



Swimming Against the Current

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Episcopal
Business
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Conference
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Swimming against the Current

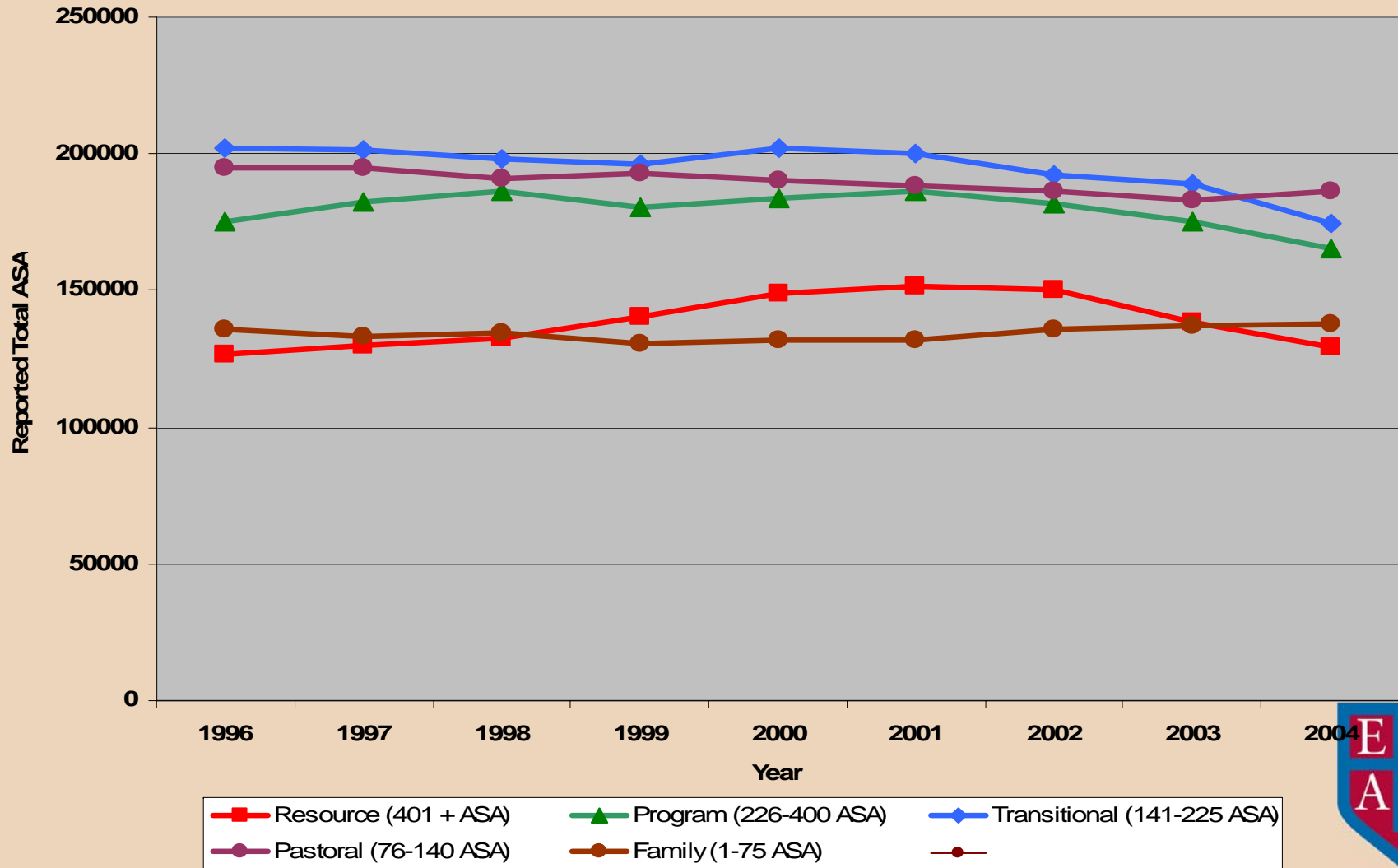
Many congregations show it can be done!!!

- ***34% of all ECUSA congregations had an ASA increase in 2004***
- ***24% Of all ECUSA congregations had ASA growth of at least 10% over the past five years***



Aggregate ASA Trends by Church Size:

ECUSA Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) by Church Size (1996-2004)
(As reported on parochial reports each year within church size category)



Congregational Sizes and Characteristics-

ECUSA 2004: 7154 congregations, 793,836 ASA, 100 dioceses

- **Family (ASA =1-75) 3603 congregations (50.4%, but 17.1% of ASA) Decisions and control by matriarchs and patriarchs, relational; resilient; clergy increasingly part time, bi-vocational, yoked, and/or “retired”; some lay pastors;**
- **Pastoral (ASA =76-140) 1784 congregations (24.9%, but 23.0% of ASA) Traditional “one priest/one roof” church; decisions, culture, and pastoral care focused through priest; relationships paramount**
- **Transitional (ASA =141-225) 983 congregations (13.7%, but 21.6% of ASA) Caught between cultures and expectations of pastoral and program churches; additional full time staff needed but funds not adequate**
- **Program (ASA = 226-400) 573 congregations (8.0%, but 20.4% of ASA) Variety of adequately funded programs with multiple paid and volunteer staff, decision making and pastoral care shared**
- **Resource (ASA = 400+) 245 congregations (2.9%, but 16.0% of ASA) Additional programs and outreach; ability to mentor and support; visionary collaborative leadership; strong charismatic rector, large professional staff; effective “federation of small churches”**

“Hybrid Parish”: (ASA at one level, scope of budget and operation at another)



