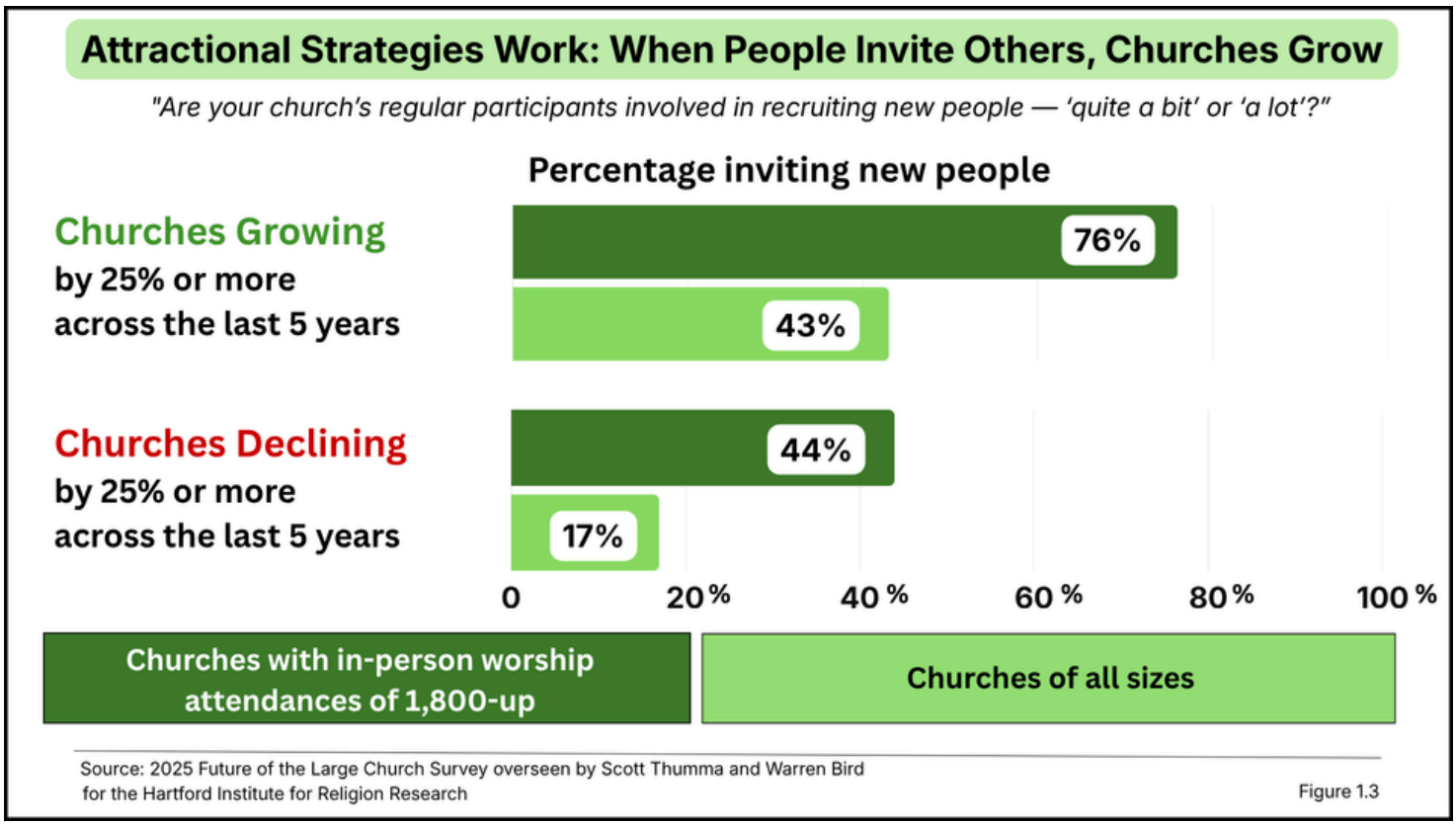


This environment of long-term decline makes it all the more newsworthy that such a high percentage of big-attendance churches are growing. How do they grow? One popular strategy has been nicknamed the attractional model, where church leaders encourage their people to invote their friends to church services.

Is the attractional model dying or dead? Not according to Figure 1.3. It shows that churches with a high invitation culture tend to be growing, and also that larger churches tend to have a much higher percentage of their church's regular participants involved in recruiting new people.

In short, the news is not surprising: growing churches have greater recruiting by their participants. For those megachurches that report their members are involved in "recruiting new people a lot," 80% of them grew by 5% or more in five-years compared to just 69% where "quite a bit" of members did, "some" member recruiting resulted in 59% growing, and when just "a few" members recruited only 44% were growing at that rate.

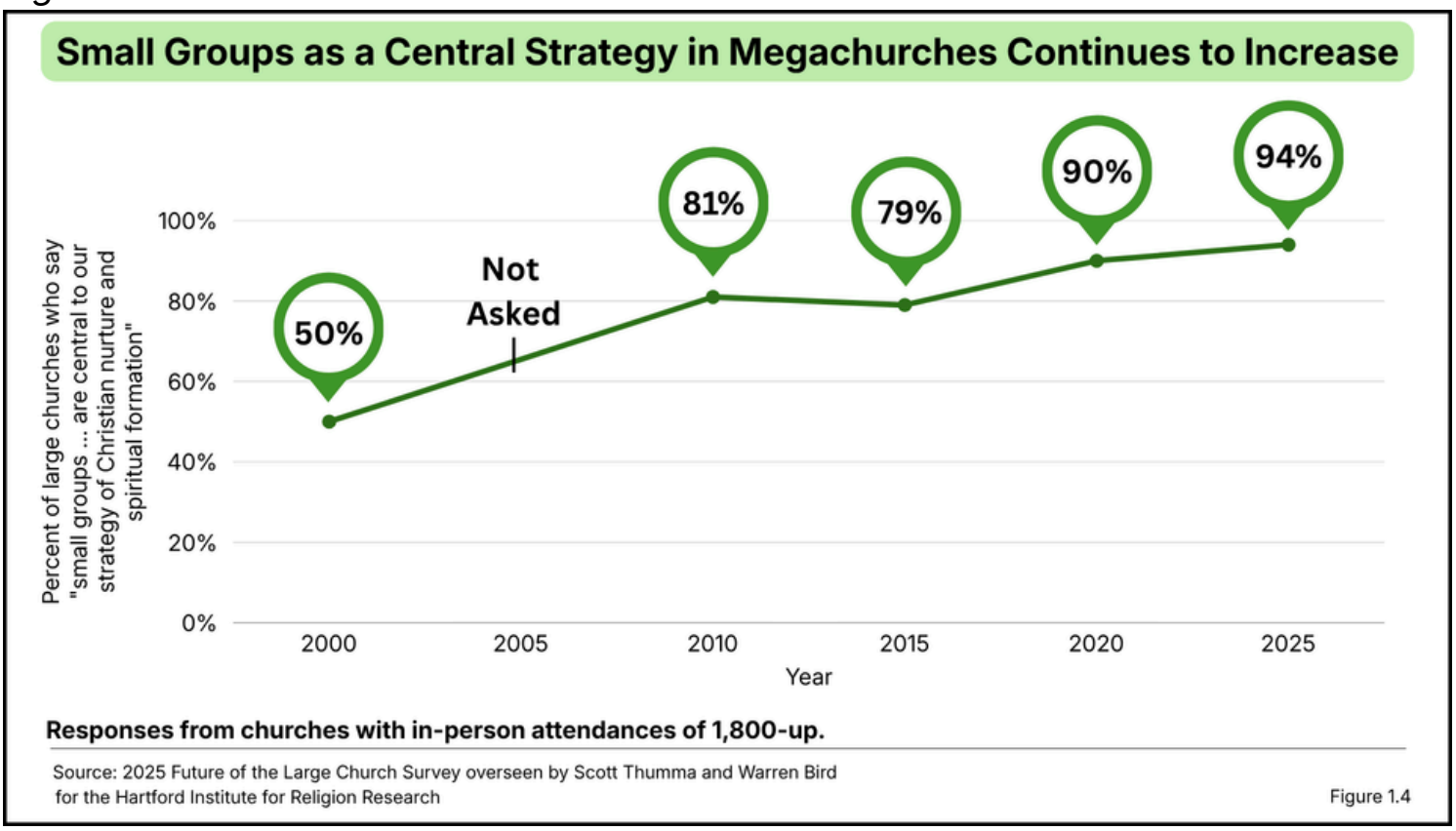
Figure 1.3



Small groups have become a defining feature of larger congregations. Figure 1.4 visualizes the increasing centrality of small groups across time for these large churches. Nearly all these churches now see them as being "central" to a church's strategy of Christian "nurture and spiritual formation." **Almost 19 out of 20 megachurches (94%) affirm the centrality of groups**–defined as small groups for fellowship, spiritual nurture, etc., in addition to church school or mission groups.

Alas, this high value placed on small groups does not always translate into an equally high practice of small groups. As noted in the earlier commentary on Figures 0.3 and 0.4, the percent of adults who are part of a small group–a median of 40% in 2025–is roughly the same as in 2020. Also there is a **positive correlation between the percent of members in small groups and the estimate of how often the typical person attends worship**.

Figure 1.4

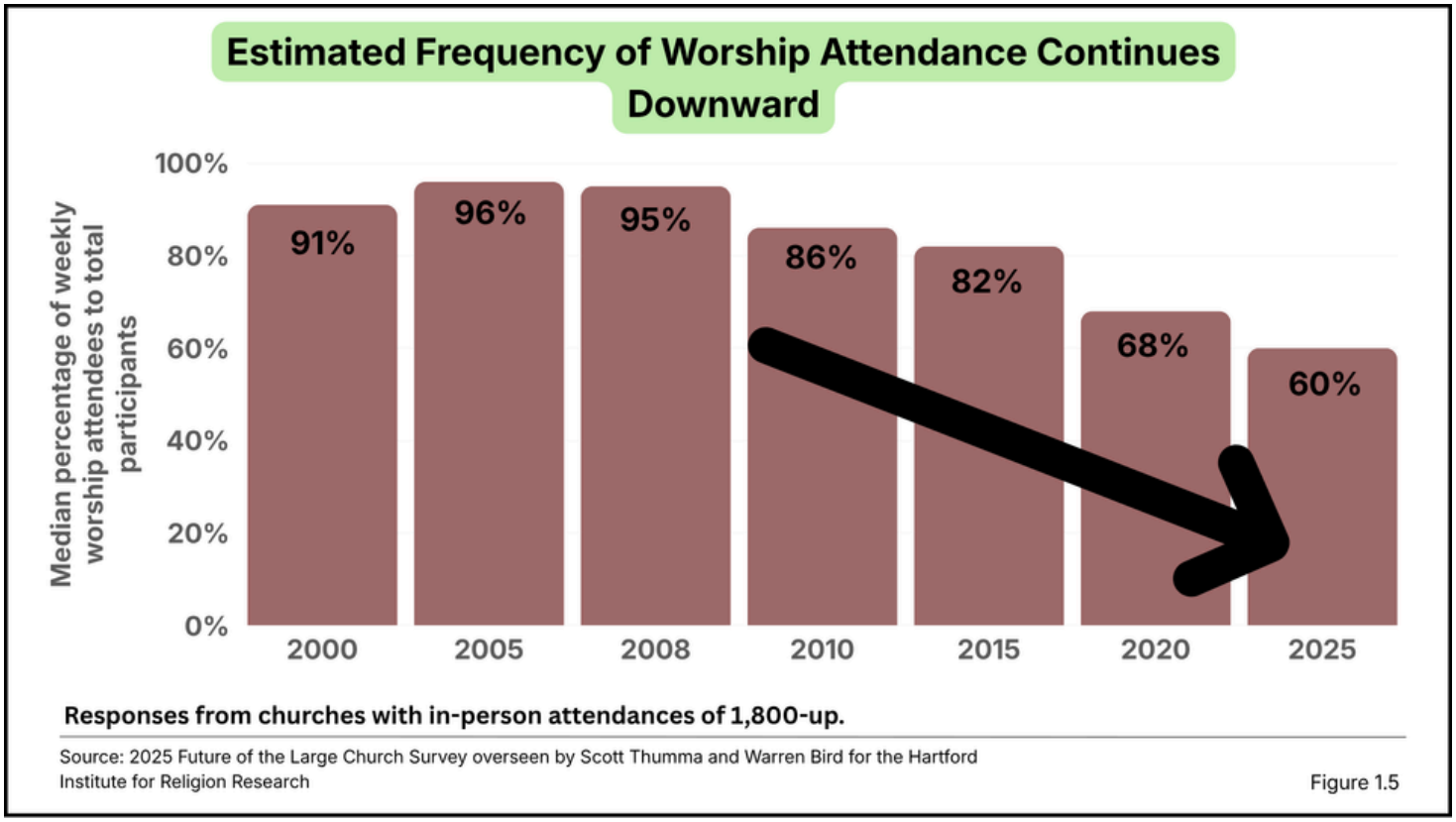


While the importance of group life continues to increase, the actual frequency of worship attendance continues to decrease, as affirmed in Figure 1.5. We first noted this dynamic in our 2015 report: **"**Megachurches are part of the general multi-year trend among churches of all sizes in which the average attender comes to church less often."

Figure 1.5 documents a 20-year pattern of regular participants attending worship less requently. We are measuring this by comparing the stated total regular participants by the average weekly attendance figures given by the churches rather than asking members themselves or getting clergy to estimate the participants' frequency of attendance.

For megachurches, the median percentage of weekly worship attendees as a ratio to the median of total church participants is now at .60.

Figure 1.5



A related question asked: "If you have calculated how many times a month someone typically attends, what is that number?" The most common response was, by far, "once a month." **Thus 68% of attenders come only once a month–as compared to 5% who attend 3 or more times a month.** Very large churches fared slightly worse, with 72% of them estimating that their attenders come only once a month.

2. Vitality

Congregational vitality has increased dramatically, but isn't always related to attendance growth.

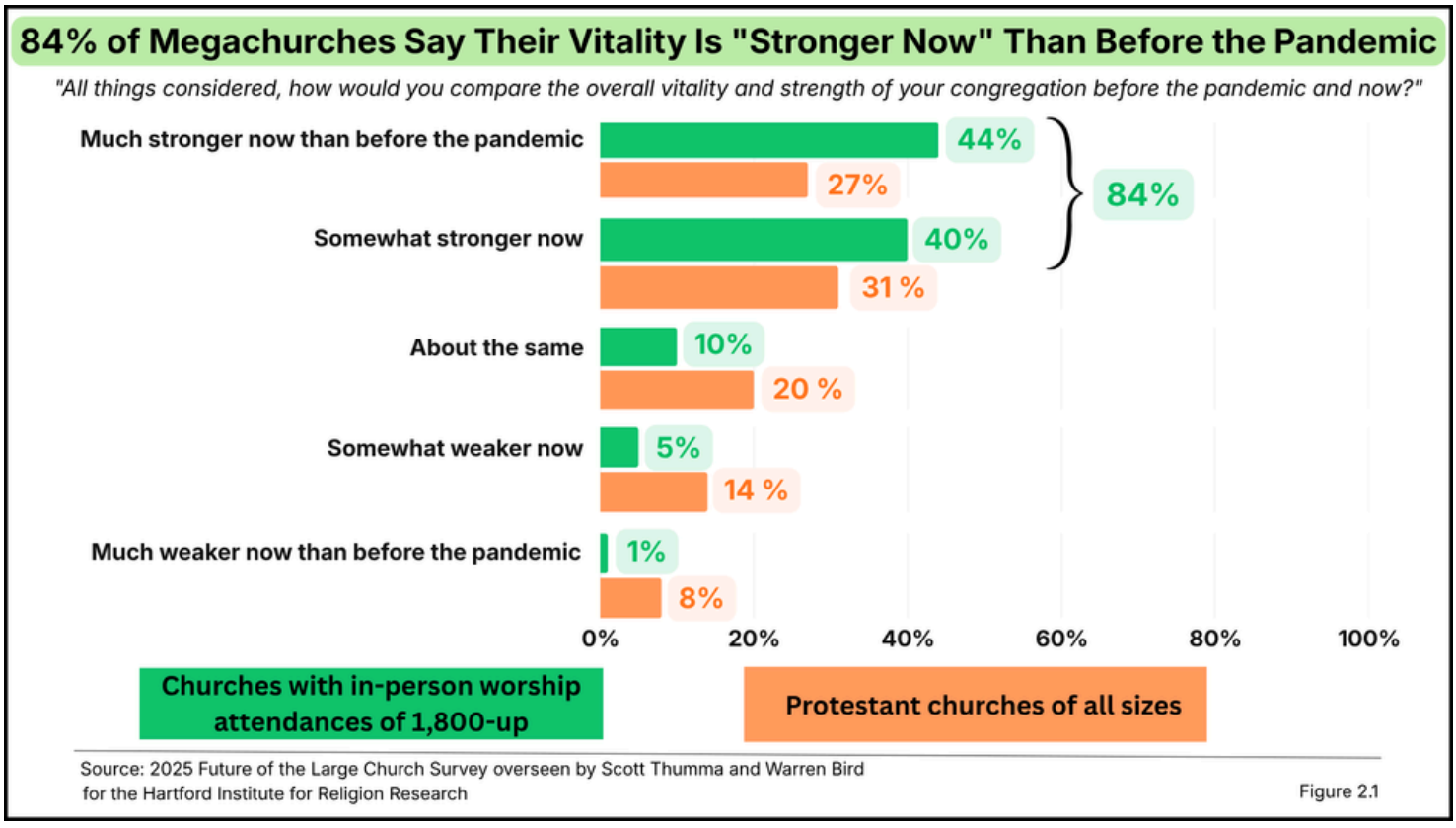
Attendance alone never tells the whole story of a church. This generalization is especially true with the 2025 survey findings. However strong the attendance comeback, many other important markers also changed, especially around the concept of vitality.

An overwhelming majority (84%) of megachurches say their "overall vitality and strength" is stronger now than before the pandemic, per Figure 2.1. This high self-assessment is markedly different from how churches of all sizes responded to the same statement where 58% are stronger now than before the pandemic. The survey did not define "vitality and strength," in the question, and thus the answer reflects each survey taker's perspective.

This megachurch response is consistent with another question this survey series has asked across the years, each time repeating the same agree-disagree statement: "Our church is spiritually vital and alive." In 2025, the megachurch response was the highest ever: an astounding 97% either agreed (30%) or strongly agreed (67%).

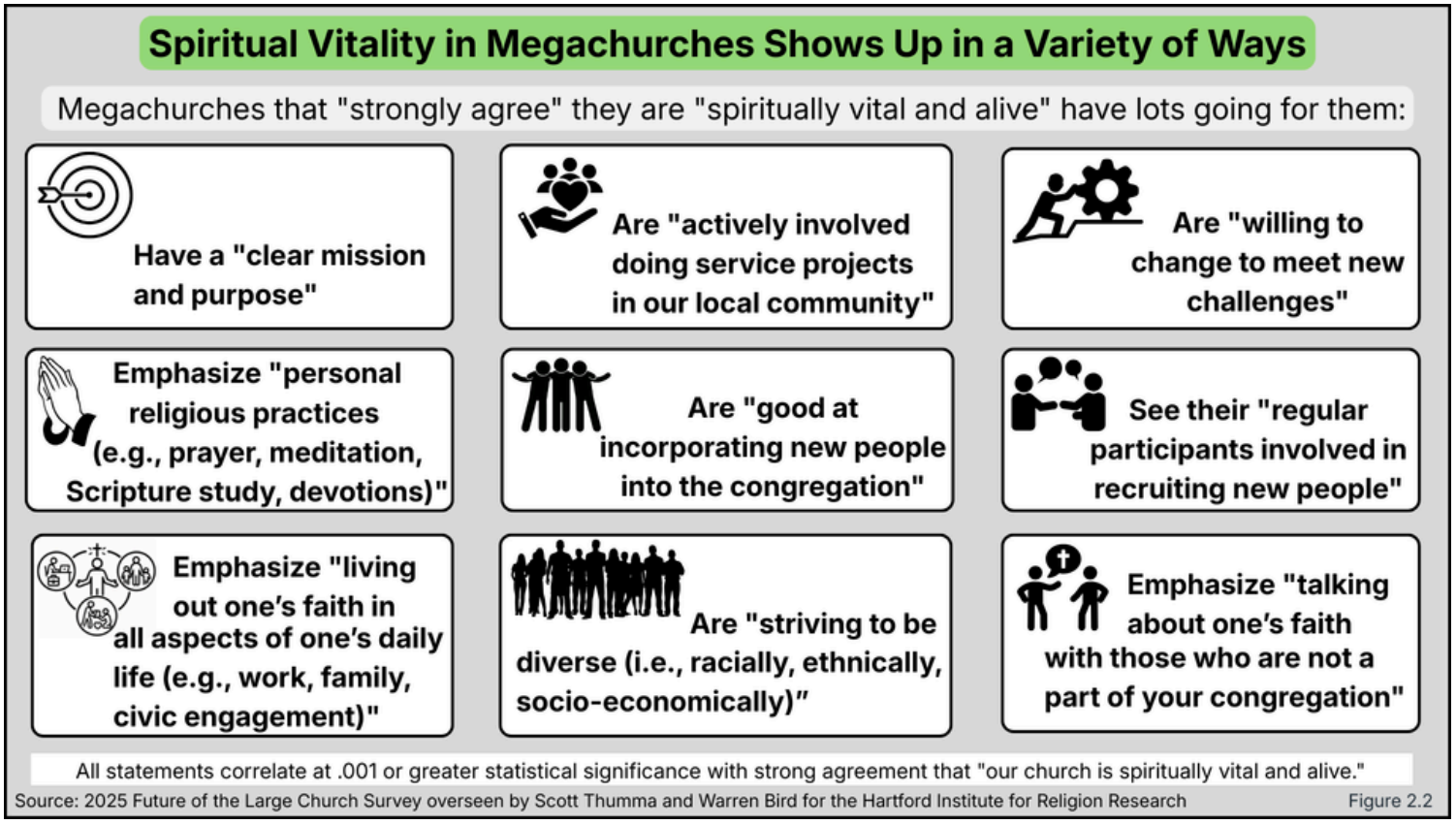
Very large churches likewise said (80%) their "overall vitality and strength" is stronger now than before the pandemic (38% saying "much stronger now" and 42% saying "somewhat stronger now." For the statement that "our church is spiritually vital and alive," 97% of very large churches either strongly agreed (45%) agreed (52%).

Figure 2.1



The survey did not define "vitality and strength," in the question thus the answer reflects each survey taker's perspective. Figure 2.2 shows nine different areas which **strongly correlate with high** spiritual vitality. **These correlations expand the substance of "thriving" beyond just attendance and growth expansion and show that many factors play into a church's sense of what thriving looks like.**

Figure 2.2

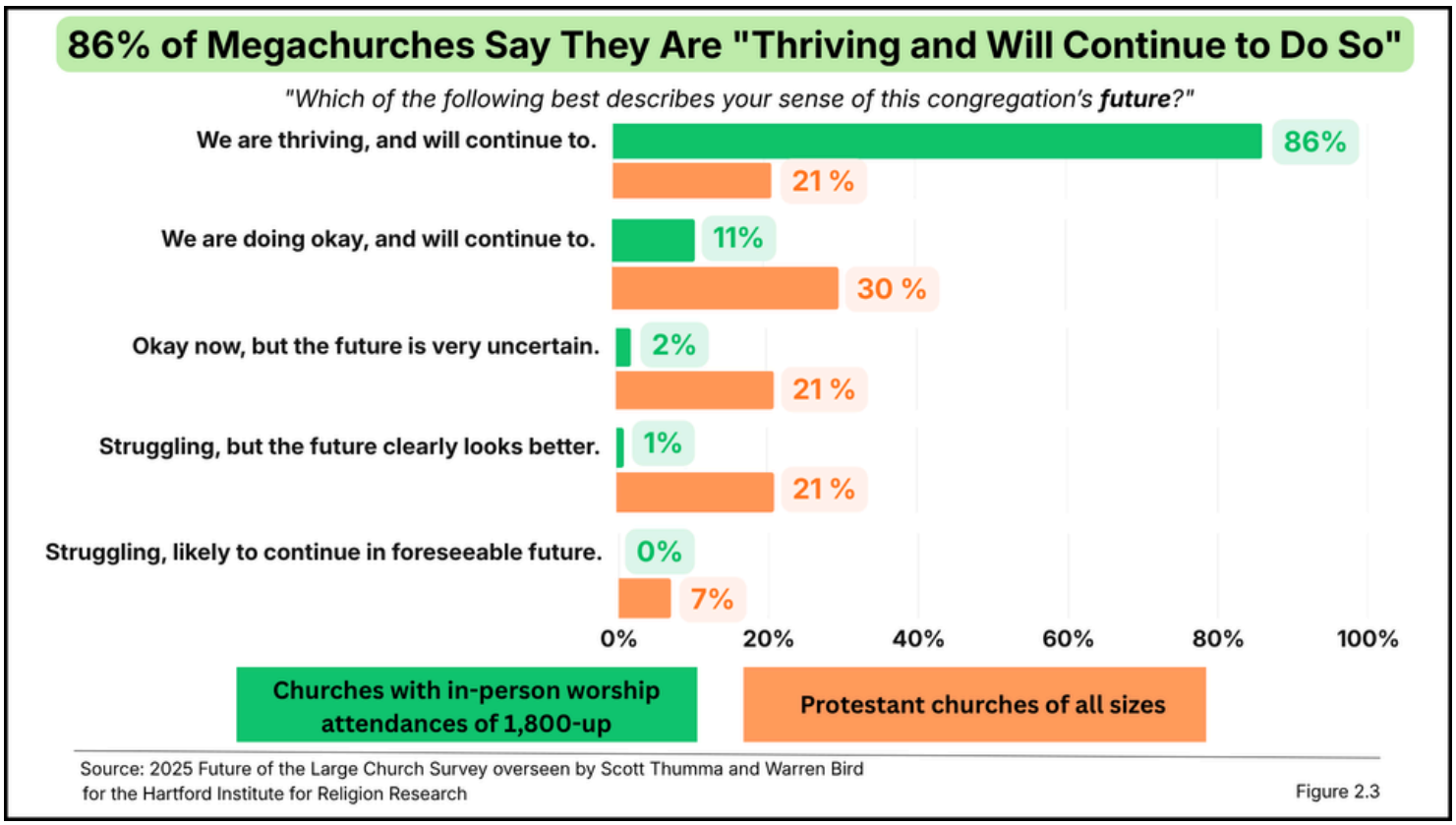


Most megachurches (86%) have a strong sense that they are thriving, and will continue to thrive going forward, compared to 36% of Protestant churches of all sizes as depicted in Figure 2.3. It is striking that when given five levels of response options–from struggling to thriving–big churches overwhelmingly selected this top option, where the comparison group–churches of all sizes–expressed had a decidedly less optimistic view of their congregation's future.

Similar to the terms used in Figure 2.2, the survey did not define "thriving," and the answer reflects the survey taker's perspective. Even so, responses to other survey questions would support this confident view. For example, for 69% of churches, **the total number of paid staff has increased since 2019.** Further, most megachurches are growing in attendance (Figure 1.1), they view their financial health as good or excellent (Figure 5.1), they're reaching beyond their walls to launch new multisite campuses or new churches (Figure 9.1), and they're optimistic in general (Figure 2.5).

Very large churches have seen similar outcomes, with 77% saying that they are thriving, and will continue to thrive going forward. Likewise 60% of very large churches have increased their total number of paid staff since 2019, 84% view their financial health as good or excellent, 37% are increasing their reach beyond their walls to launch new multisite campuses or new churches, and 77% are optimistic about their church's future.

Figure 2.3



What emphases have changed for megachurches since the pandemic? What churchwide initiatives decreased, stayed the same, or increased? The survey offered 15 statements in Figure 2.4 to test how priorities might have changed for large church leadership.

Surprisingly, quite a range of responses surfaced, from the top-ranked item, which 80% said had increased, to the bottom-ranked item, which only 22% said had increased. Areas of greatest increase encompass core issues of the health and vitality of today's church, such as these five top-named emphases:

- Young adults
- Community impact
- Higher commitment
- Disciplemaking
- Digital ministry

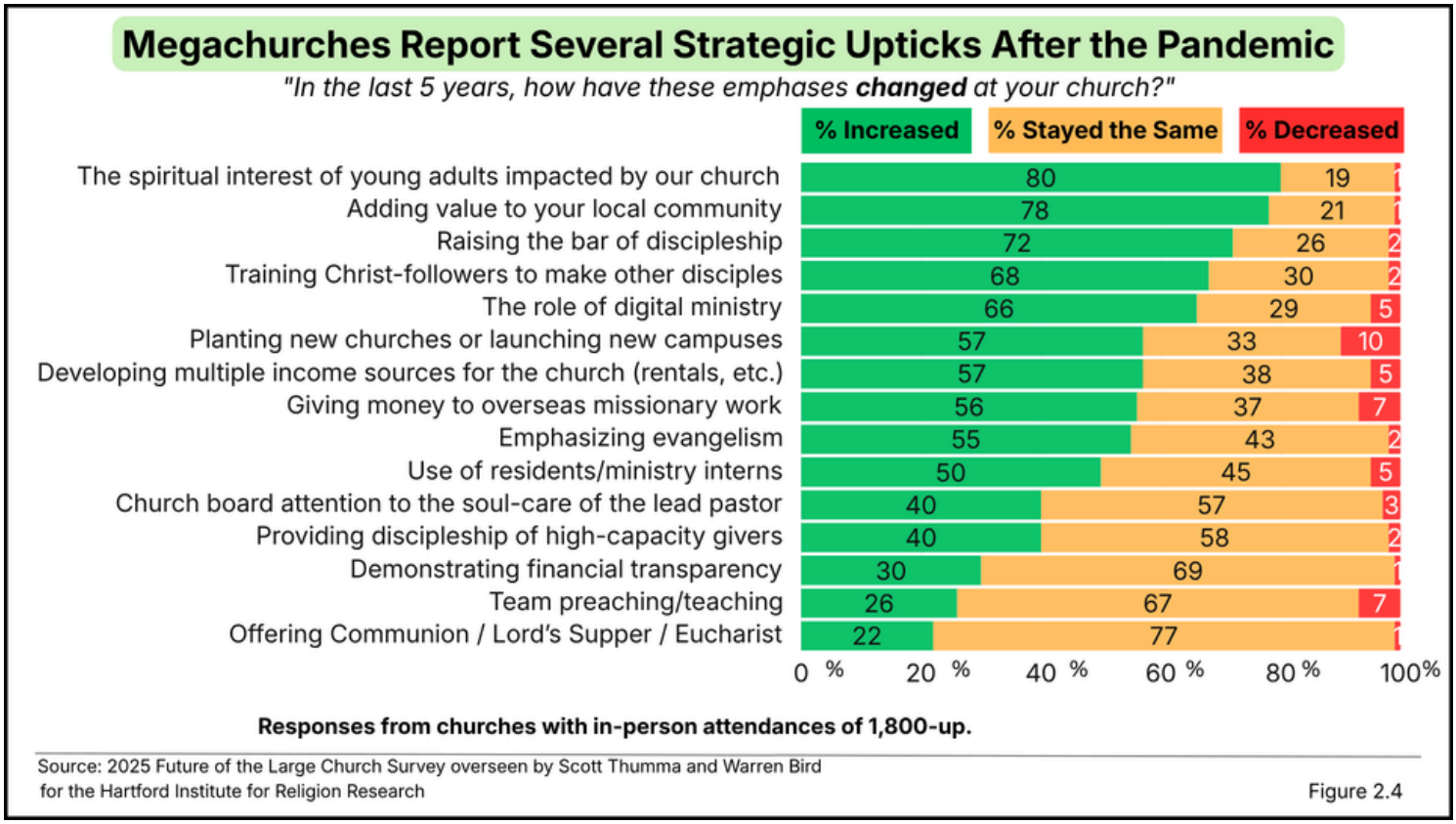
These top-named qualities, taken together, challenge any stereotypes that megachurches are an inch deep and mile wide–or if they are, they don't want to stay that way! These top choices indicate that churches are increasing their emphasis on discipleship, outreach, and service, including to young adults.

Note that this question asked about increasing (or decreasing), not starting (or stopping). During the pandemic, many congregational emphases diminished, so the responses likely indicate reinstatements of previous emphases just as much as a resurgence or new directions.

As one example, other questions in the survey documented the sizable percentage of megachurches that are running residency programs or equivalent (see Figure 7.1). Now, here in Figure 2.4, 50% of churches are saying their commitment to residency-type training has increased even further coming out of the pandemic.

Very large churches followed many of the same patterns in how they responded to the 15 areas of potential increase or decrease. The top five were the same and close to the same order as the list in Figure 2.4. The biggest changes were in developing multiple income sources for the church (much lower at 26%), team preaching/teaching (much higher at 50%), and planting new churches or launching new campuses (much lower at 37%).

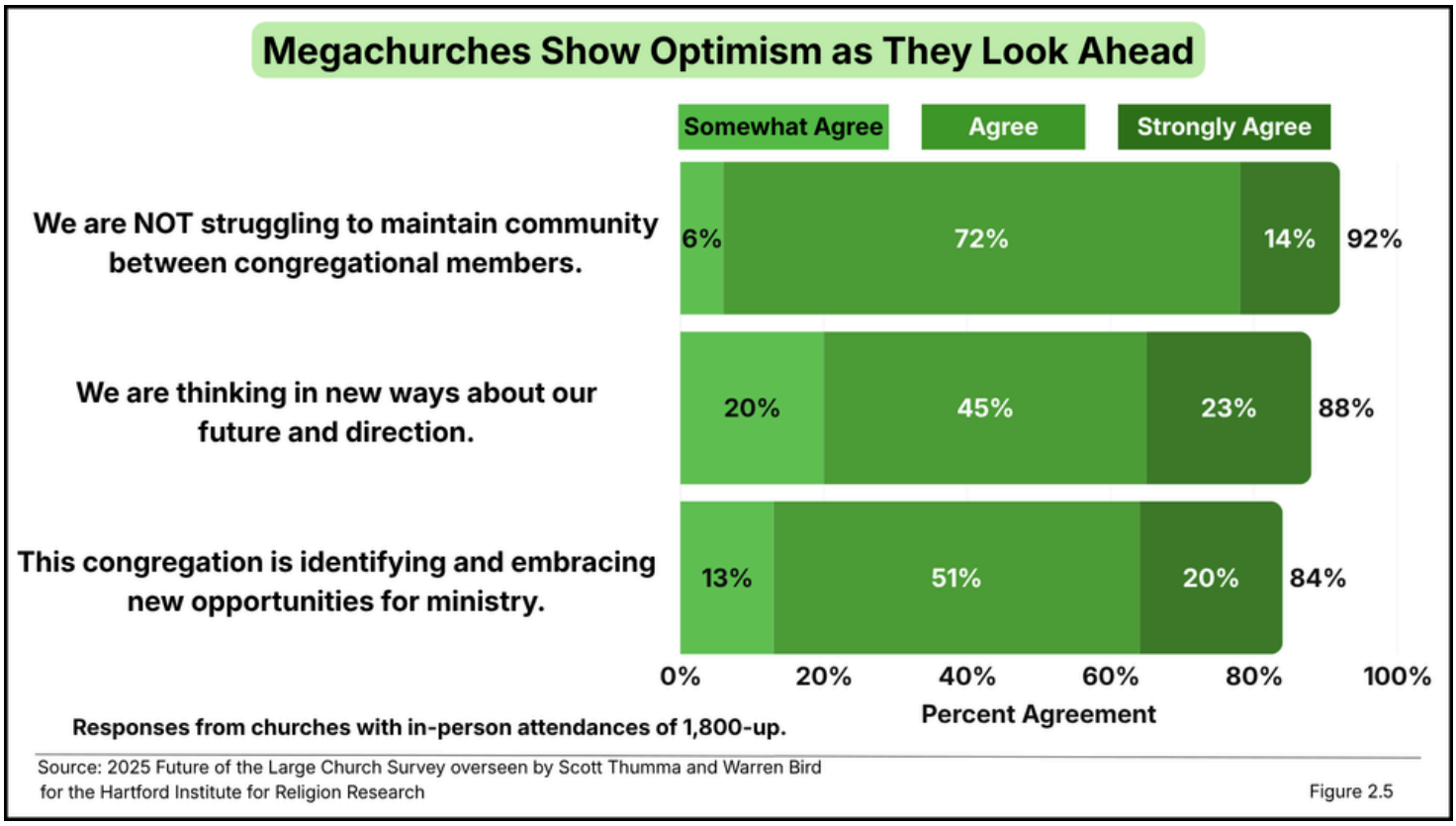
Figure 2.4



Looking ahead, megachurches are decidedly optimistic, according to Figure 2.5. They firmly reject (by 92%) the idea that they're struggling to maintain community between congregational members. Likewise a strong majority (88%) are thinking in new ways about their church's future and direction, followed closely by 84% saying the congregation is identifying and embracing new opportunities for ministry.

For very large churches, the percentages are somewhat comparable: 74% reject the idea that they're struggling to maintain community between congregational members, 90% are thinking in new ways about their church's future and direction, and 84% say the congregation is identifying and embracing new opportunities for ministry.