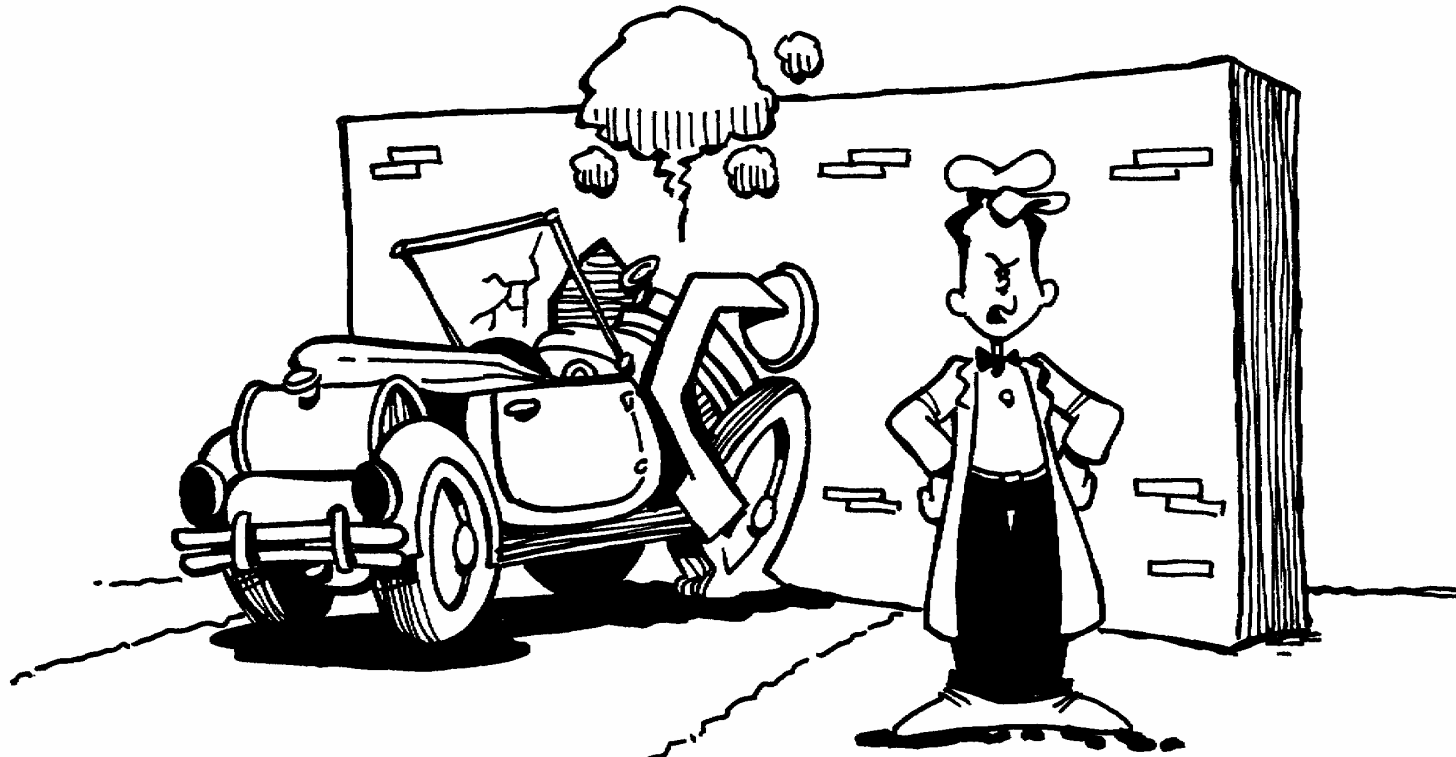
Stewardship of Buildings and Grounds:

Linking past, present, and future:

- ***Buildings and grounds indicate health***
- ***Buildings and grounds telegraph vision***
- ***Improvement of facilities can enhance giving***
- ***Improvement of facilities can enhance attendance***
- ***Improvement of facilities can enhance mission***
- ***Improvement of facilities can change culture***



"Better to identify the wall before you hit it!"



**Vision supported by good
data and analysis
can help us see ahead**



Become “bilingual”!!!!

Speak with both words and numbers

(Speak “lay” as well as “clergy”)

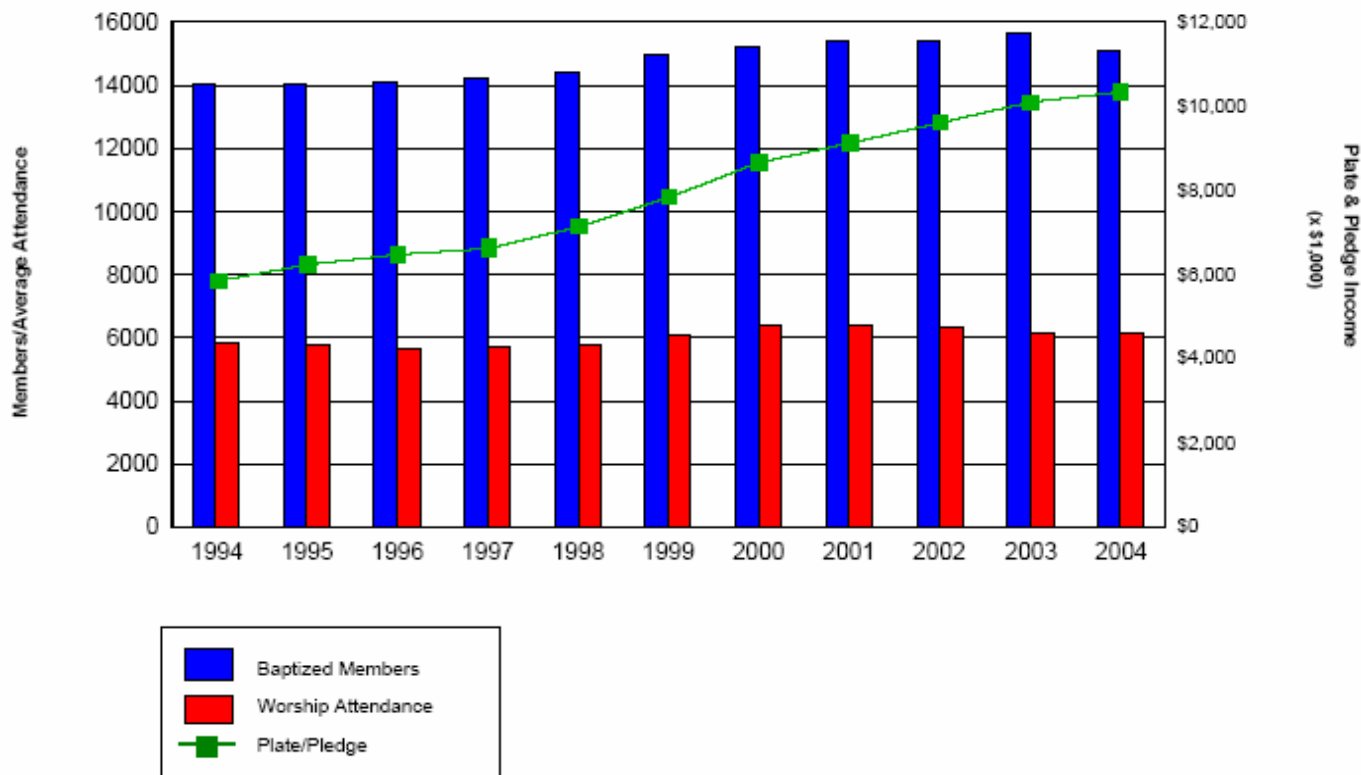
“The church has tried to manage by anecdote and story long enough—it hasn’t worked!”

Use data for future oriented decision making, not just to record the past



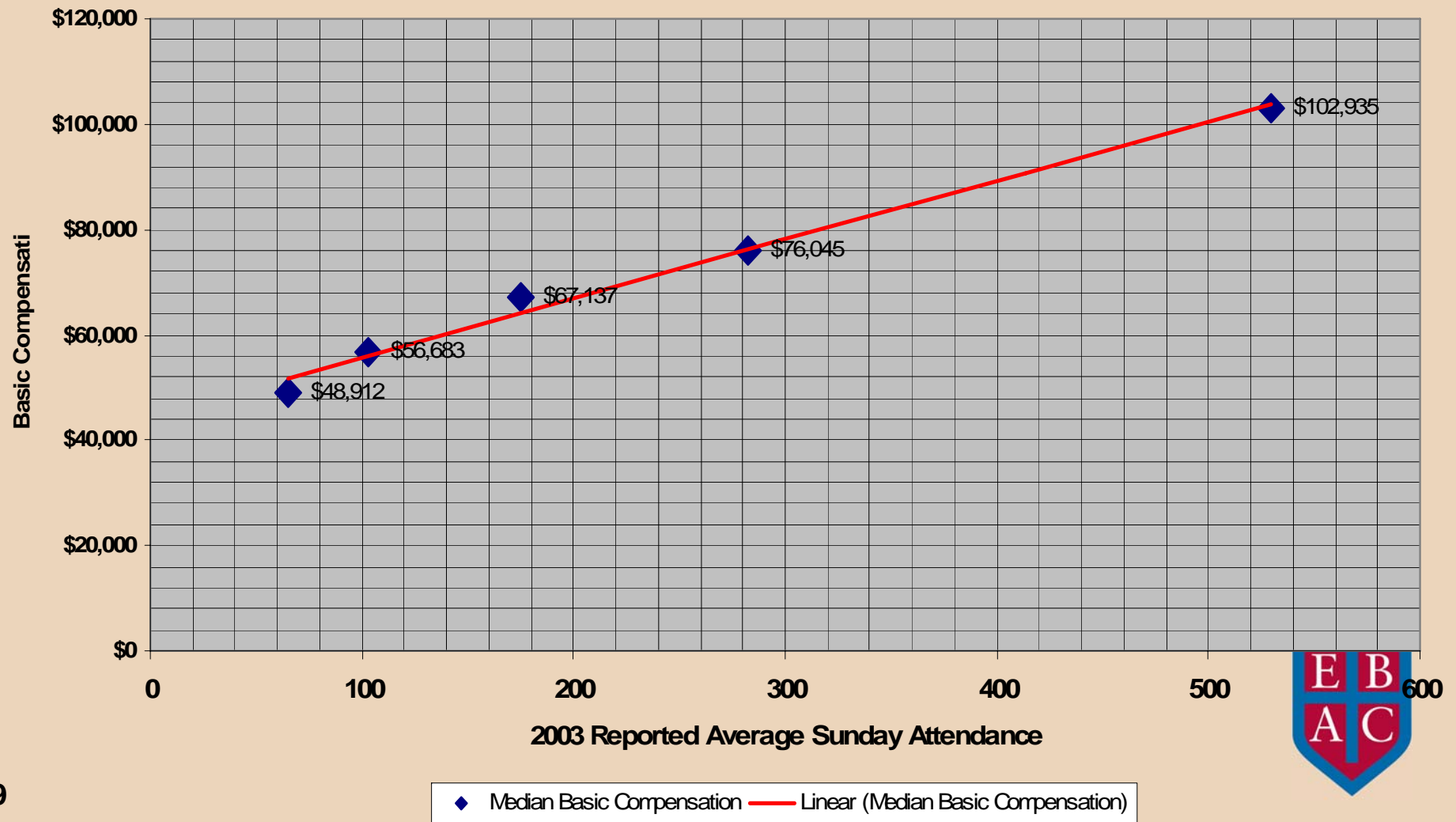
Many resources are readily accessible: *Research at Church Center (Kirk Hadaway)*

Participation & Giving Trends
Diocese of Rio Grande (6552-2252)