Figure 2.5



3. Conflict

Conflict is ever-present but not necessarily destructive.

In 2019, who would have predicted that major friction would happen in churches over issues like whether to require attenders to wear masks for health purposes? Megachurch leaders who thought they were the only church to experience division will be somewhat relieved to learn that **only 5% of megachurches had no dissent or conflict in regard to church's covid response.** As Figure 3.1 indicates, the majority experienced "very mild or mild conflict" (51%) or "moderate" (32%) conflict. Another 12% experienced more severe dissent within the congregation.

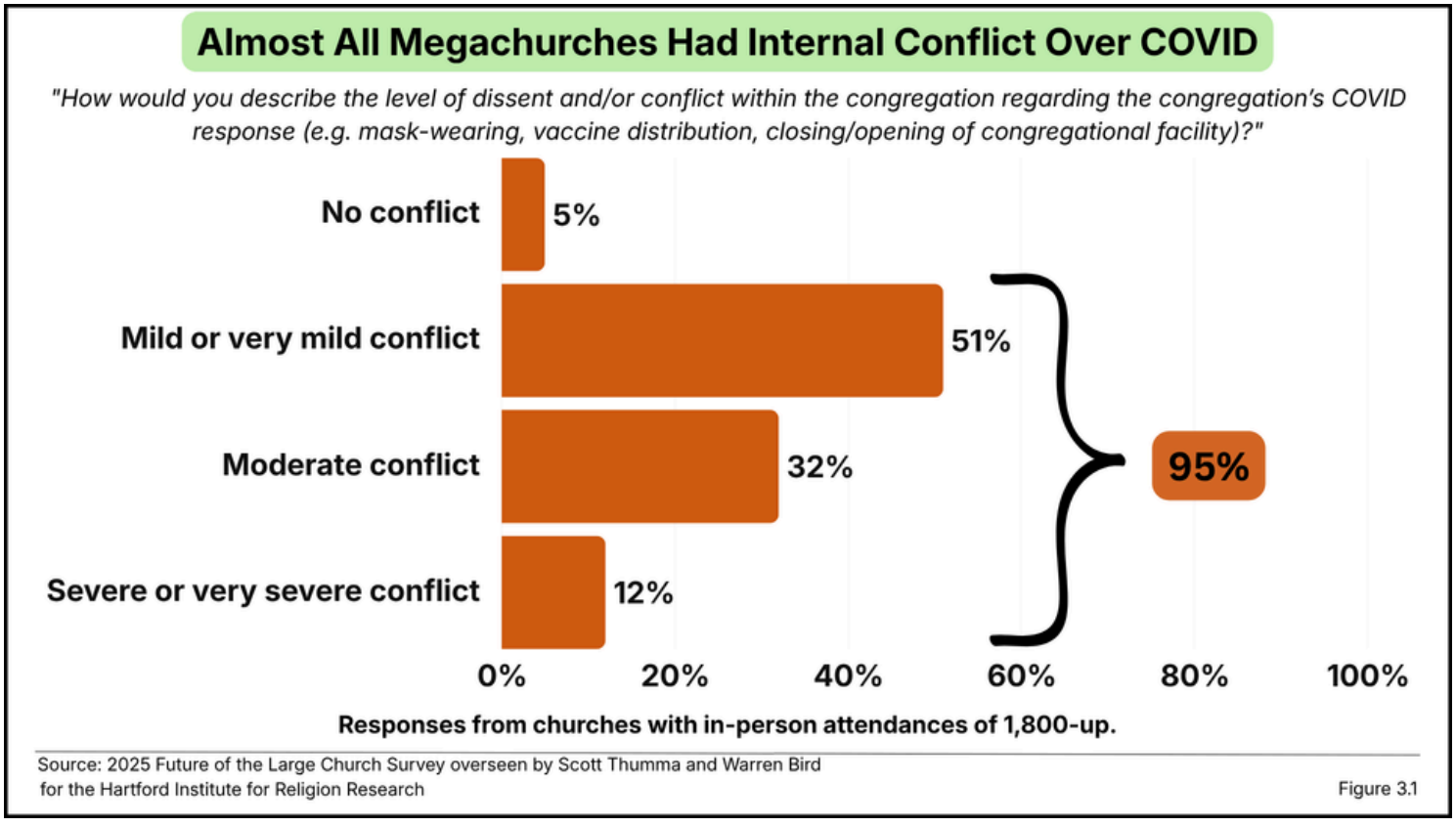
There was also political turmoil during this period, but not nearly as strong as the responses to covid issues. Only a quarter (28%) of megachurch leaders agreed that "this congregation has experienced recent conflict over political issues," with another quarter (24%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and more than half (58%) disagreeing. Megachurch leaders were divided over whether "this congregation is politically active" with a small minority (14%) agreeing, a third (33%) neither agreeing

nor disagreeing, and just over a half (53%) disagreeing. Further, a majority agreed (54%) that "this congregation avoids discussing political issues when it gathers," with almost a quarter (23%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and an equal amount (23%) likewise disagreeing. Even larger margins (80%) disagreed that "clergy should endorse political candidates," with 15% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and only 5% agreeing.

These political sentiments translate in megachurch leaders indicating a decrease in the "level of tension in [our] congregation surrounding social and political issues (excluding COVID-19)." Only 15% viewed the current (2025) level of tension as moderately or very high, where, when asked their memory of the level of tension back in 2020, 28% said the level of tension back then was moderately or very high.

Why the lack of political tension? One clue is that **the typical megachurch congregation does not draw only Republicans or Democrats**. Just 15% of megachurch leaders agreed that "almost everyone in this congregation has the same political position," with 19% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and the remainder (66%) disagreeing.

Figure 3.1



Very large churches followed similar patterns with reporting conflict over covid issues (only 4% reported no conflict). Politically they also followed similar patterns. Almost half (45%) disagreed that "this congregation has experienced recent conflict over political issues," a majority (58%) disagreed that "this congregation is politically active," a majority agreed (55%) that "this congregation avoids discussing political issues when it gathers," and an even larger margin (87%) disagreed that "clergy should endorse political candidates." Very large churches also reported a decrease in the "level of tension in [our] congregation surrounding social and political issues (excluding COVID-19)." Only 17% viewed the current (2025) level of tension as moderately or very high, where, when asked their memory of the level of tension back in 2020, 40% said the level of tension back then was moderately or very high. Finally, it is helpful to remember that two thirds (67%) of respondents disagreed with the statement that "almost everyone in this congregation has the same political position."

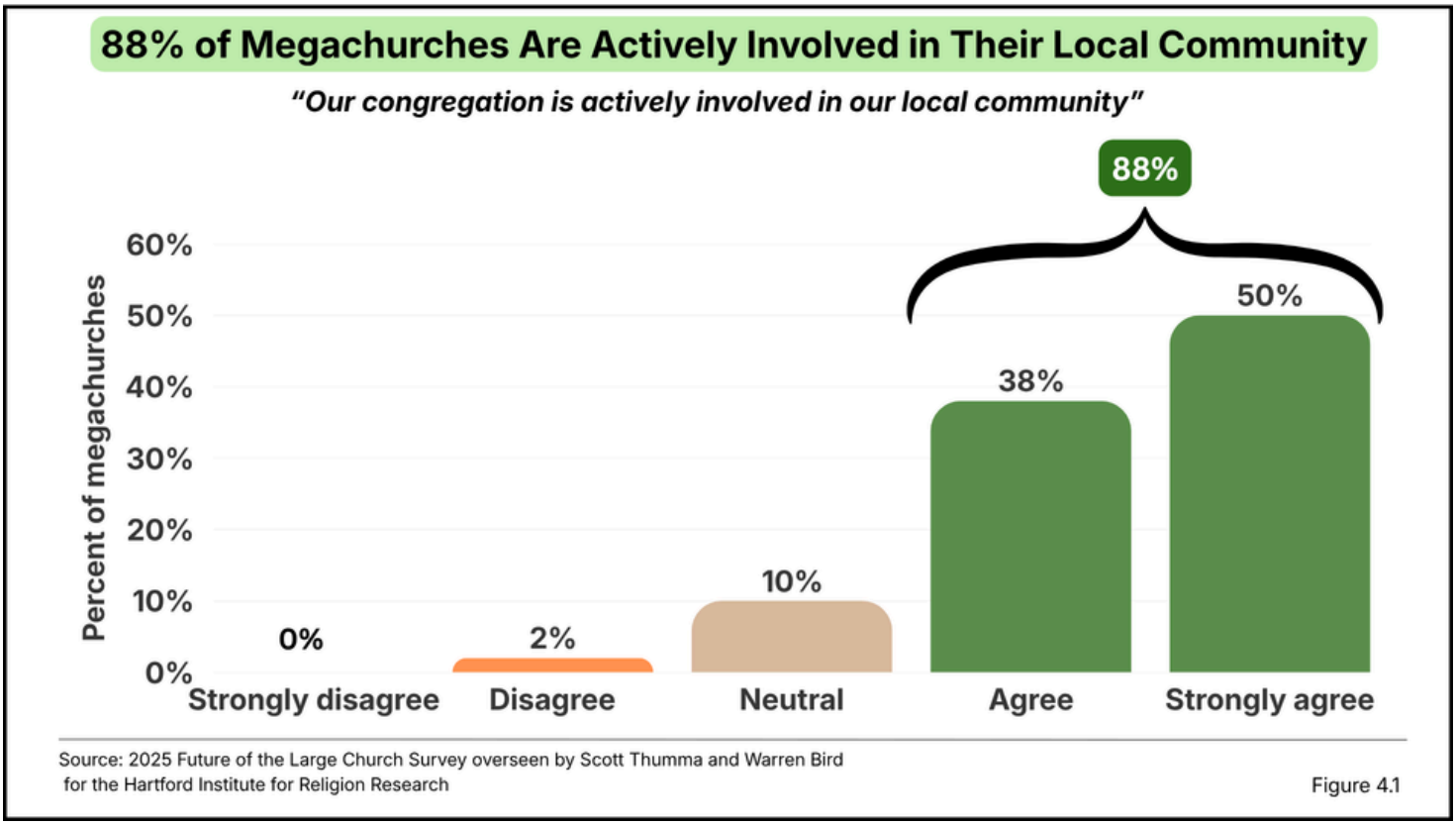
4. Beyond the Walls
Facility sharing and community service are high priority.

Often the stereotype of megachurches is that they are isolated or entirely self focused, however this data contradicts that myth. Figure 4.1 shows that 88% of megachurch leaders agree – a majority of them strongly agreeing – that "our congregation is actively involved doing service projects in our local community." This is not a recent shift either; the same statement received similar high agreement in the 2020 survey (89%).

Within this group, 73% of those who strongly agree that they are actively involved say they place "a lot of emphasis" on supporting activities like food pantries, health clinics, support groups, and other community essentials.

Very large churches likewise agree (87%) with the statement that "our congregation is actively involved doing service projects in our local community" and are nearly equally engaged in providing support for these activities.

Figure 4.1



How are these megachurches involved in the surrounding community? One major way is to open their facilities to other groups.

In a new question for this survey, more than half (59%) affirm that "one or more other organizations (beyond your congregation) use space at the facility where you worship." Of these, 60% said the organizations provide rental income or donations for the space. However, the monies received amount to only a very small percentage of revenue (1% median, 3% mean) for these churches, in terms of total yearly income.

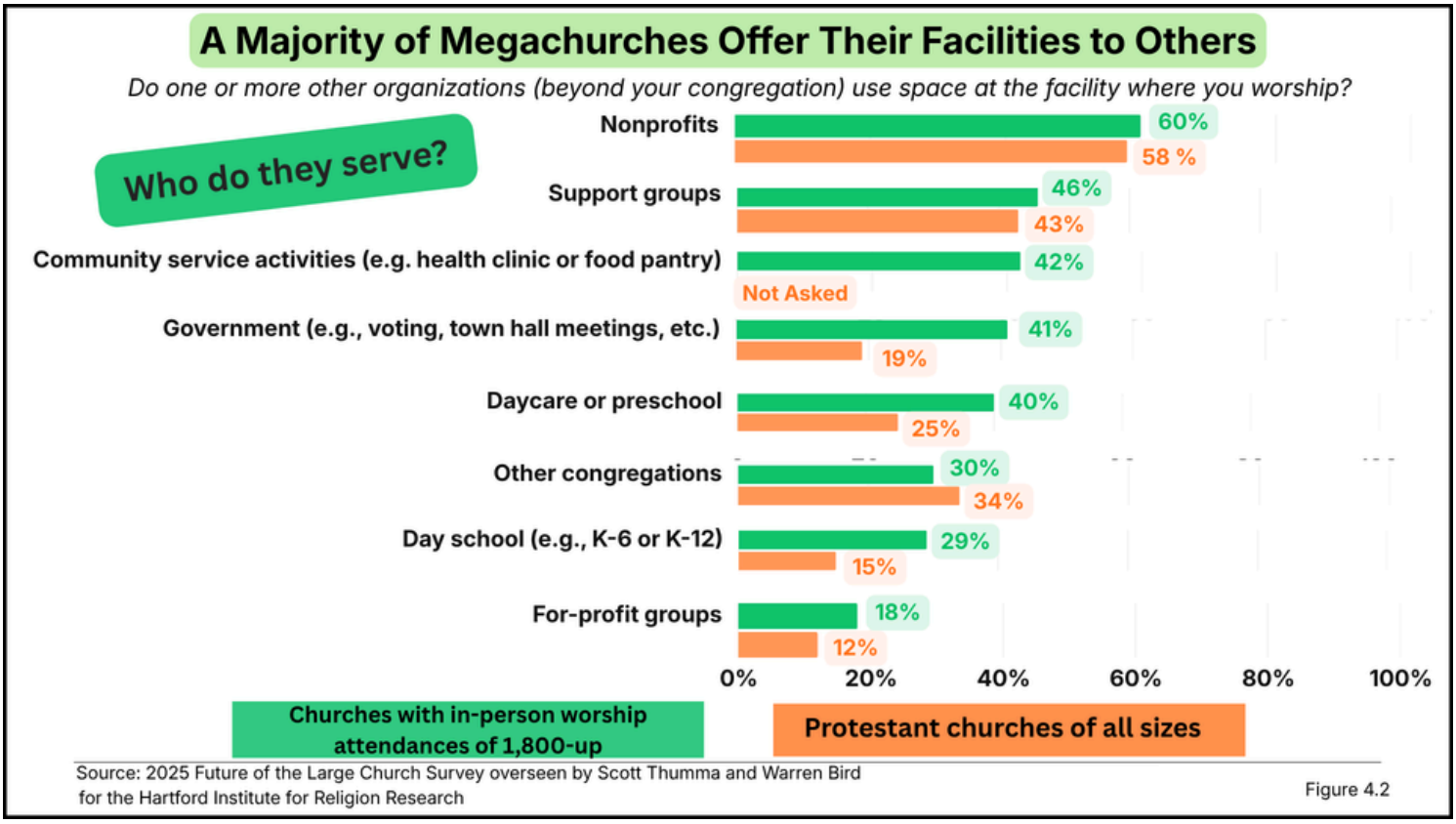
As Figure 4.2 details, nonprofits are the most likely to benefit from the space sharing (60%), followed by support groups (46%), community service activities like a health clinic or food pantry (42%), government usage like voting or town hall meetings (41%), daycare or preschool (40%), other congregations (30%), day school (29%), and for-profits (18%).

Those megachurches who are actively engaged in service projects are also more likely to see a significant correlation to a willingness to change, being spiritually vital, and to having a clear mission and purpose. Such active engagement does not, however, have a strong positive correlation to volunteering, more young adults, increased giving, or a greater growth rate in worship attendance.

Additionally, nearly three quarters of churches said they had an increased emphasis on “Adding value to your local community” since the pandemic. Interestingly, only a quarter of churches said they explored this space sharing as an avenue for adding new revenue streams from space rentals.

For very large churches, 57% affirm that “one or more other organizations (beyond your congregation) use space at the facility where you worship.”

Figure 4.2



5. Finances

Growth of giving has outpaced both cost of living and attendance growth.

Among megachurches, 86% rate their financial health as excellent or good, as Figure 5.1 shows. That’s a higher rating than these churches indicated they were in 2020. Predictably, the churches that rated their financial health as excellent also reported significantly higher per-capita giving.

The total 2025 median income from all sources for megachurches participating in the 2025 survey is $7.4 million (mean is $11.2 million), while the total median annual expenditures are $6.6 million (mean is $9.8 million). When asked about their total debt level, sixty percent of those responding to the question claimed their total median debt to be $2.1 million (mean is $4.4 million). The median debt level is 29% of the annual income of these churches.

For very large churches,the total 2025 median revenue from all sources is $3.0 million (mean is $3.7 million), with median total expenditures of $2.9 million (mean is $3.4 million). For these churches that responded, 52% of them claimed a total debt (median) of $0.6 million (mean is $1.7 million). The median debt level is 20% of the annual income of these churches.

How is all this giving received? Overall, 91% of the revenue comes from individual gifts and donations. Among megachurches, 93% describe their congregation as using electronic/online giving “a lot.” Not surprisingly, electronic/online giving accounts for 75% (median) of the 2025 income they received. By contrast, only 9% of megachurches have an endowment, though a slightly larger percentage have investments and even more obtained revenue from capital campaigns.

For very large churches, 96% describe their congregation as using electronic/online giving “a lot.” For them, 17% have an endowment.

Per-capita giving in megachurches is $1,460 (median) or $1,680 (mean) when calculated as total income divided by an average of 5,000 total participants over the course of a month. While megachurch per-capita giving does decrease as church size becomes larger, those changes are not large enough to be statistically significant.

Likewise for very large churches, per-capita giving is $1,500 (median) or $1,796 (mean), when calculated as total income divided by an average of 2,000 total participants over the course of a month.