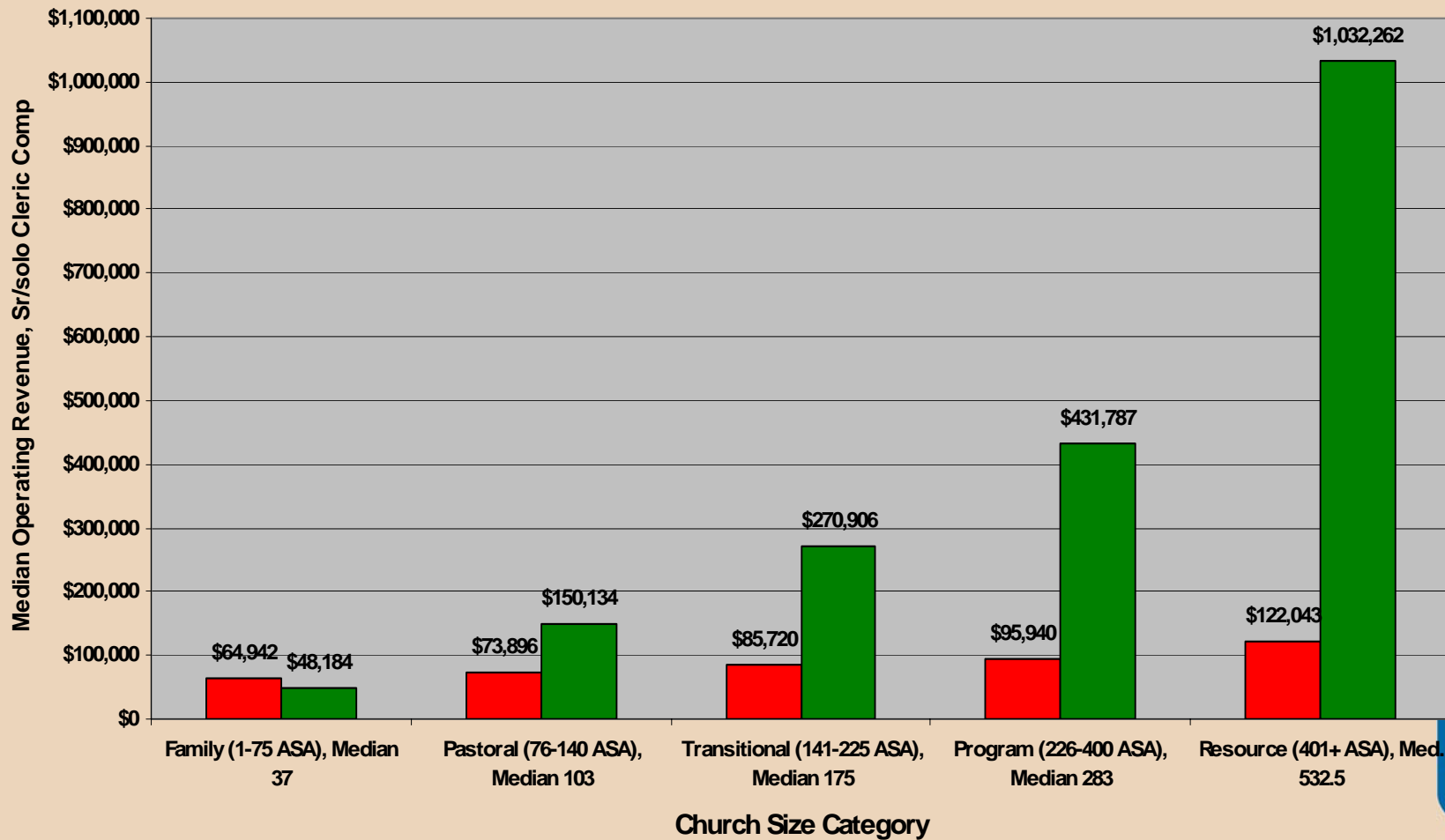
Many resources are readily accessible: Research at Church Pension Group (Matthew Price)

ECUSA Year 2003: Median ASA vs. Median Basic Compensation
(Family size adjusted for estimate of congregations with full time clerics only)



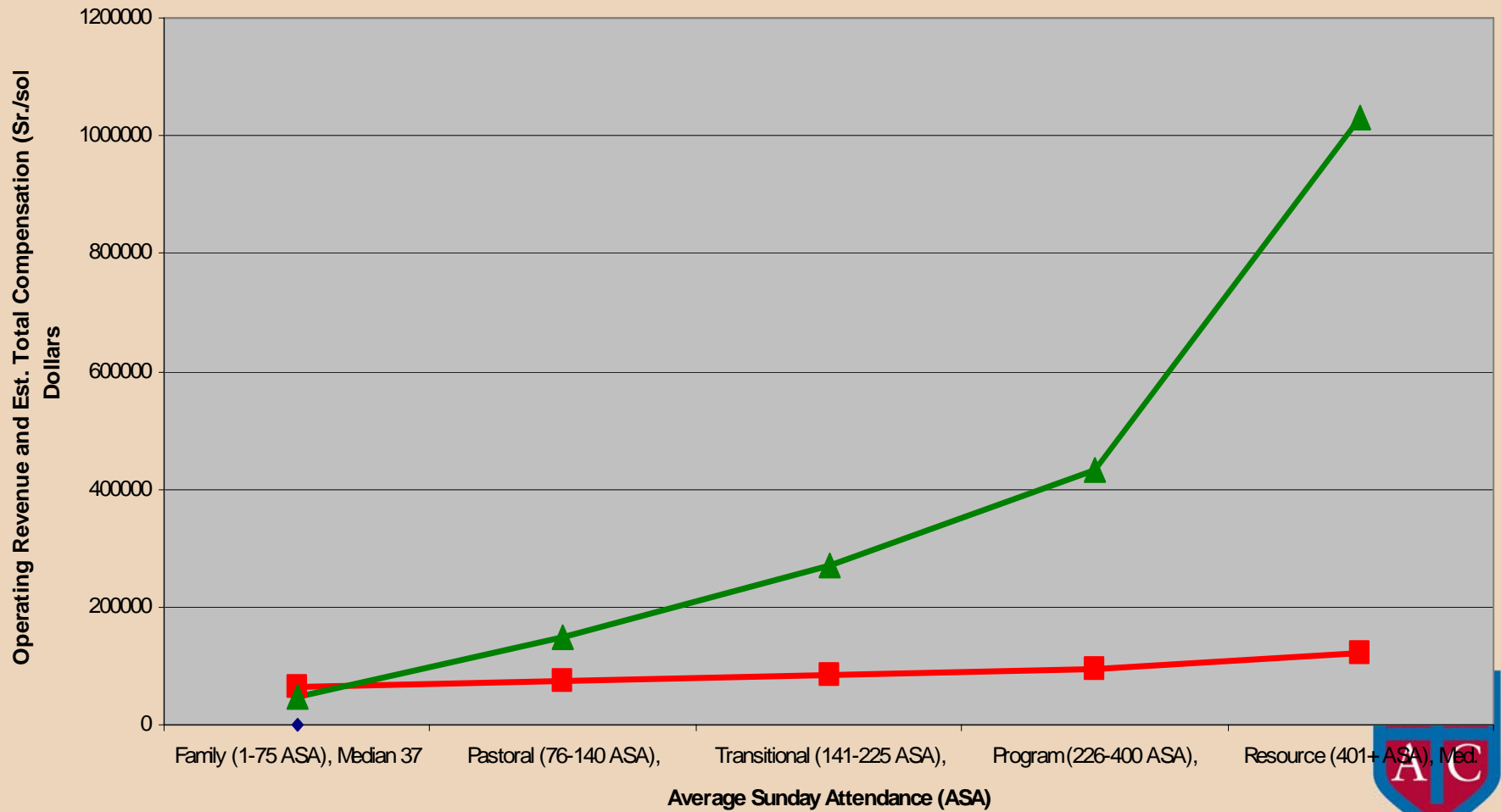
Cost of Sr./solo priest vs. parish operating revenue