Figure 5.1

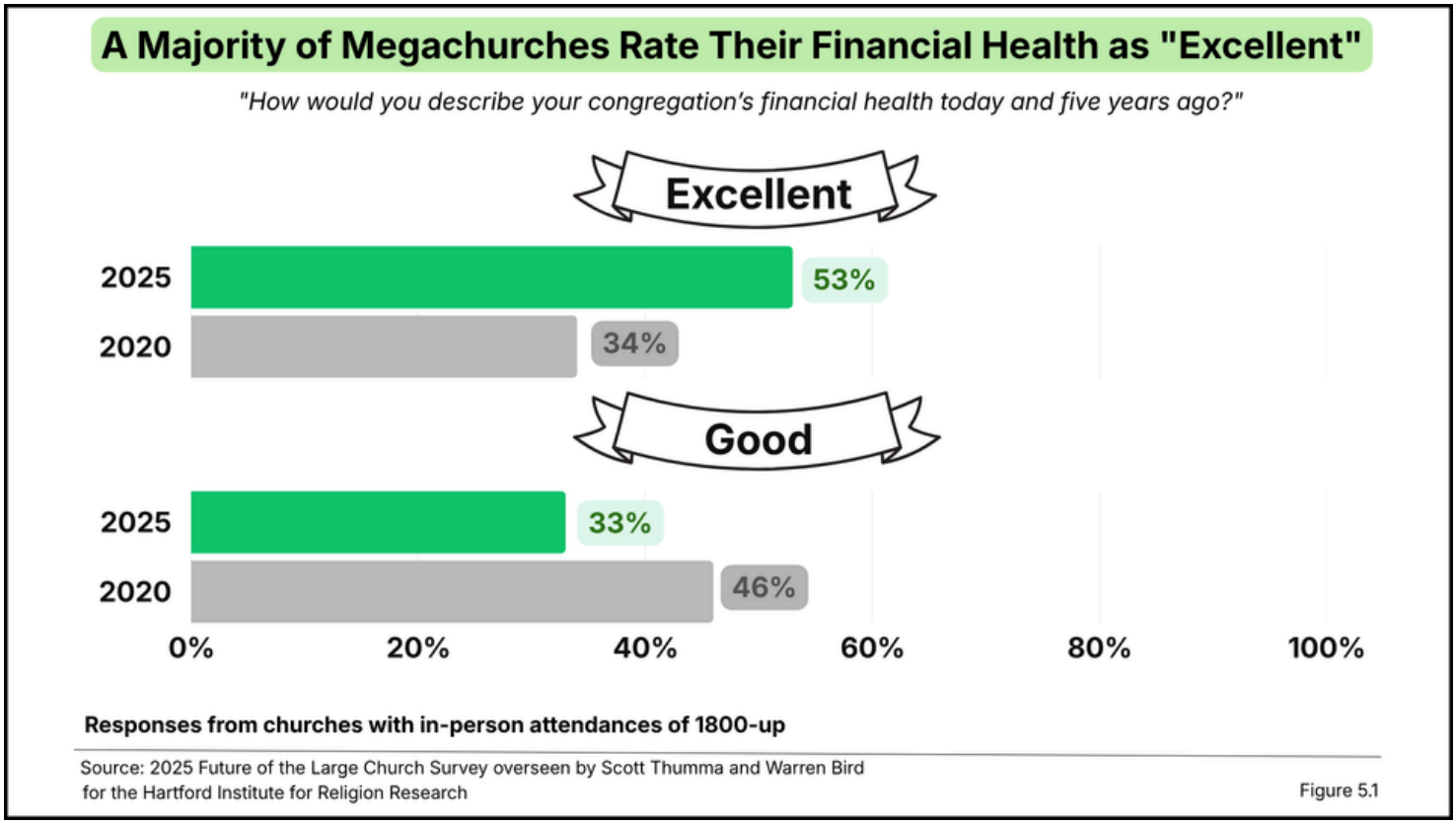
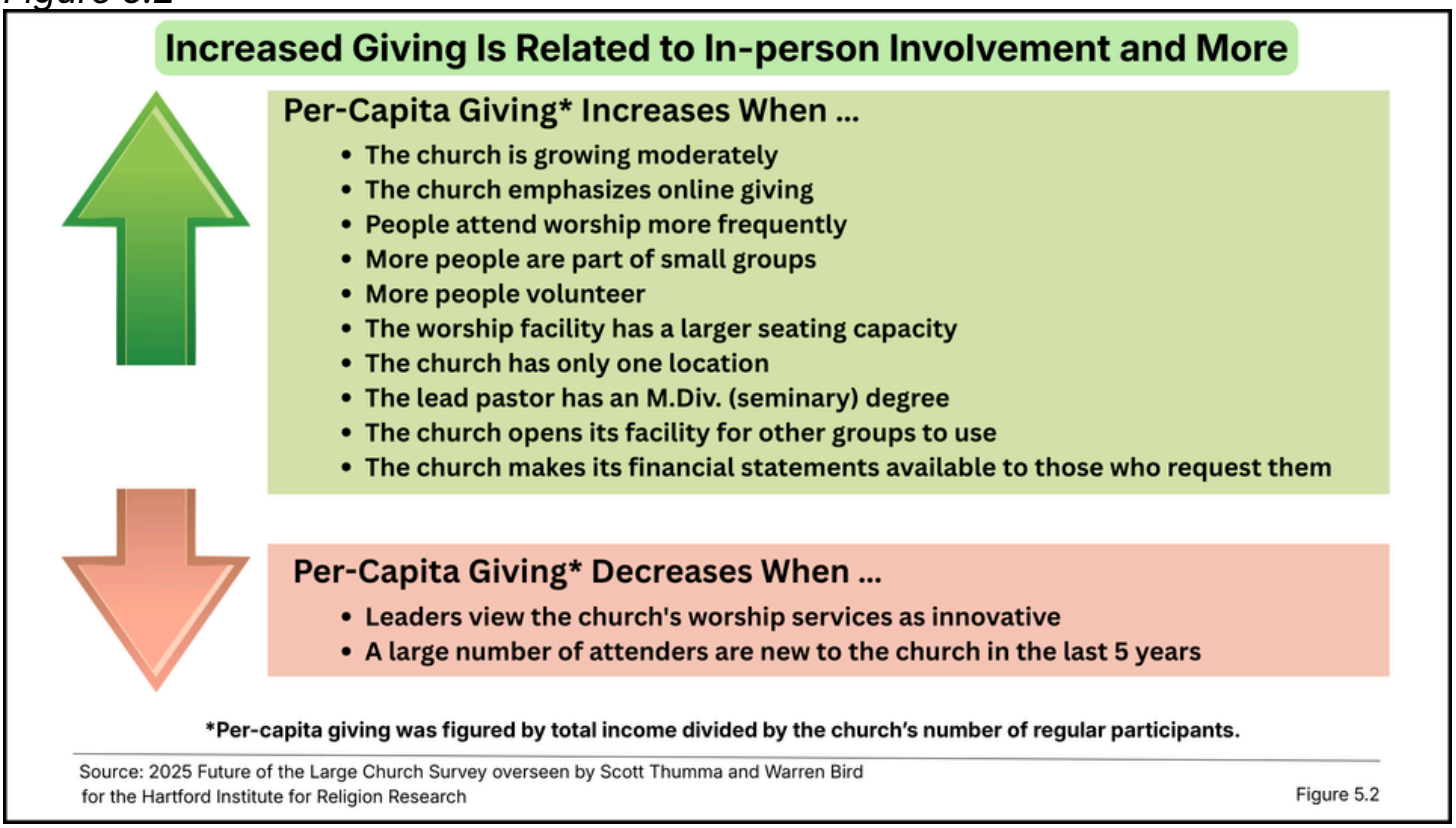


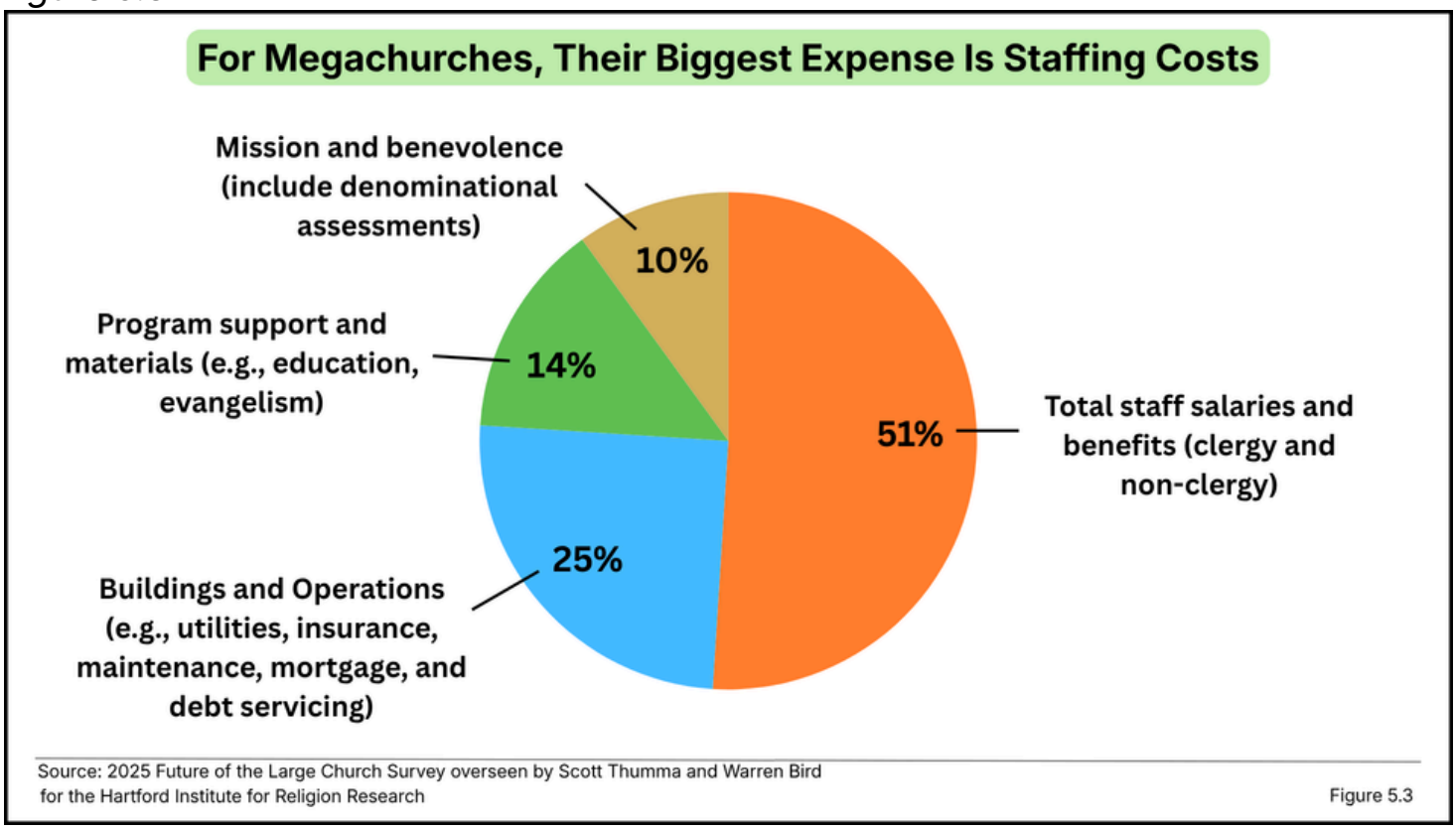
Figure 5.2 itemizes 12 areas where there are statistically significant correlations with giving increases in megachurches. While this figure shows that generosity is tied to many factors, an increased level of spiritual vitality was not one of those areas strongly correlated to greater per-capita giving. Interestingly, the highest per-capita giving for megachurches is seen where there is modest growth or modest decline (but the church is not stagnant). By contrast, churches with 25+% decline or 25+% growth have lower per capita.

Figure 5.2



Megachurches, consistent with churches of all sizes, spend about half of their income on staffing costs, and a quarter of their income on facility costs, as Figure 5.3 details.

Figure 5.3



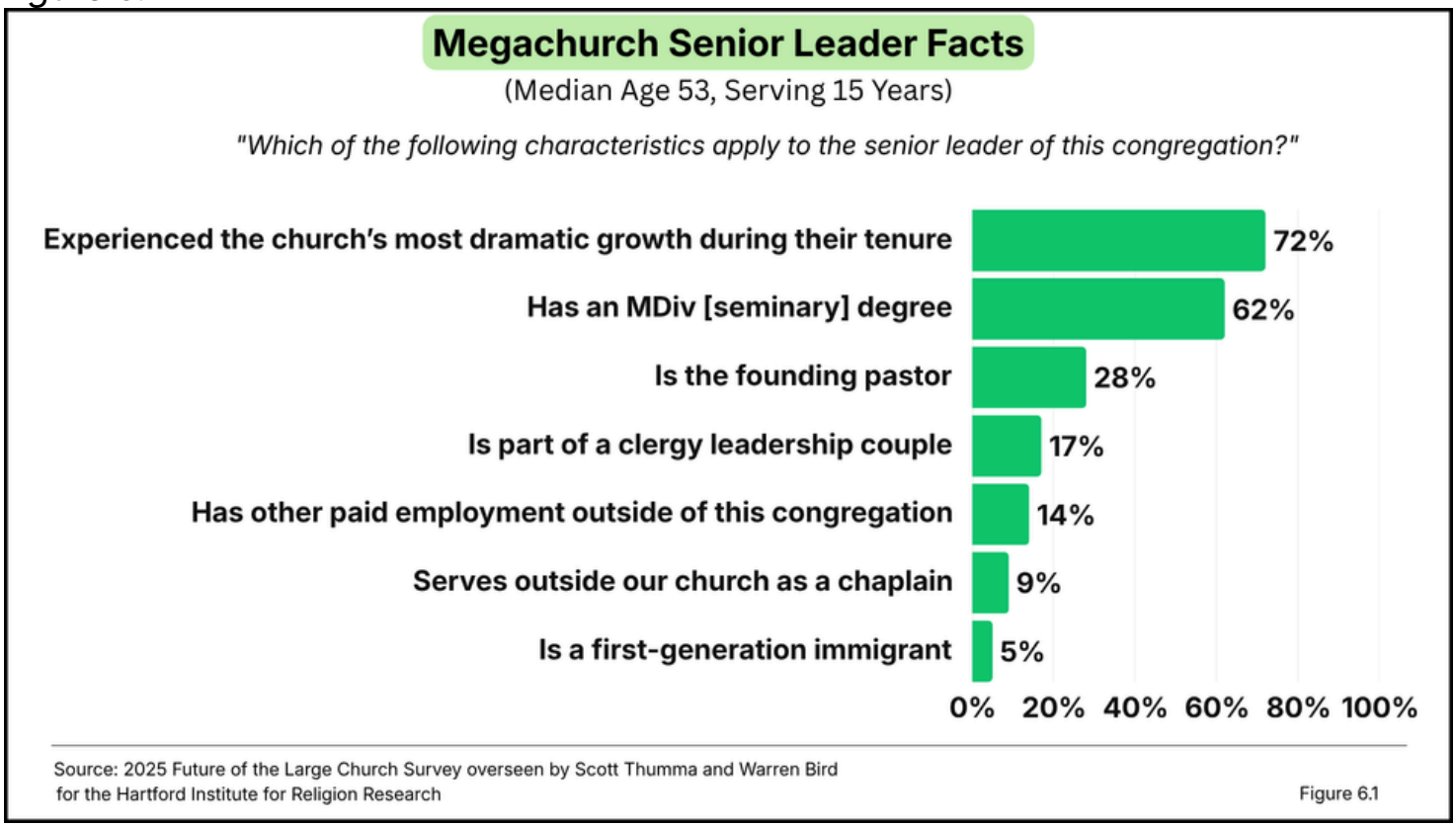
Interestingly, there is no statistically significant difference between the percent of the budget that goes to staff (or that goes to facility costs) and whether the church is growing.

Much of the growth in congregational expenses during the last five years can be attributed to higher operational expenses, such as facilities and maintenance, particularly rising insurance rates. Specifically among megachurches, insurance costs increased "in the last five years" for 96% of them–60% said "a lot," and 30% "a little." Among very large churches, insurance costs increased for 90% of them in the last five years–"a lot" for 54%, and "a little" for 38%.

6. Pastoral Tenure
Lead pastors have stayed healthy and largely remained in place.

The typical megachurch lead pastor is 53 years old, the same median age as was reported in the 2020 survey. This person has served in that lead pastor role for 15 years, again the same as in the 2020 survey. However, 62% reported receiving the standard seminary degree (M.Div.), which is a much higher percentage than in the 2020 survey, and likewise now 5% are first-generation immigrants, which is higher than in 2020. See Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1



Further, 72% of the lead pastors are the growth pastor–meaning survey respondents said yes to the question, "Did the church's most dramatic growth occur during the tenure of this senior leader?" In the 2020 survey, 73% said yes to this question. In the 2015 survey, 81% said yes; in 2010, 79% yes; and in 2005, 83% yes. So this question has consistently received a positive response by an average of 78%.

In addition, 28% are the founding pastor of the church. Not surprisingly, 100% of founders are also the growth pastor. However, among the 72% who are "successors," 61% of these are the pastor of growth.

An even more surprising finding in Figure 6.1 is that **17% (one in six) are part of a "clergy couple."** The survey question asked, "Is the senior leader of this congregation part of a clergy leadership couple?" Another surprise is that 14% of the senior leaders have "other paid employment outside of this congregation." This could include side jobs totally unrelated to ministry, such as owning a business. Or it might include closely related work like adjunct seminary teaching or being a local chaplain. The survey specifically asked if the senior clergy "serves outside our church as a chaplain," and 10% said yes.

What about senior pastor health and wellness? The most common survey respondent was someone in the executive pastor role, but 110 senior pastors filled out the survey themselves, and also opted to answer an extra set of questions just for senior pastors.