Est. Total Compensation (Sr./solo cleric) vs. Operating Revenue by Church Size Category
Year 2001



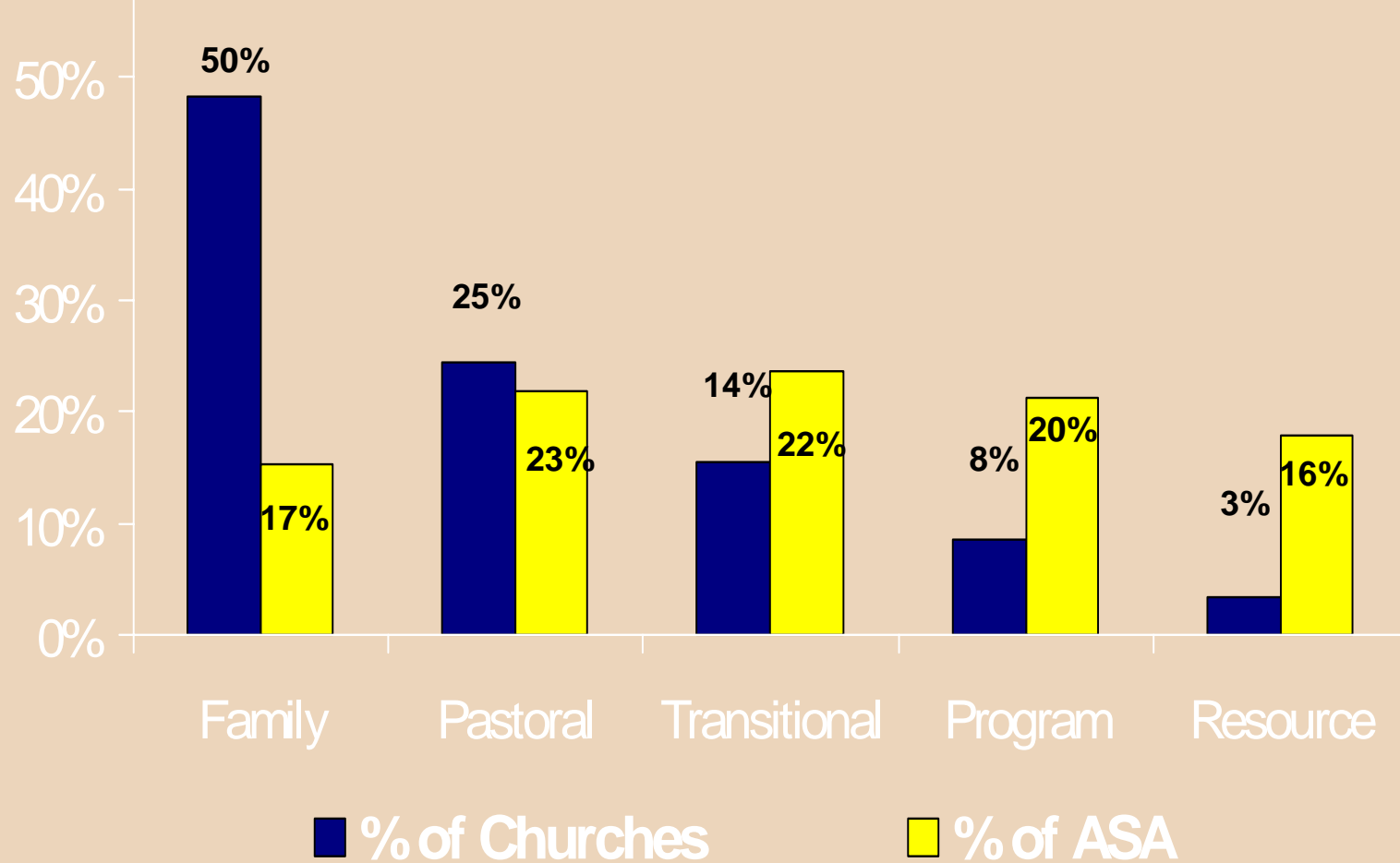
Growth “leverages” money for ministry and mission