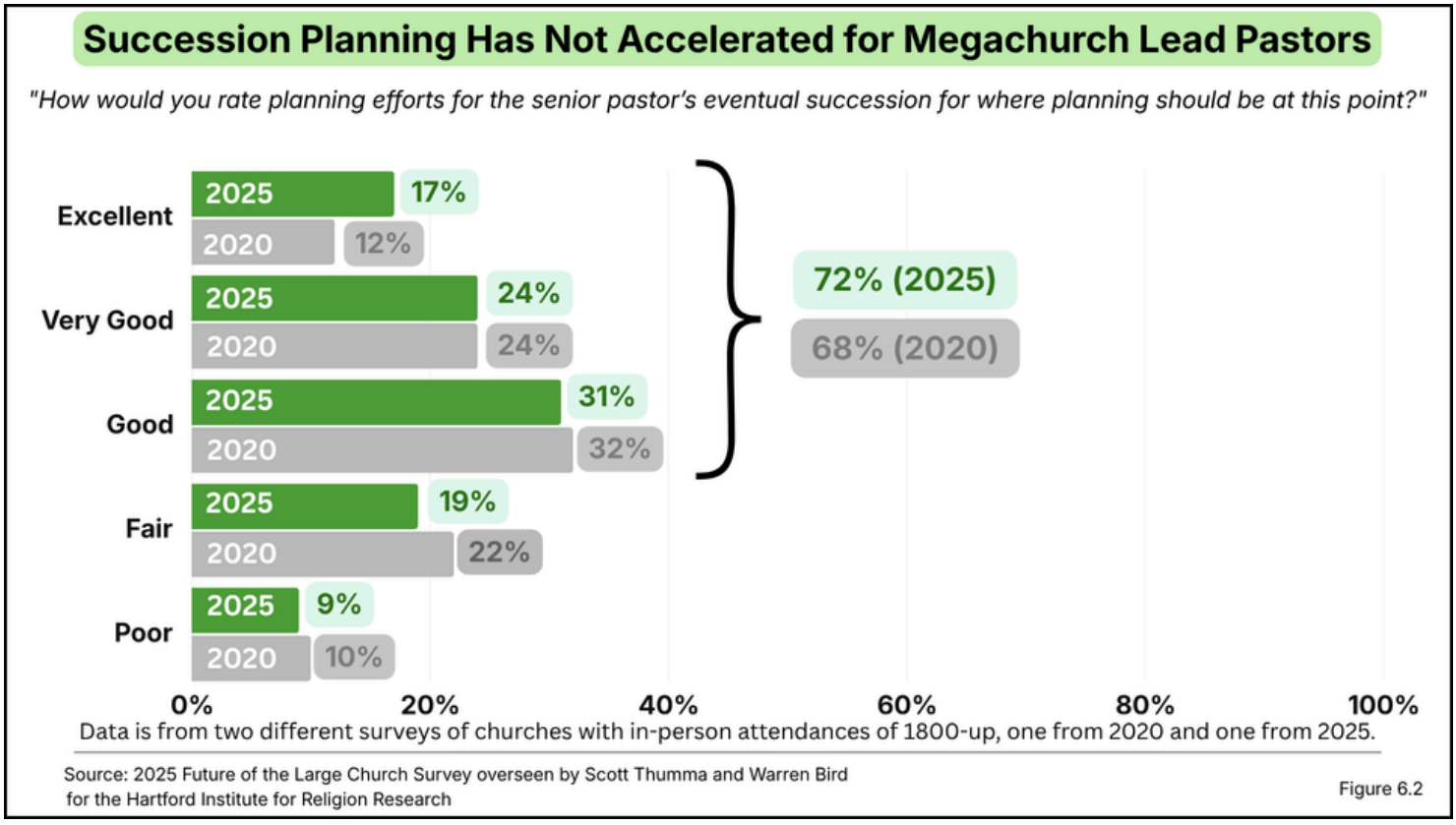
Most gave themselves a very good rating. On a low-to-high scale of 0 to 10, they self-rated their physical health as 7.4, mental health as 7.7, relational health as 7.9, financial health as 8.1, and spiritual health as 8.1 (all are means rather than medians). These scores are roughly similar to Protestant pastors in all sized churches surveyed in 2025.

For very large churches, the typical lead pastor is 53 years old, and has served in that lead pastor role for 13 years. Among senior pastors who participated in the survey, their self-rating for various health issues is close to what their megachurch counterparts said. However, 68% have received the standard seminary degree (M.Div.), and only 1% are first-generation immigrants. Further, 23% of the lead pastors are the founding pastor of the church, 13% have paid employment outside the church, 10% serve outside the church as a chaplain, 63% are the growth pastor and 12% are part of a clergy leadership couple.

Has the so-called Great Resignation happened to megachurch senior pastors? No. In the past year, only 3% indicated that they "fairly often" or "very often" "doubt that [they] were called by God to ministry." Likewise, only 3% "fairly often" or "very often" "seriously considered leaving this congregation for another one," and only 5% said they "fairly often" or "very often" "seriously considered leaving pastoral ministry." Other survey questions about pastoral age and length of tenure also affirm that there hasn't been a strong turnover.

As another measure of potential pastoral change, Figure 6.2 shows that **succession planning in 2025 is just slightly better than it was in 2020**. Both years the survey question asked, "How would you rate efforts at planning for the senior pastor's eventual succession from this church, relative to where you feel that planning should be at this point?" In 2025, 72% said "good," "very good," or "excellent." In 2020, 68% selected one of those three options.

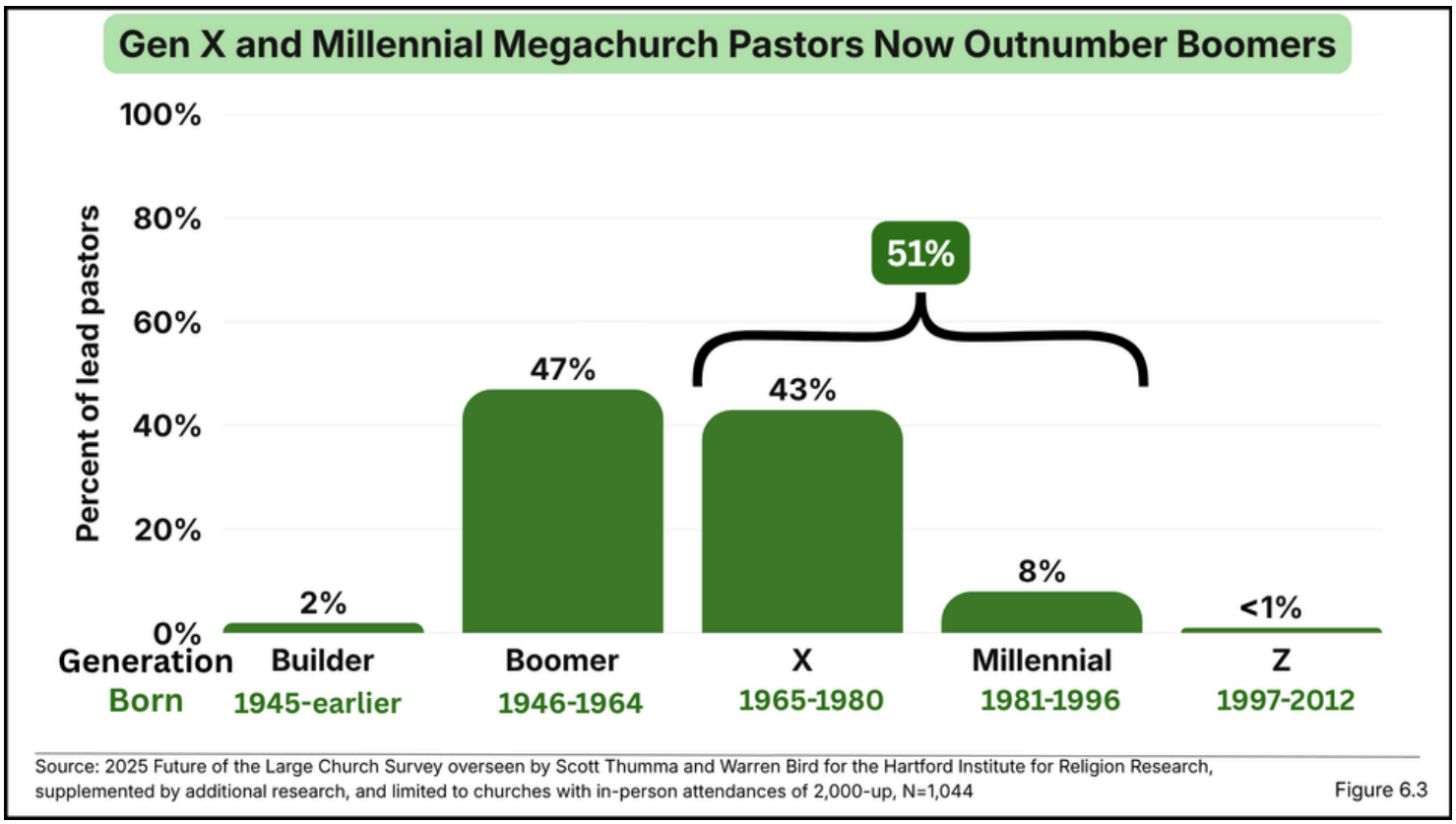
Figure 6.2



Among very large churches, only 3% indicated that they "fairly often" or "very often" "doubt that [they] were called by God to ministry," only 5% "fairly often" or "very often" "seriously considered leaving this congregation for another one," while 13% said they "fairly often" or "very often" "seriously considered leaving pastoral ministry." Further, only 63% said succession planning for the senior leaders is said "good," "very good," or "excellent" relative to where it should be at this point.

Are megachurches a Baby Boomer phenomenon, institutions that will decline or even disappear as Boomers (born 1946-1964) retire or resign? No. According to Figure 6.3, which draws on supplemental research, the number of Gen X megachurch pastors (born 1965-1980) almost equals the number of current Boomer pastors. When Millennial megachurch pastors (born 1981-1996) are considered, Gen X and Millennial megachurch pastors together now outnumber megachurch Boomer pastors. The church's attenders themselves also include a large percentage of Gen X and Millennials, which is a clear affirmation that megachurches are not a passing Boomer phenomenon.

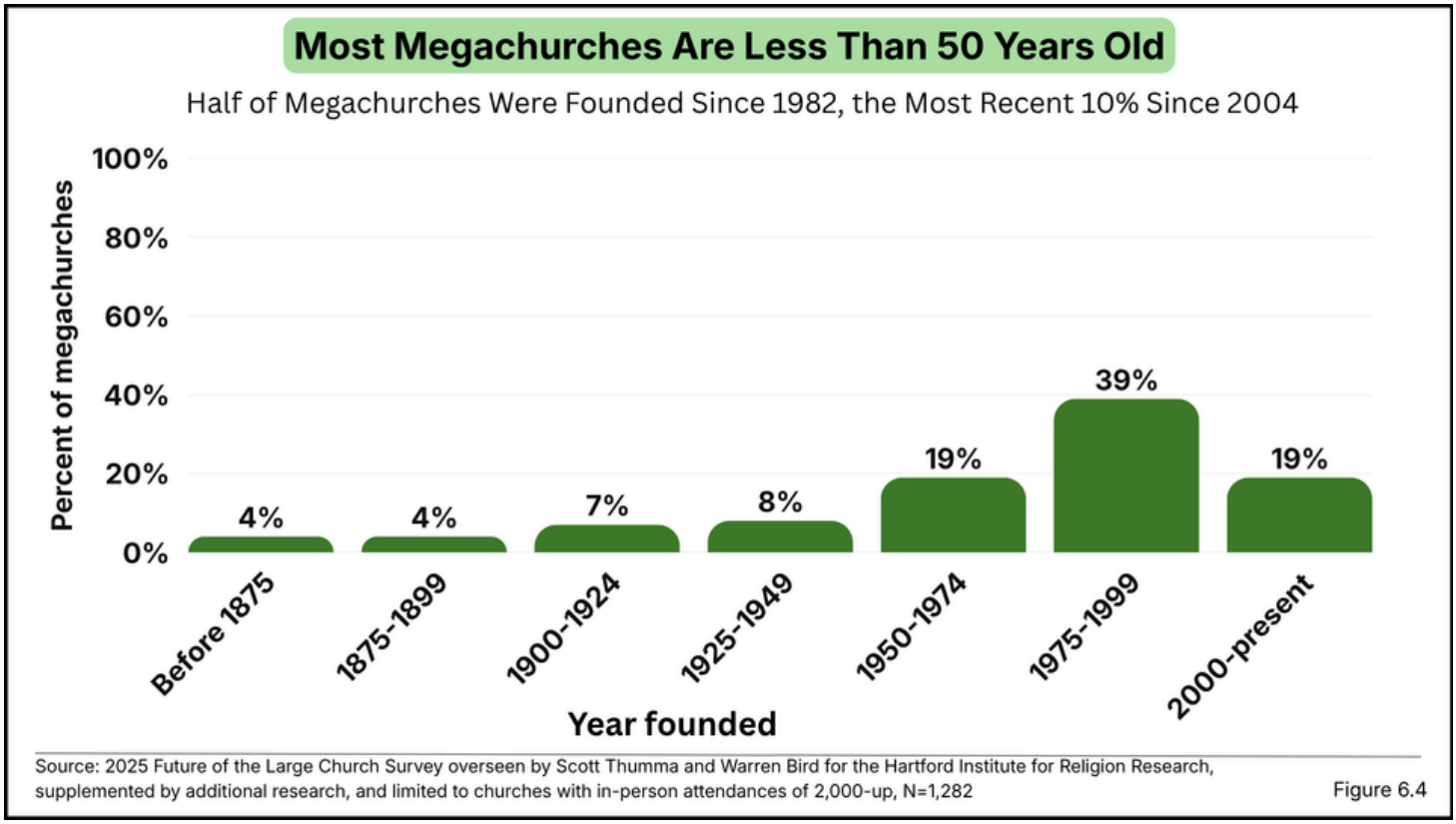
Figure 6.3



As further evidence that megachurches are not fading away anytime soon, **19% of today's megachurches were founded since the year 2000**. This means they launched, grew, and began regularly exceeding an in-person attendance of 2,000 or more adults and children, all within one generation, as Figure 6.4's supplemented data illustrates. Translation: new megachurches are continuing to develop and emerge–and this is especially true as more big-attendance churches adopt a multisite strategy (see Figures 9.1 and 9.2), making growth possible with less investment in infrastructure and in large church facilities.

Among very large churches, their average age of the church likewise traces back to a median founding date of 1982.

Figure 6.4



7. Leadership Pathways

Leadership development is creating more intentional paths to ministry.

Where do future pastors come from? Megachurches are playing a widespread and intentional role in developing pathways that raise up and train future church leaders.

Two findings from the survey affirm the rising importance of ministry residencies and other leadership development practices, Results described in Figure 7.1 affirm that during 2025, 76% of megachurches ran a ministerial leadership development program of 3 months or longer designed to develop future church leaders; and of those programs, 28% are affiliated with an outside academic college or university. The median number of residents was 6 per year in megachurches. The higher the church's attendance, the higher the number of residents each year.

Figure 7.1

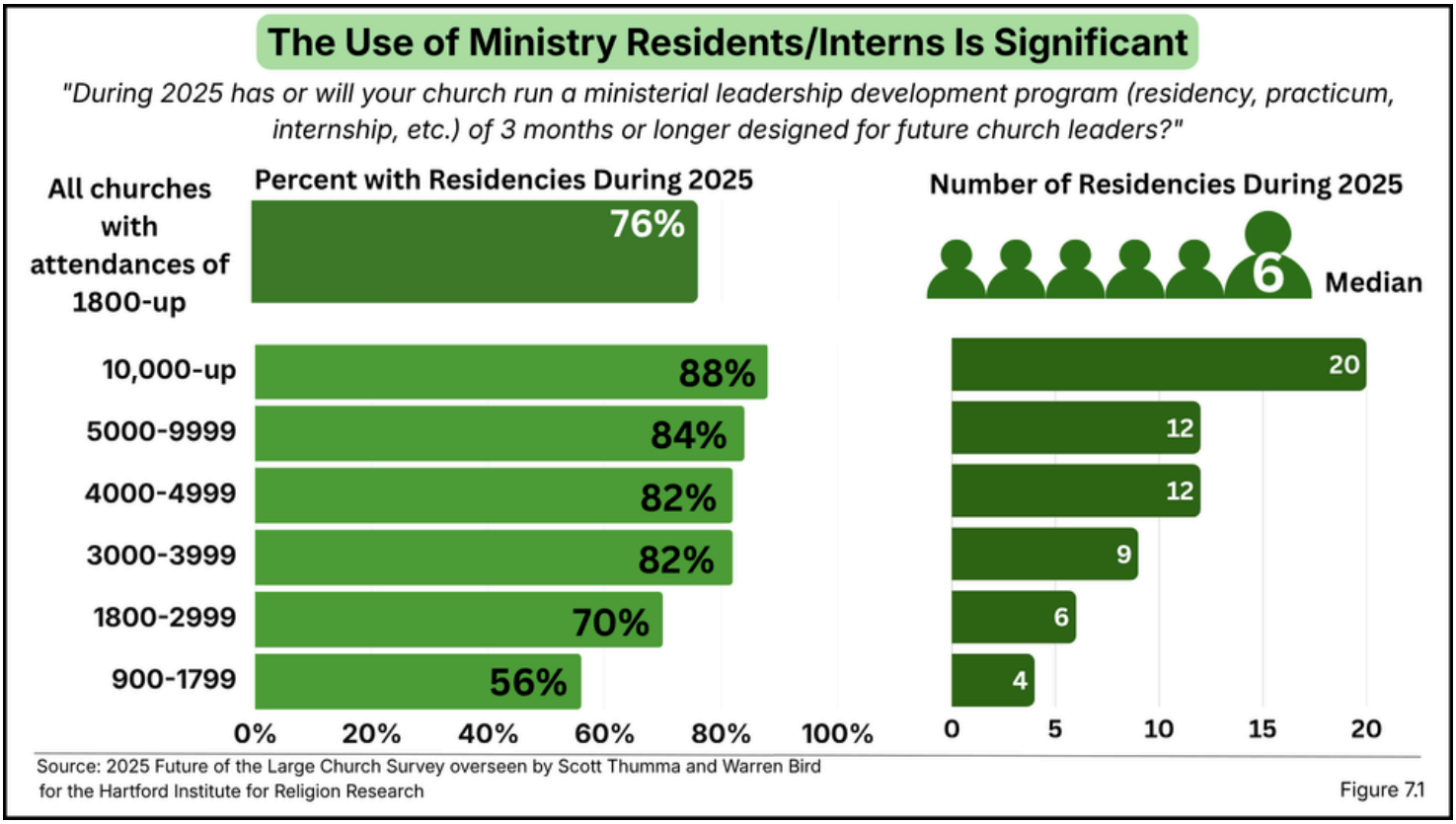


Figure 2.4 identifies that 50% of megachurches increased the use of residents/interns during 2025. These shifts mark important changes in how leadership is being nurtured and formed in these largest churches. And it is often done in conjunction and partnership with established seminaries and Bible schools.

Among very large churches, 56% ran such a program for developing future church leaders during 2025, and of those, 22% are affiliated with an outside college or university.

8. Race

Larger churches have become even more multiracial.

Martin Luther King's oft-repeated statement about Sunday morning church time being the most segregated hour of the week is increasingly inaccurate for big churches. If racial diversity is defined as 20% or more attenders from racial groups not of the majority race of the church, then 66% of megachurches are racially diverse, according to Figure 8.1. That diversity level increases with church size, as Figure 8.2 illustrates, with the trendline (the red line) moving from 56% in 2000 to 75% in 2025.

Figure 8.1

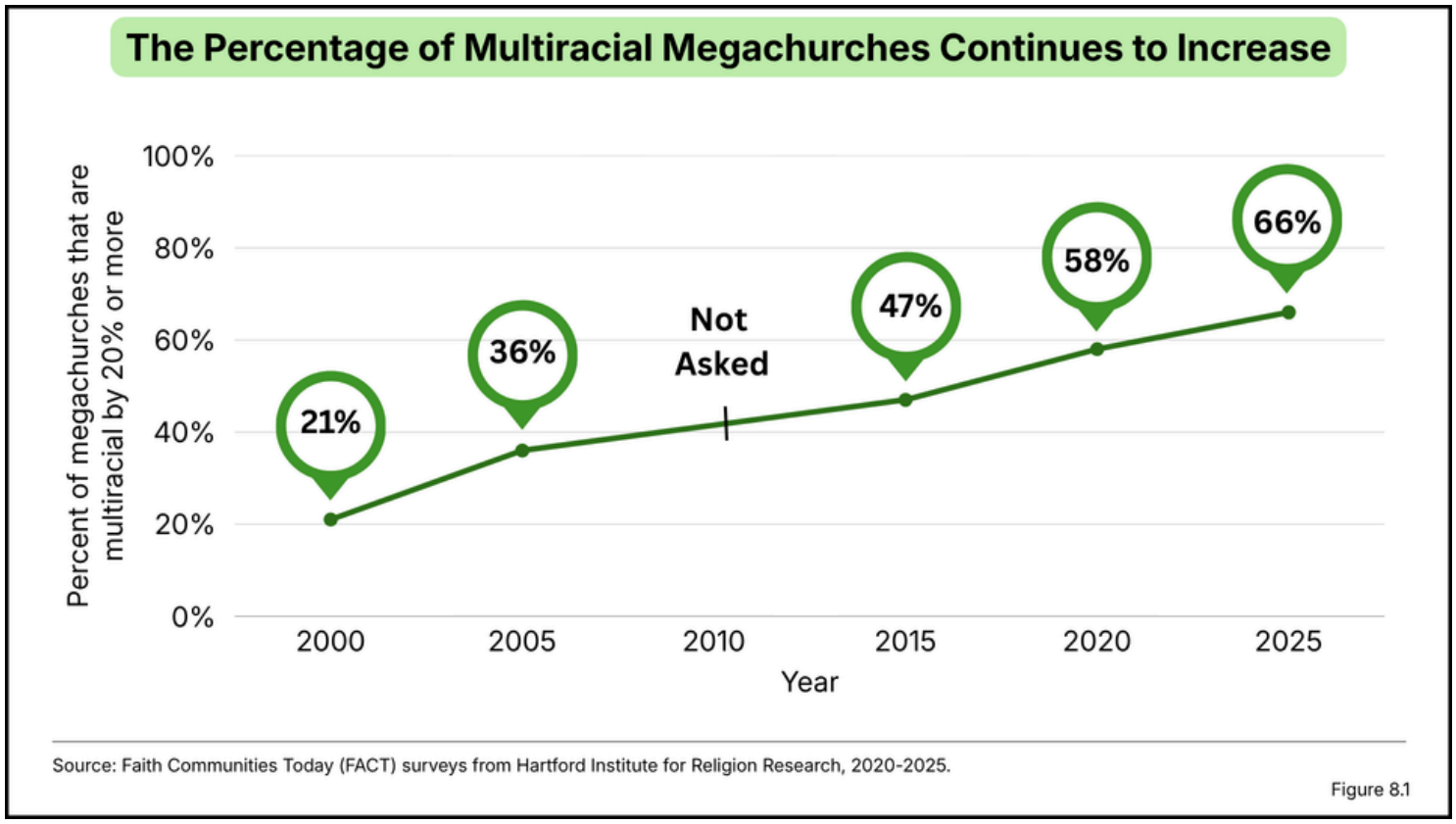
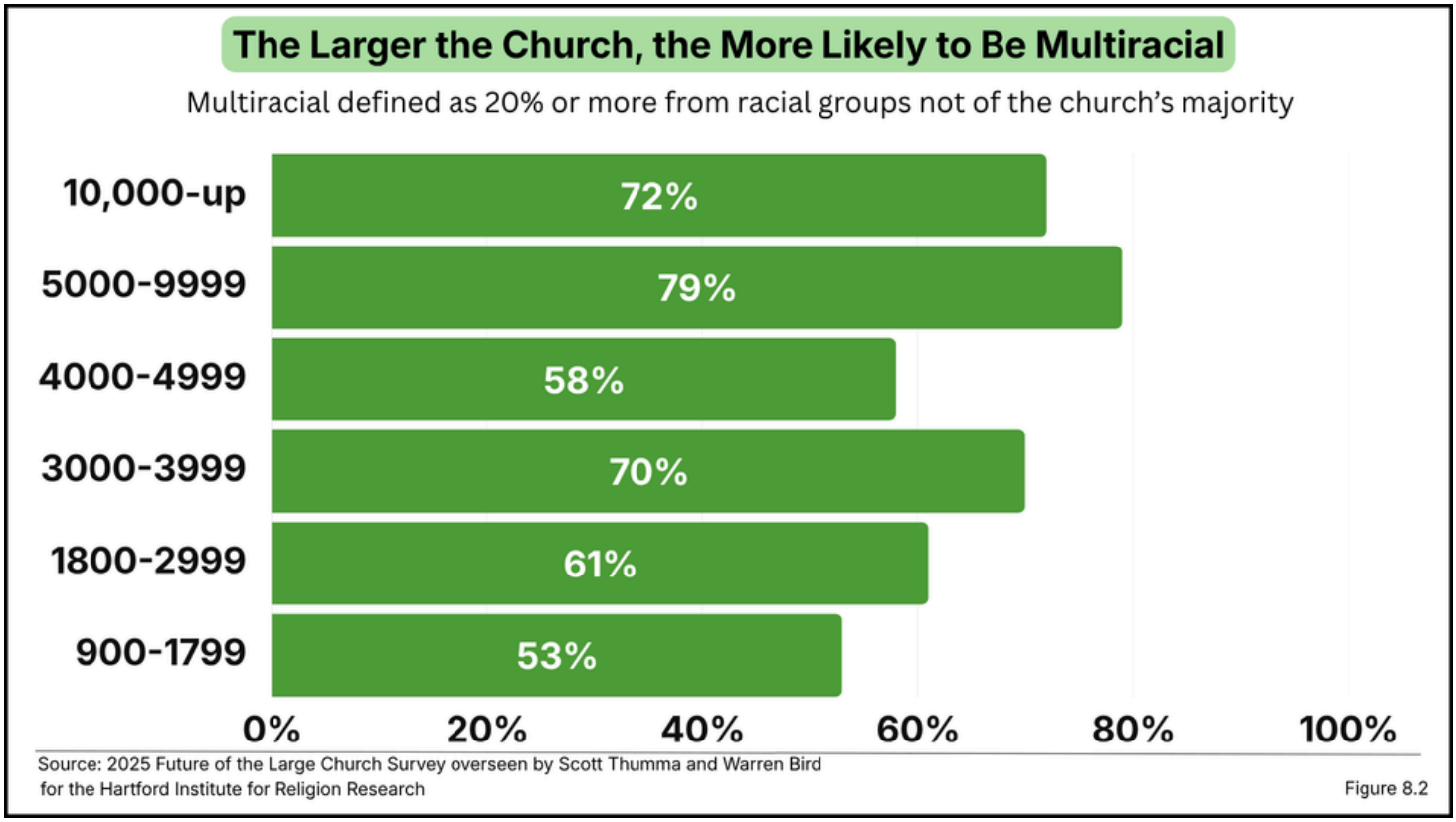


Figure 8.2



In our 2020 study, we probed ways that churches become more racially diverse, concluding that a major factor is an intentional desire to be diverse, and an intentional modeling of diversity from the stage or platform, and also at the leadership level, both staff and board. As we noted in that report, "We've known for some time that the larger the church, the more likely it is to be racially diverse, but the growth in racial diversity in megachurches is now of headline-making character."[4]

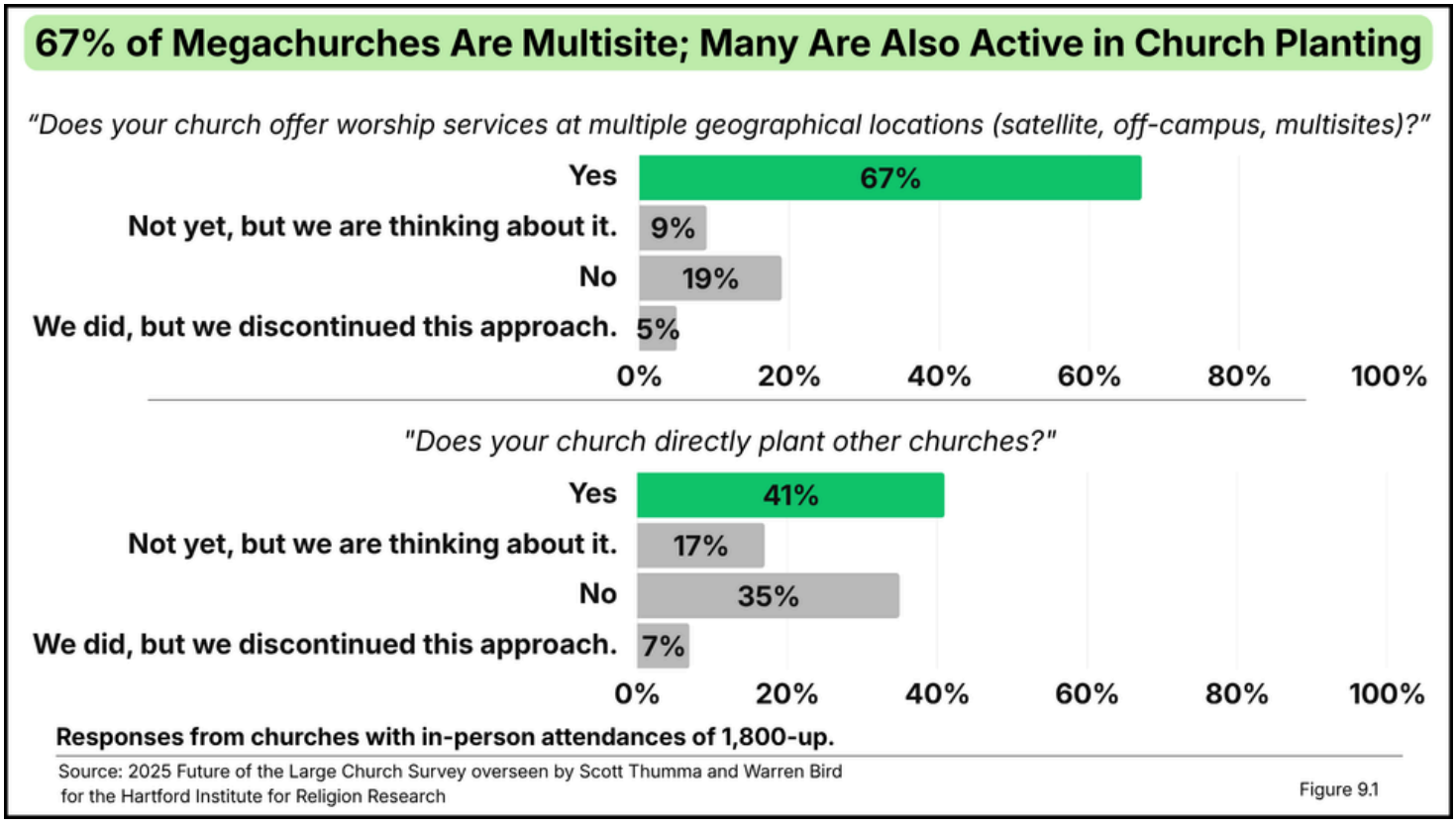
9. Multisite

Multisite churches—now in the majority—show distinctive strengths and weaknesses.

Figure 9.1 visualizes these different approaches to multisite, and it also shows that 41% of megachurches are also involved in starting new churches (an average of 2 new churches each over the last 5 years) and with another 17% thinking about direct involvement in starting new churches.

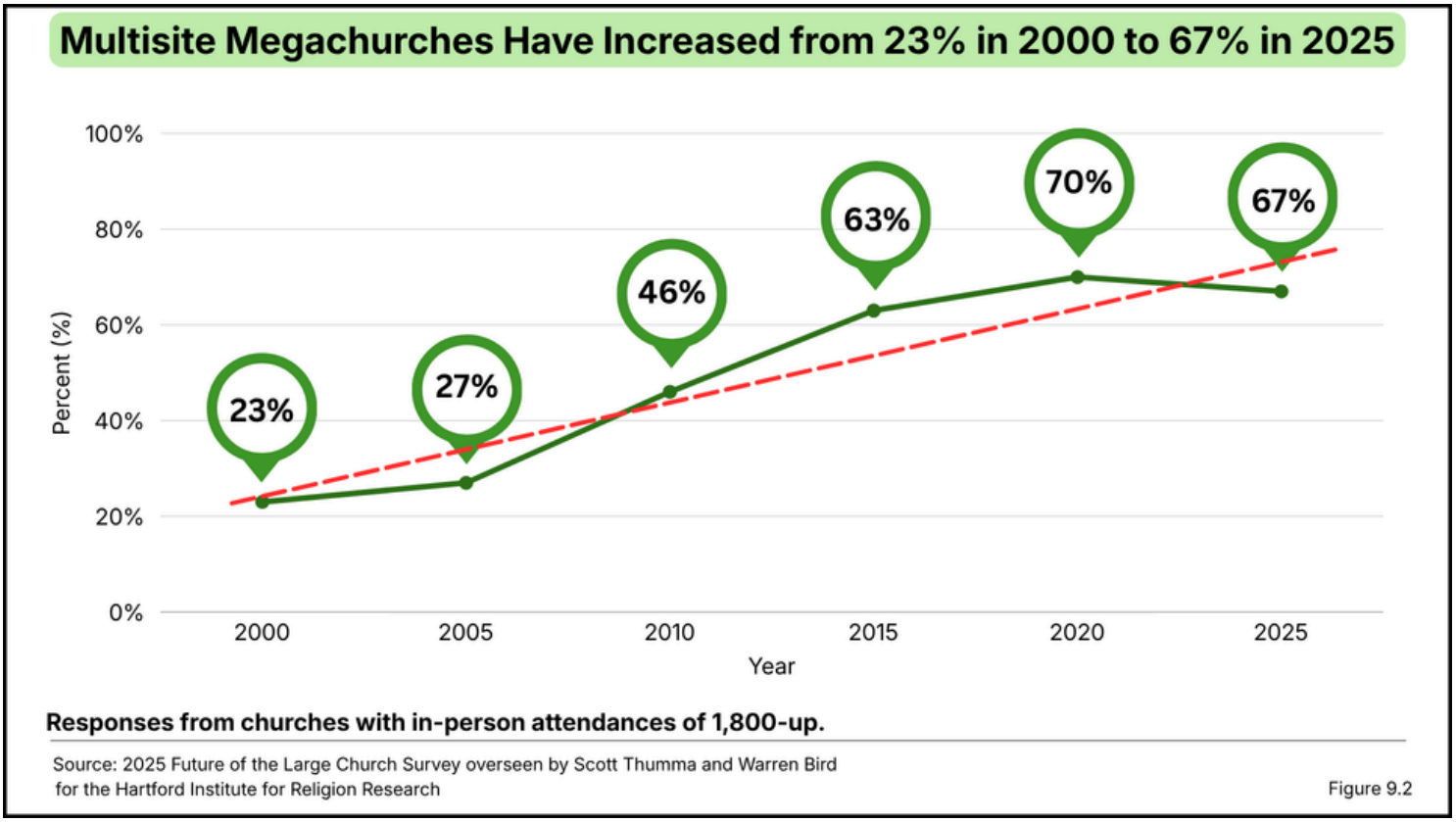
Among very large churches, 1 in 3 (32%) are multisite, and a full quarter–25%–are thinking about becoming multisite. For this group, 8% were multisite at one time but discontinued that approach and went back to being a single-site church. Also, 36% are directly involved in starting new churches.

Figure 9.1



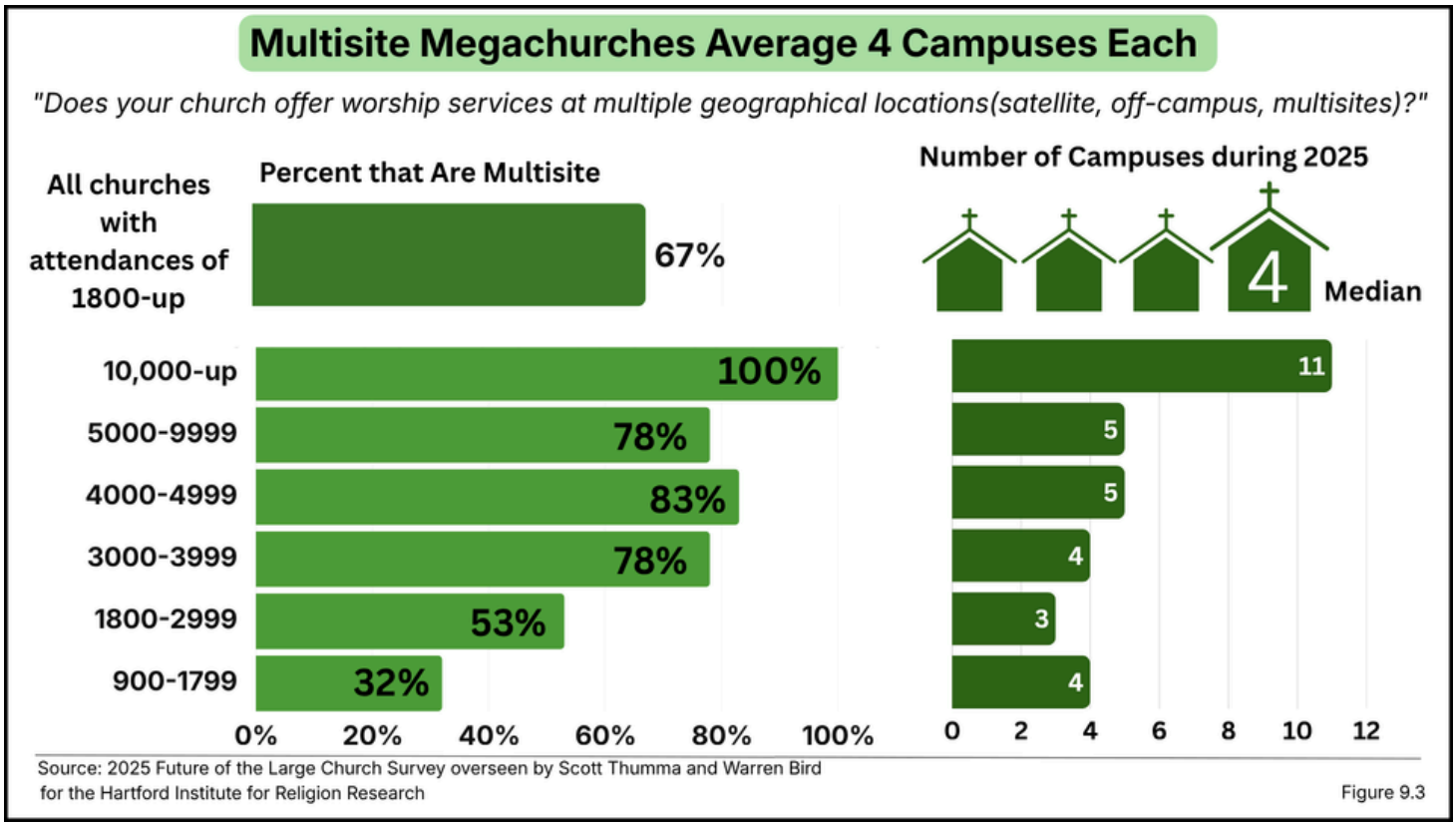
Overall, the number of megachurches becoming multisite has increased dramatically since this survey series first measured it in 2000, as Figure 9.2 depicts, noting a slight decrease from 2020 (70%) to 2025 (67%), which might be due to how many churches consolidated or closed school-based and other campus locations during the pandemic.