Est. Median Total Compensation vs. Median Operating Revenue by Church Size Category
Year 2001

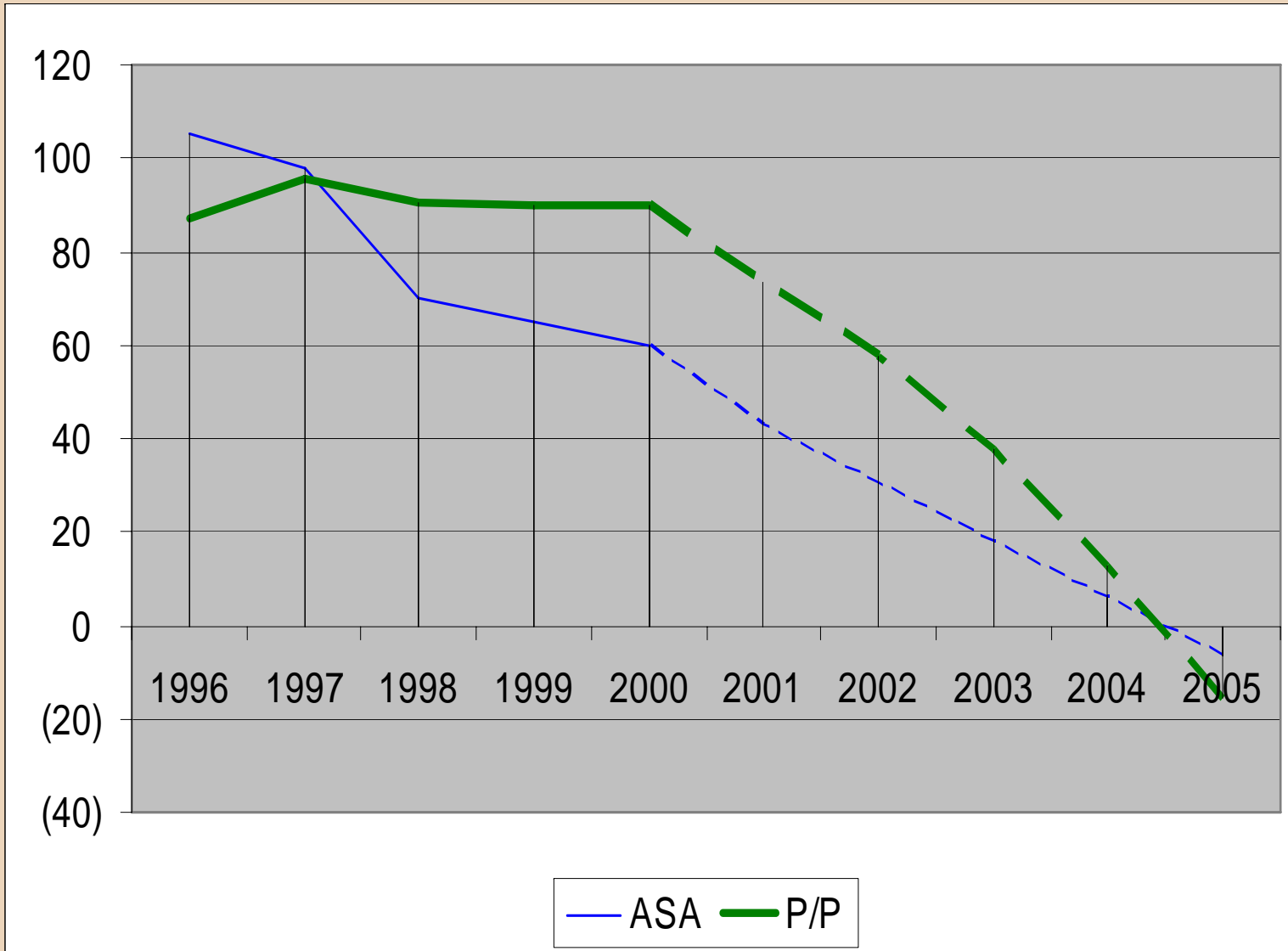


***ECUSA is a denomination of smaller churches-
but more people attend larger churches than smaller ones***

Percentages of Churches and Attendance by Size Category

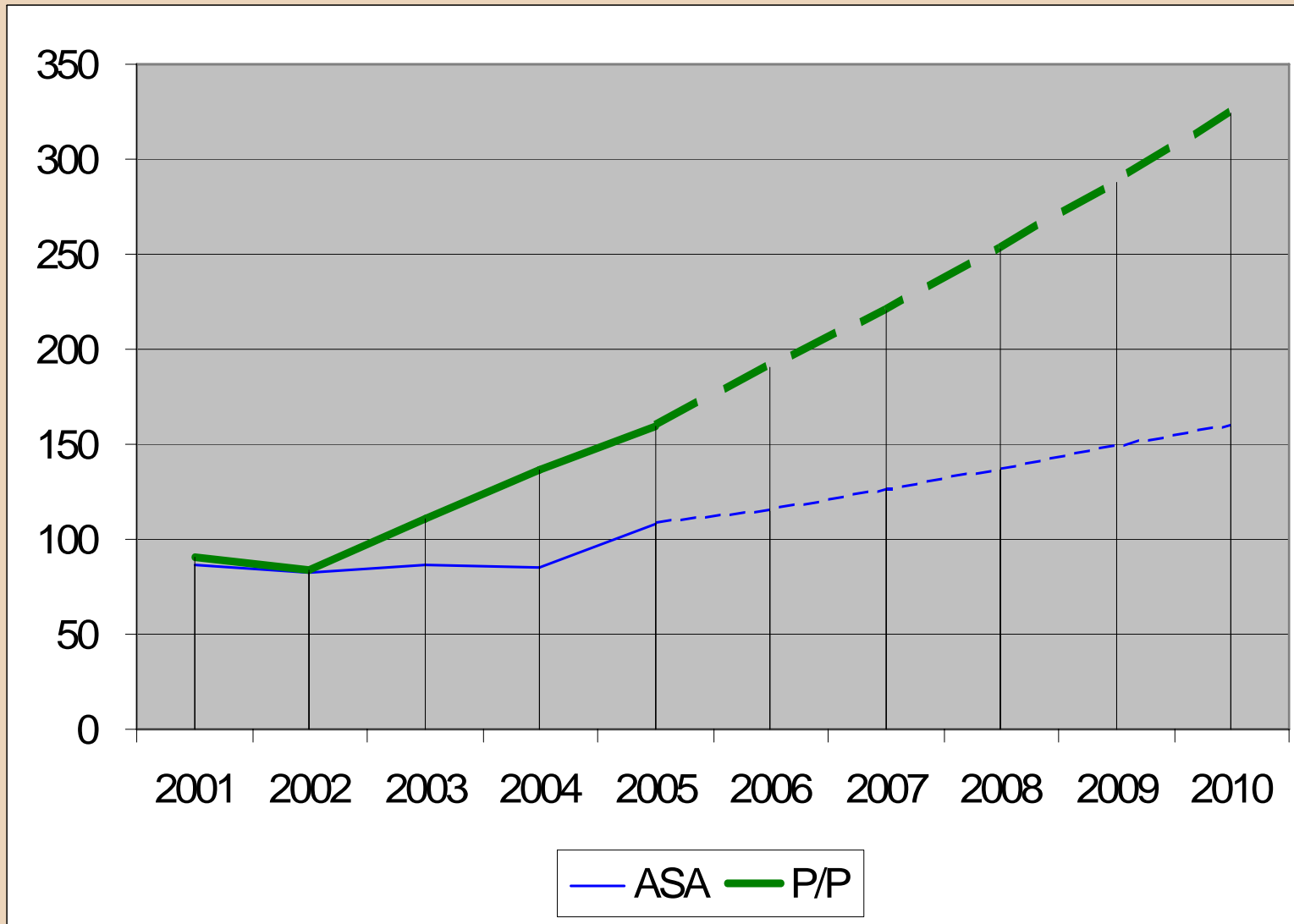


Good data can help diagnose, break denial, and facilitate change:
St. Someproblems at end of Year 2000



Same parish at the end of 2005!!!

+80% in ASA and Plate_and Pledge in five years



Lack of a Godly vision has consequences!!!

■ ***“A people without vision will perish.”***

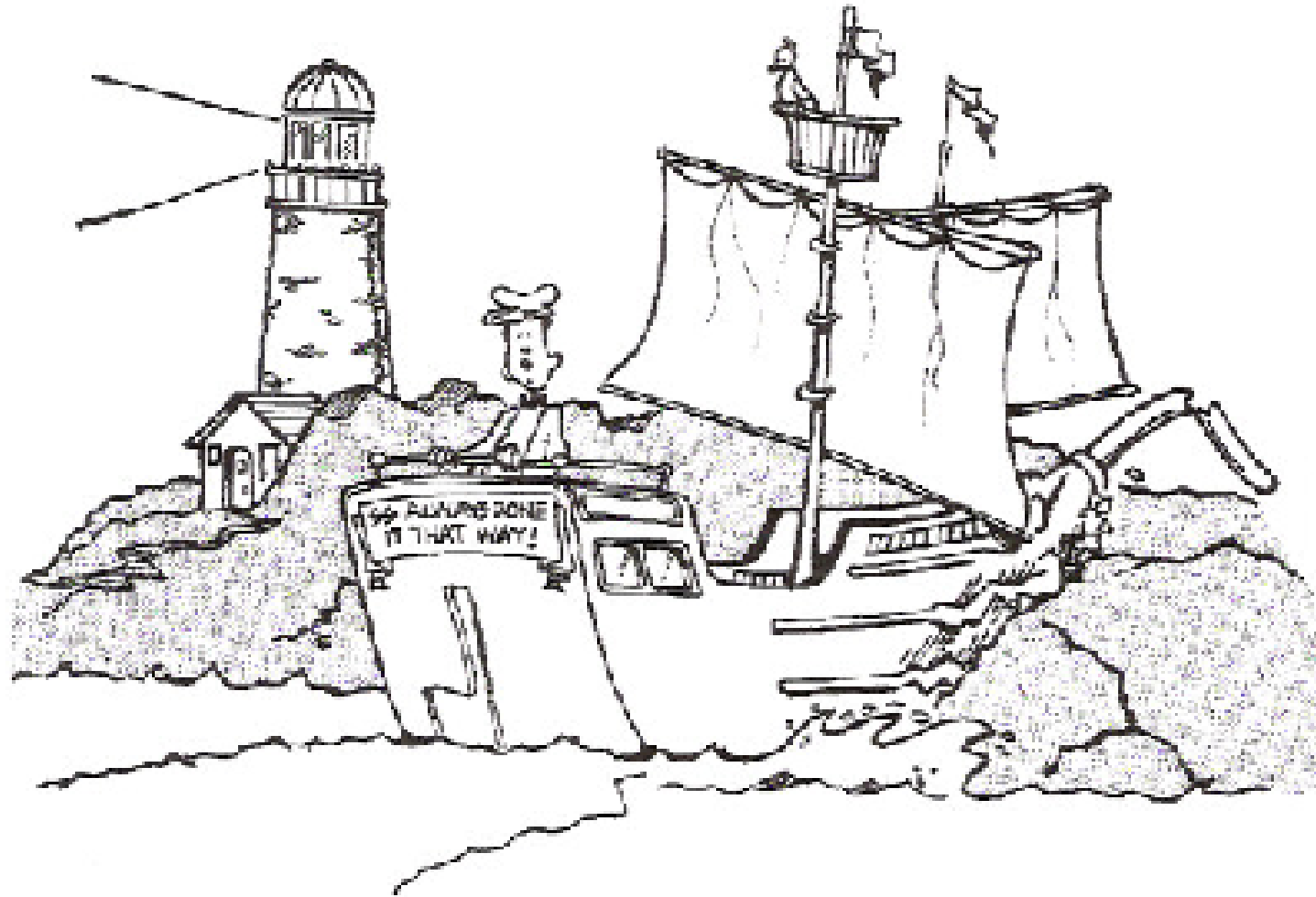
Proverbs 29:18 KJV

■ ***Parishes (and stewardship campaigns) without vision will also perish!***

■ ***Vision trumps technique***



Nostalgia is a poor navigator!!