Figure 9.2



Likewise the number of campuses continues to increase, with an average of 4 per church, as Figure 9.3 depicts. It also shows that the larger the total in-person attendance, the more campuses. For churches with in-person worship of 10,000 or more across all campuses, the average number of campuses is 11.

Figure 9.3

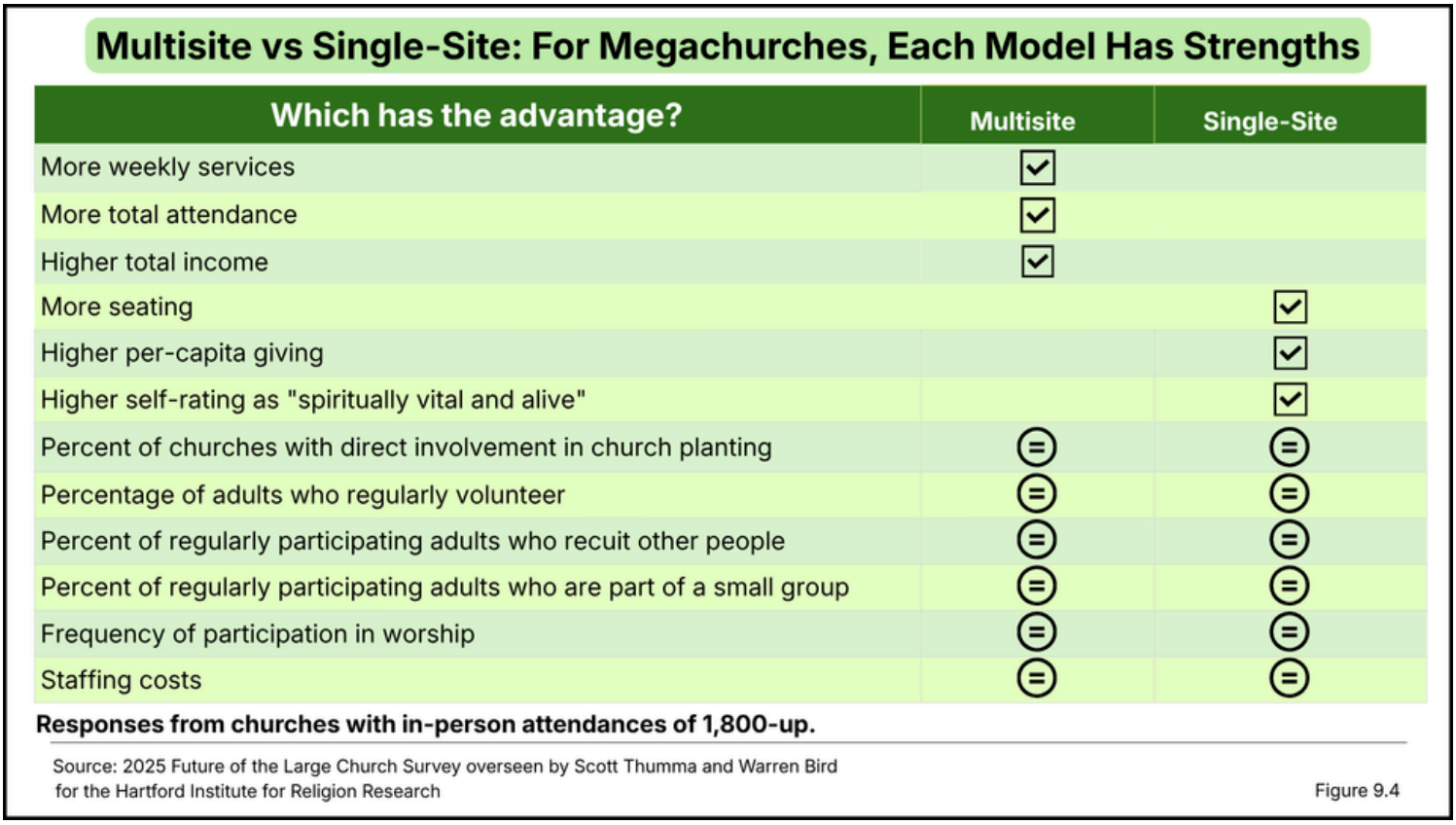


Sorting other data in the survey between multisite and single-site megachurches show that each model has distinctive strengths and weaknesses, as shown in Figure 9.4's table. For example, facility costs are no different for multisite vs single-site churches, although the percent of income spent on building costs goes down for both types of church the larger they become.

Predictably, single-site megachurches have larger seating capacities, fewer weekly services, smaller total attendance, and less total income. However, single-site churches have higher giving per capita and more robust services on scores of being "spiritually vital and alive."

Multisite megachurches are bigger in overall size, more weekly services and therefore more total income. But the following are all basically the same (statistically insignificant) for both types of churches: differences in volunteer percentages, number of church plants, percent of the congregation that recruits new people, the participation rate, the small group percentage, and the percentage of staffing costs.

Figure 9.4



Multisite vs Single-Site: For Megachurches, Each Model Has Strengths

Which has the advantage?	Multisite	Single-Site
More weekly services	☑	
More total attendance	☑	
Higher total income	☑	
More seating		☑
Higher per-capita giving		☑
Higher self-rating as "spiritually vital and alive"		☑
Percent of churches with direct involvement in church planting	=	=
Percentage of adults who regularly volunteer	=	=
Percent of regularly participating adults who recuit other people	=	=
Percent of regularly participating adults who are part of a small group	=	=
Frequency of participation in worship	=	=
Staffing costs	=	=

Responses from churches with in-person attendances of 1,800-up.

Source: 2025 Future of the Large Church Survey overseen by Scott Thumma and Warren Bird for the Hartford Institute for Religion Research

Figure 9.4

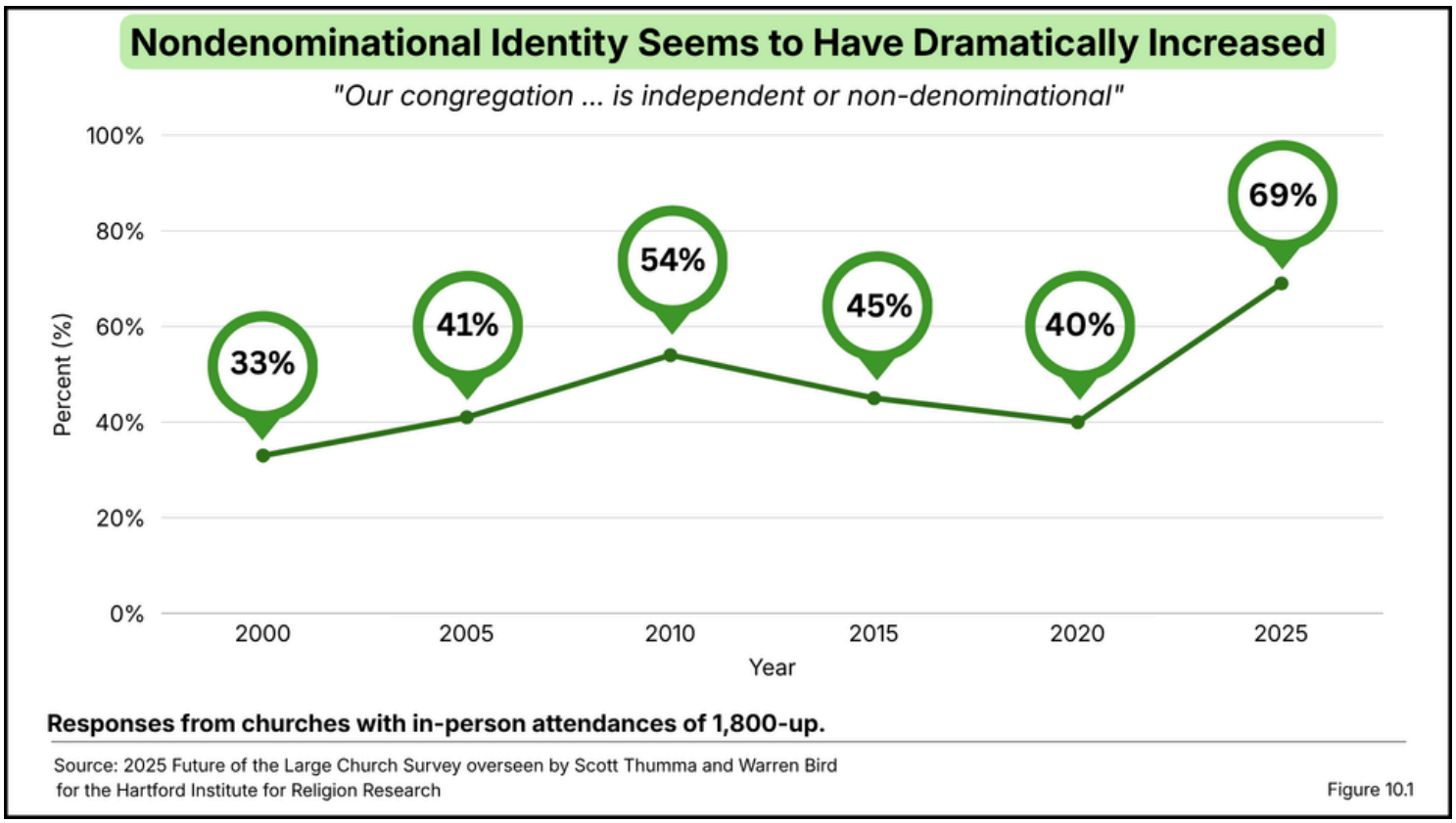
10. Denominations
Denominational identification has decreased.

One of the more curious findings of the survey appears in Figure 10.1 which shows a big jump in megachurches that identify as “independent or non-denominational” vs. the alternate choice of “it is part of a Protestant denomination.” We have no good explanation for why so many indicated they are non-denominational. The exodus of a few megachurches from the United Methodist denomination between 2020 and 2025 is not enough to explain this jump.

Whatever it means, **the clear message of this functional nondenominationalism is that institutional loyalty is weaker now than at any time in the 25-year run of this survey series**. Many others may be calling themselves nondenominational while still maintaining their official connection to a denomination.

Very large churches did not show a similar increase, with only 51% indicating they are “independent or non-denominational.”

Figure 10.1



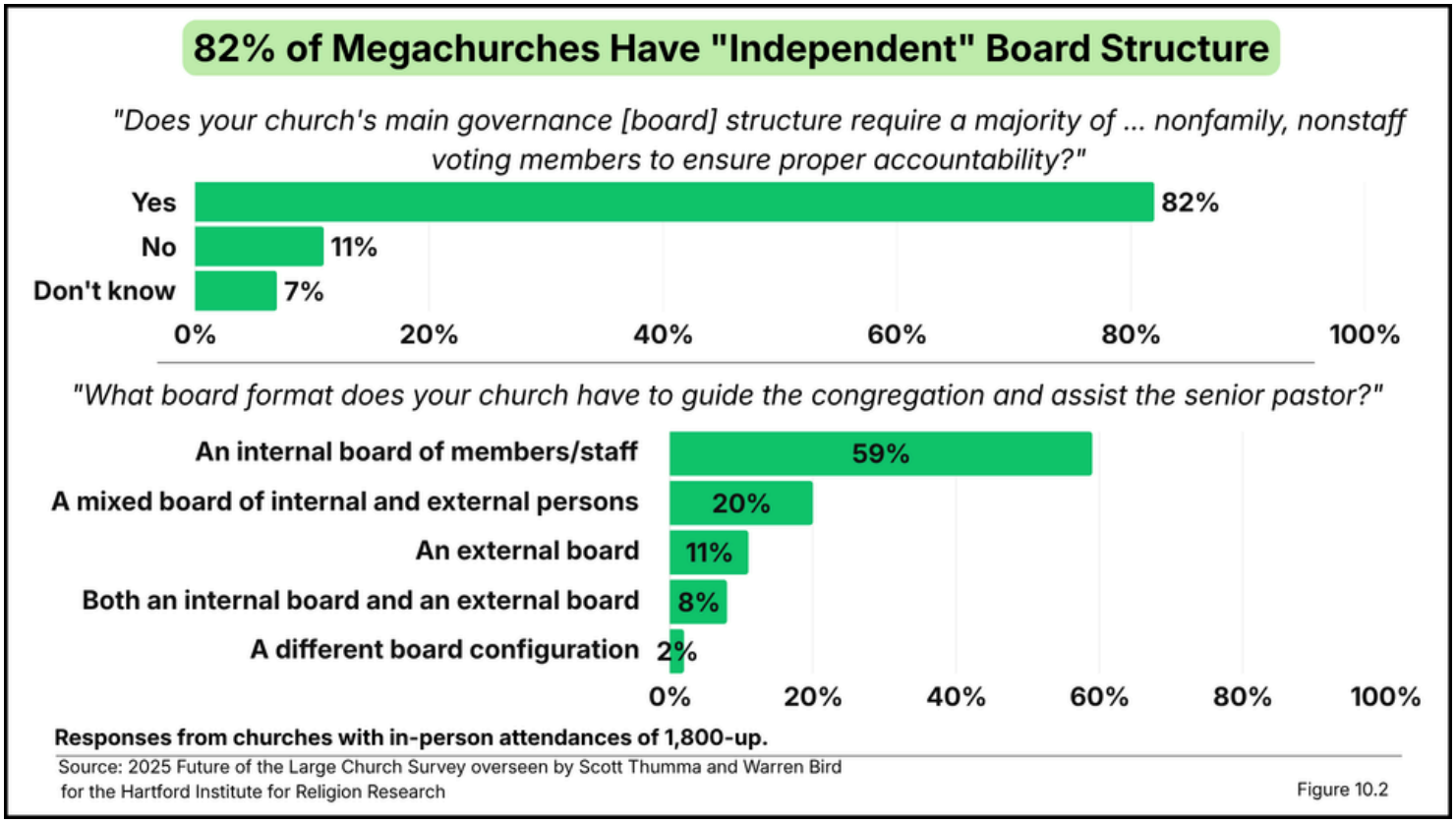
Whether denominationally connected or not, most megachurches (82%) have a governance (board) structure that has a majority of nonfamily, nonstaff voting members to ensure accountability, according to Figure 10.2. Further, the majority (59%) has an internal governance board made up of church members and staff.

Further this "main" governance board is made up of 8 voting members (median).

In very large churches, 80% have a main governance structure that requires a majority of independent voting members to ensure accountability, and 69% have an internal governance board made up of church members and staff.

Among megachurches, we asked if the "Church board's attention to the soul-care of the lead pastor" had changed in the last five years and the majority (57%) said it had stayed about the same, 40% said it had increased, and 3% had decreased, as visualized back in Figure 2.4.

Figure 10.2

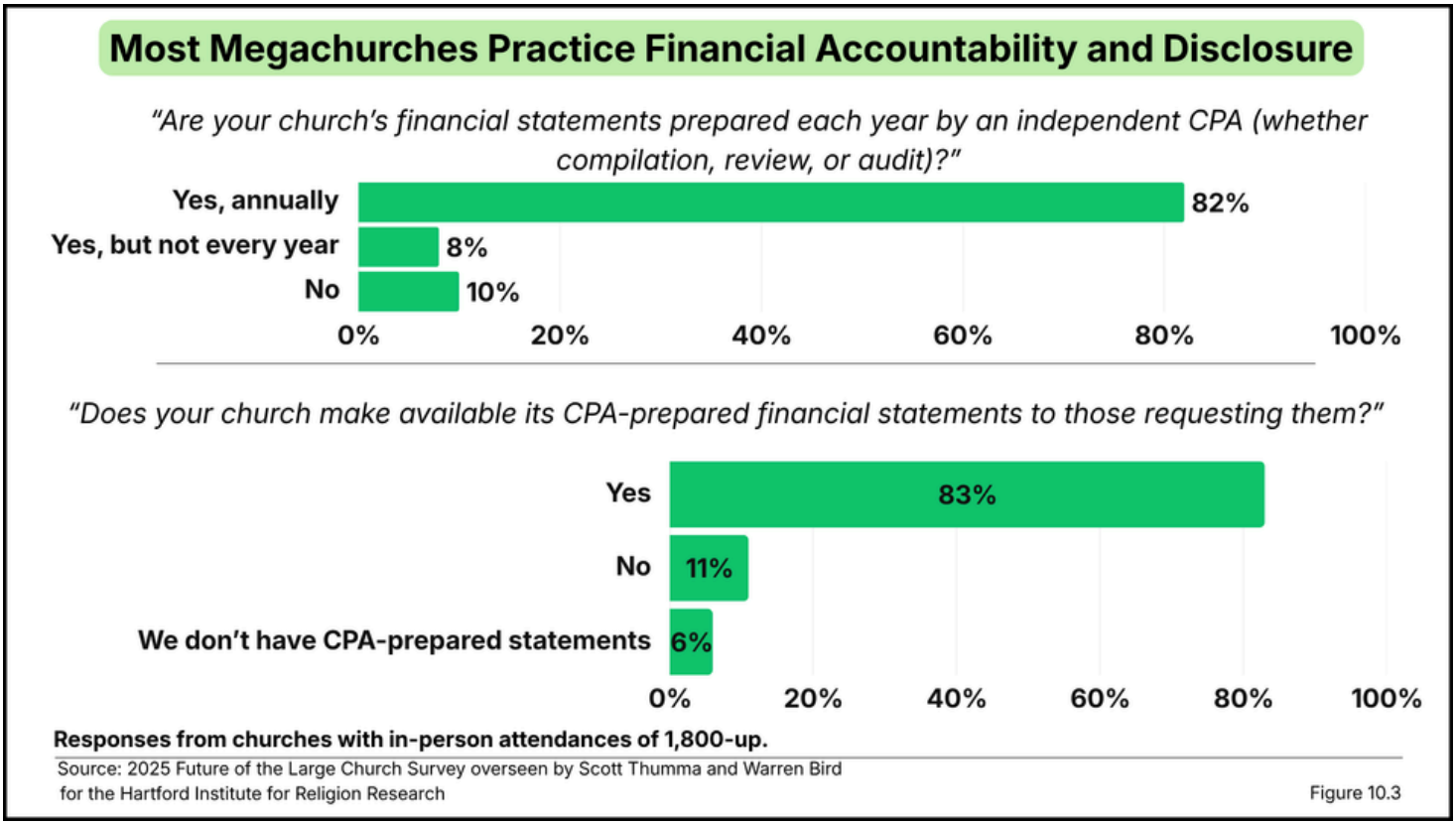


Among megachurches, the vast majority (82%) say they have an independent CPA prepare financial statements for the church annually, plus another 8% follow that practice, but not every year. Likewise, nearly every megachurch (83%) who has a CPA-prepared financial statement says that it would make this publicly available if asked.

We compared these financial practices with other variables and found per-capita giving does not increase if a megachurch demonstrates financial transparency (Figure 10.3), raises the bar of discipleship (Figure 2.4), or provides discipleship of high capacity givers (Figure 2.4).

Having an independent CPA prepare the church's financial statements didn't affect per-capita giving, but as Figure 5.2 noted, making the financial statements openly available did increase per-capita giving. (We're not sure why this one element of transparency is associated with increased per-capita giving, while the others are not.)

Figure 10.3

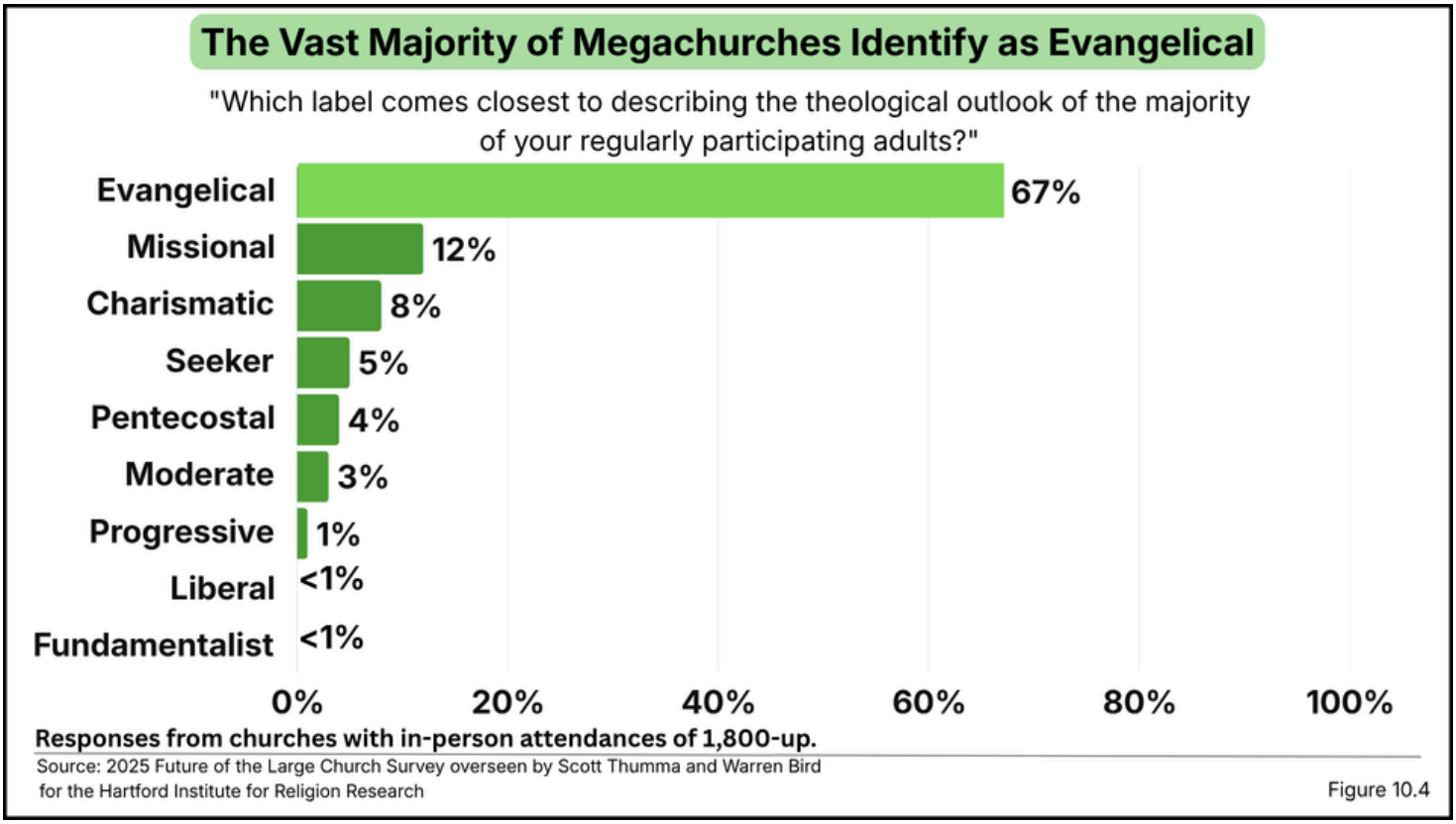


According to Figure 10.4, the theological label most megachurches give themselves is evangelical (67%) or one of the families within the evangelical movement, such as missional (12%), charismatic (8%), seeker (5%), or Pentecostal (4%). Those who selected fundamentalist were extremely few in number (less than 1%). Thus, other theological families comprise less than 5%, such as moderate (3%), progressive (1%), or liberal (less than 1%).

In preparing for this survey, all established denominations were contacted for a list of their large-attendance churches, with the discovery that for many mainline denominations the number of congregations with in-person attendances of 2,000 or higher were very few in number, which matches the self-ratings by those who participated.

This overwhelmingly evangelical theological outlook explains other findings such as the ongoing importance of an invitational culture (Figure 1.3) and many of the "spiritual vitality" practices that scored high (Figure 2.2).

Figure 10.4


The Vast Majority of Megachurches Identify as Evangelical
"Which label comes closest to describing the theological outlook of the majority of your regularly participating adults?"
Evangelical
67%
Missional
12%
Charismatic
8%
Seeker
5%
Pentecostal
4%
Moderate
3%
Progressive
1%
Liberal
<1%
Fundamentalist
<1%
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%
Responses from churches with in-person attendances of 1,800-up.
Source: 2025 Future of the Large Church Survey overseen by Scott Thumma and Warren Bird for the Hartford Institute for Religion Research
Figure 10.4

Examples of Innovation

In addition to the specific questions cited above, we were also very interested in specific examples of **recent innovations in big-attendance churches**. Our survey's open-ended questions addressed such issues. We received more than 300 meaningful responses. The overall tenor of the comments was positive, hopeful, and often creative and innovative. They supported our "resurgence" title theme and even suggested that for many, their best season may be yet ahead.

Each survey taker received just one of the following questions, which the survey software randomly assigned. Below we provide a brief analysis of these comments–aided in part by AI-generated summaries.

1. "What's an out-of-the-box idea your church has been trying that is bearing good fruit?"

    These responses are particularly interesting because they reveal that "out-of-the-box" often does not mean technological innovation. Instead, the most fruitful innovations tend to be creative community engagement, reimagined discipleship structures, new uses of church facilities, and unconventional outreach strategies.

    The single most common theme is using church facilities and property as community assets rather than simply worship venues. Churches are creating community touchpoints seven days a week rather than relying on Sunday attendance alone.

    The most frequently cited innovations involved transforming church property into community assets, including parks, community centers, clinics, schools, childcare partnerships, and gathering spaces. Many churches also highlighted creative community engagement initiatives such as school partnerships, community service projects, refugee support, prison ministry, and neighborhood-based outreach. Another major area of innovation involved reimagining discipleship through affinity-based groups, geographic groups, digital discipleship tools, and leadership development pipelines. While some churches reported experimenting with technology—including virtual reality ministries, AI-assisted communication, and digital engagement platforms—the most fruitful innovations generally focused on building relationships, serving communities, and creating new pathways for discipleship and leadership development.

2. “What’s the biggest problem your congregation needs to solve?”

Responses reveal that churches are wrestling with a surprisingly concentrated set of challenges. **Growth-related capacity concerns appear in roughly one-third of all responses and constitute the single largest challenge category**. The second most common challenge involves leadership. Notably, many churches recognize that continued growth depends less on attracting attendees and more on developing enough capable leaders to sustain ministry expansion.

In both, the dominant theme is not decline or survival, but managing success—growth, expansion, leadership capacity, and organizational complexity. Many churches also express concern that attendance growth is outpacing discipleship growth.

3. “What’s the greatest contribution big-attendance churches make to their surrounding community?”

These responses are remarkably consistent. While churches describe their contributions in different ways, most answers cluster around a handful of themes. What is striking is that respondents rarely define their contribution primarily in terms of organizational size. Rather, they see size as enabling them to do more of three things: **share the gospel, mobilize people, and serve the community.**

Across all responses, a common narrative emerges: **Larger churches contribute to communities by leveraging their scale to create spiritual, social, and practical impact.**

Respondents consistently described a sequence: **Transform lives → Mobilize people → Serve communities → Strengthen institutions → Expand God's kingdom.**

In their view, the greatest advantage of a larger church is not attendance itself but the ability to mobilize substantial people, resources, and leadership toward both evangelistic and community-serving purposes.

4. “How are emerging leaders identified and developed within your church?”

Churches most commonly identify emerging leaders through observation by pastors, staff, and existing ministry leaders who recognize leadership potential in

faithful volunteers and participants. Development typically occurs through a combination of mentoring, discipleship, increasing ministry responsibility, and formal leadership pathways. Common mechanisms include leadership pipelines, small groups, leadership cohorts, training classes, internships, residencies, and schools of ministry.

Overall, leadership development is most often characterized as a progression from service to responsibility, supported by both relational mentoring and structured training opportunities. **Many churches described a deliberate multiplication model in which current leaders are expected to identify, invest in, and develop future leaders.**

Conclusion: Laboratories of Innovation

This report demonstrates that five years after one of the most disruptive periods in modern religious history, most megachurches and other very large churches report renewed vitality, strong financial health, growing attendance, expanding ministry participation, and optimism about the future. While churches of all sizes across the broader religious landscape continue to face many challenges related to younger generational commitment and attendance, leadership transitions, and institutional sustainability, **these largest Protestant churches have generally demonstrated a remarkable capacity to adapt, innovate, and rebound.**

Neither is the success of these churches solely a function of their size, though it is a factor. However, **the most vital large churches and megachurches consistently exhibit a powerful combination of characteristics: a clear sense of mission, willingness to embrace change, strong leadership development, intentional discipleship, active engagement with newcomers, and a culture that encourages members to invite others into the life of the church**. These qualities appear to matter more than any single structural feature.

At the same time, **the data challenge several common assumptions about these largest churches**. Rather than retreating into self-centered postures, most megachurches report substantial engagement with their surrounding communities. Rather than becoming less diverse, they are becoming more multiracial. Rather than reducing their emphasis on spiritual formation, they increasingly prioritize small groups, discipleship, and leadership development. And rather than

representing a passing generation of religious participants, they continue to raise up younger leaders, launch new campuses, plant new churches, and attract newer cohorts.

While many churches continue to struggle, a substantial percentage of very large churches and megachurches demonstrate that **growth, innovation, and vitality remain quite possible in the contemporary religious environment**. They are not immune to the cultural pressures affecting all faith communities, but they appear particularly adept at responding to them according to these results.

As American religion continues to develop, these **big-attendance churches remain important laboratories of innovation**. Their experiences offer valuable insights not only for their peers, but for congregations of all sizes seeking to navigate a rapidly changing ministry landscape.

If the past five years are any indication, the story of megachurches and other very large churches in America is not primarily one of survival or even rebound. **It is a story of adaptation, resilience, and the continued desire to influence the country's spiritual landscape.**

Key Findings at a Glance

What, then, should we take away from this research on very large churches and megachurches in American church life? In the multiple-year buildup to launching this survey, we noted significant questions we were hearing from large-church leaders, from the media, and from fellow researchers. They included many of the following key findings covered in this study, so we offer these answers as a recap of sorts.

- **How many megachurches are there today?** *About 1,850. How many very large churches? Up to 7,000. (See Figures 0.1 and 0.2, and the related commentary.)*
- **Are very large churches and megachurches back stronger than ever?** *In many ways, yes. (See Figures 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5, and the related commentary.)*
- **Is the attractional model dead?** *No. (See Figures 1.3 and 10.4, and the related commentary.)*
- **What factors are most related to spiritual vitality–health and growth?** *We identified nine of them. (See Figure 2.2 and the related commentary.)*
- **How often do regular attenders actually attend worship?** *More churches said "monthly" than anything else. (See Figure 1.2 and the related commentary.)*
- **Are megachurches increasing their emphasis on discipling people?** *Yes. (See Figure 2.4 and the related commentary.)*
- **Is the impact of small groups still strong?** *Yes, very strong, and it continues to increase. (See Figure 1.4 and the related commentary.)*
- **Are churches in the survey becoming more community-minded and making their communities a better place?** *Yes. (See Figures 2.4, 4.1, and 4.2, and the related commentary.)*
- **What about the impact of COVID-19?** *95% of megachurches reported some level of internal conflict. (See Figure 3.1 and the related commentary.)*

Key Findings at a Glance (cont'd.)

- **Where does the money go, and what influences churchgoers to give more?** *The biggest expense is staffing costs, and we identified 10 factors that increase per-capita giving. (See Figures 5.2 and 5.3 and the related commentary.)*
- **Did the church experience its greatest growth era under the leadership of the current senior pastor?** *Yes, for the majority. (See Figure 6.1 and the related commentary.)*
- **Are pastors in the study more ready for their eventual succession than they were 5 years ago?** *Not much. (See Figure 6.2 and the related commentary.)*
- **Are big churches a Baby Boomer phenomenon?** *No, Gen X and Millennial megachurch pastors together outnumber Boomer pastors. (See Figures 6.3 and 6.4, and the related commentary.)*
- **How important are church-based leadership development programs in raising up new pastors?** *The use of ministry residencies and related training programs is widespread. (See Figure 7.1 and the related commentary.)*
- **Are multiracial big churches still on the rise?** *Yes, from 21% in 2000 to 66% in 2025. (See Figures 8.1 and 8.2, and the related commentary.)*
- **Is multisite still on the rise?** *Yes, as part of a 25-year trend, and an increase in the typical number of campuses. (See Figures 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, and 9.4, and the related commentary.)*
- **Are big churches directly involved in church planting?** *Yes. (See Figure 9.1 and the related commentary.)*
- **Are big churches part of a denomination?** *Many are, but increasingly they identify as non-denominational. (See Figure 10.1 and the related commentary.)*
- **What is the level of financial disclosure and accountability?** *It's quite high. (See Figures 10.2 and 10.3, and the related commentary.)*

Endnotes

1. Hartford Institute for Religion Research, EPIC: Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations, and Faith Communities Today, Signs of Rebound Amid Uneven Recovery: The Changing Congregational Landscape, April 2026, https://www.covidreligionresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Signs-of-Rebound-Amid-Uneven-Recovery-The-Changing-Congregational-Landscape-1-1.pdf.

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4. Warren Bird and Scott Thumma, The Changing Reality in America's Largest Churches: Megachurch Research Report, Hartford Institute for Religion Research, 2020, 3–4, https://hirr.hartfordinternational.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2020_megachurch_report.pdf.

About the Authors

Warren Bird, Ph.D., is a fulltime church researcher and writer. He has authored or co-authored 35 books for church leaders, most based on major research projects he's overseen. Titles include *Next: Pastoral Succession that Works* (William Vanderbloemen and Warren Bird), *Better Together: Making Church Mergers Work* (Jim Tomberlin and Warren Bird), *Hero Maker: Five Essential Practices for Leaders to Multiply Leaders* (Dave Ferguson and Warren Bird), *How to Break Church Growth Barriers* (Carl George and Warren Bird), and *Becoming a Future-Ready Church* (Daniel Yang, Adelle Banks, Warren Bird).

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He has written widely on the subjects including megachurches, congregational dynamics, and nondenominational churches. He has published many research reports and three books (*Gay Religion*, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, and T*he Other 80 Percent: Turning Your Church's Spectators into Active Participants*–the latter co-authored with Warren Bird) Learn more about **Scott Thumma's work**.

About the Hartford Institute for Religion Research

Hartford International University's Hartford Institute for Religion Research (hirr.hartfordinternational.edu), founded in 1981, has developed an international reputation as an important bridge between the scholarly community and the practice of faith. Its work is guided by a disciplined understanding of the interrelationship between the life and resources of American religious institutions and the possibilities and limits placed on those institutions by the social and cultural context in which they work.

About the Survey

The online survey was fielded 8/20/25-11/19/25 after an extensive multi-year effort to identify and find contact information for every Protestant large-attendance church in the U.S. The research sources included denominational lists, public lists such as "Top 100" by Outreach magazine, media searches for terms like large church, biggest church, megachurch, etc., and specific churches identified by those who work with large and growing churches.

The survey was conducted as part of Faith Communities Today (faithcommunitiestoday. org), a network of similar studies designed to research all expressions of American religion. The megachurch survey across time (2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020 and now 2025) has repeated many of the same questions, enabling comparison of changes over time.

For the 2025 version, 589 usable responses were received, one per church by a key informant. The term megachurch is usually associated with churches that draw 2,000 or more adults and children for in-person worship on a typical weekend, combining all worship services, and if multisite, combining all campuses. However, this survey analysis uses in-person attendances of 1,800 and more for two reasons: 1) the very first megachurch survey in this series, conducted in the year 2000, opted to include attendances of 1,800 and higher in order to create a larger total sample, given that 2) attendance variations of a 200 or so happen frequently for larger churches. As so defined, each survey in this series (2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020, and now 2025) has used this starting point of 1,800 and higher for its analysis of megachurches.

For the 2025 survey, 331 megachurches participated, representing a 17% response rate from the total of roughly 1,850 U.S. megachurches. The results from these megachurches have been weighted to represent the total megachurch population with an estimated 3% +/- margin of error at the 95% confidence level. All the findings we report have a .05 or greater statistical significance.

In addition, churches with in-person attendances of 900-1,799 were also asked the same survey questions, with 258 participating. In this report, these churches have been given the title very large churches and shorthanded as being 1,000-1,999 in attendance. Statistics for this group were not weighted.

In this report, all averages are medians unless otherwise stated.

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Appendix

Survey frequencies as well as megachurch reports from previous years, including 2020, 2015, and 2010, 2008, 2005, and 2000, can be found at https://hirr.hartfordinternational.edu/research/megachurch-research/.