Don't maintain course and speed unless it is a conscious choice!



Are you looking to the future or only the past?

“We’ve always done it that way” is not a vision:

Fails to address:

- New opportunities, possibilities, and challenges***
- Changing demographics***
- Generational changes***
- More demanding expectations of members***
- Changing costs of “doing church”***
- Endowment, mission support, cost cutting traps***
- Rate of change is accelerating***
- Faithful obedience to the Great Commission***



Vital parishes address generational change!:

■ *Communications issues:*

- *more direct, open, transparent, “authentic”*
- *shorter and more concise sentences*
- *websites of quality and constant change*

■ *Expectation of Implicit “ROI”:*

- *greater disclosure*
- *narrative and line item budgets*
- *higher expectations of parish -but less loyalty*

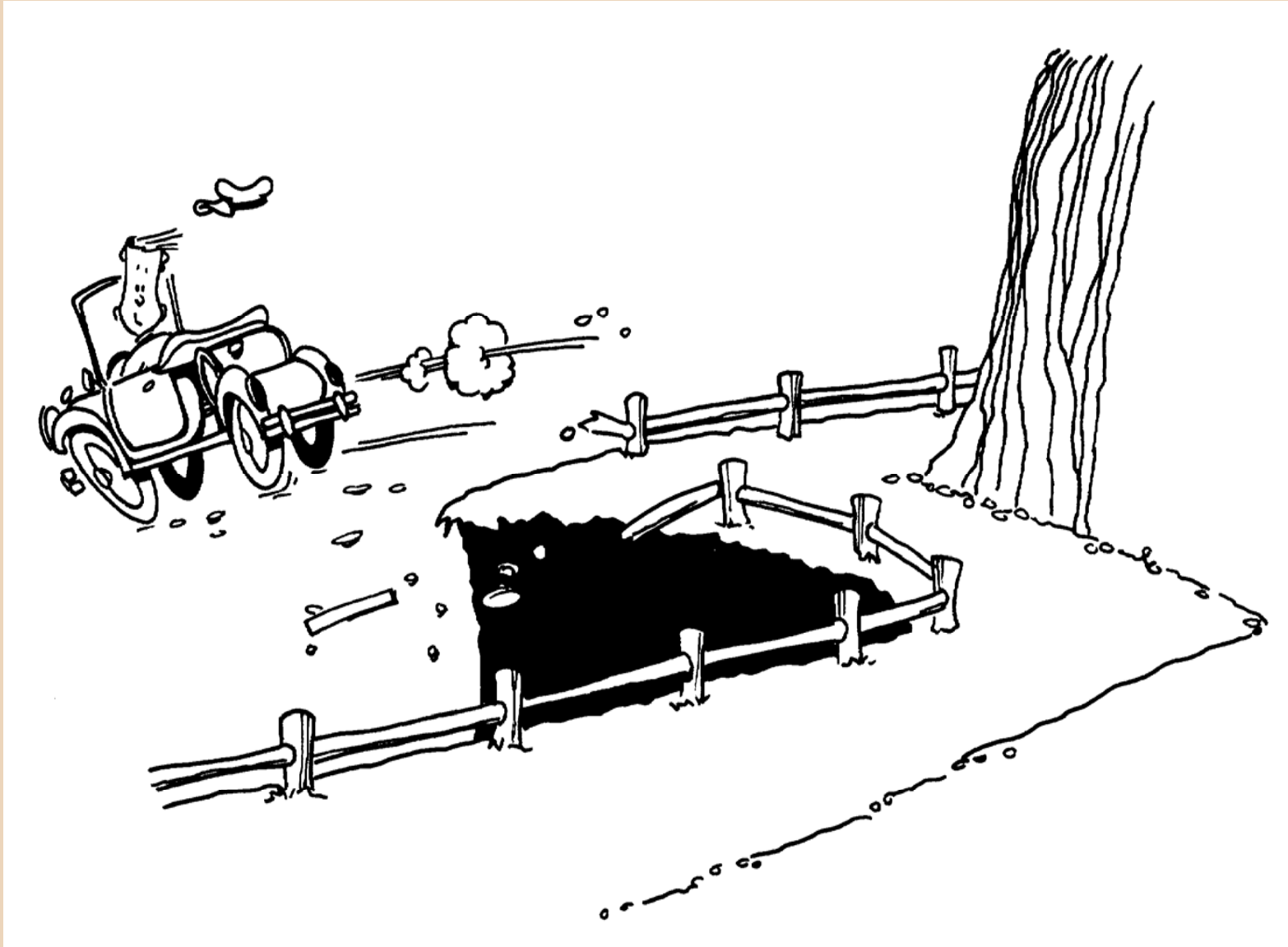
■ *“Line Item” Giving:*

■ *Peer to peer follow-up:*



“Always turn when the road does!”

Delbert Brown



Two Parables about “vision deficit disorder”:

Parable of the Garaged Car:

- **Once there was a man who bought a beautiful car and kept it in the garage. He would regularly go at least once a week to polish and admire it. Though he would spare no expense to furnish the finest wax and polish, he would never find anything left over with which to purchase gas. So the polished car continued to sit in the garage. Even as the surface was lovingly polished, the gaskets, hoses and tires dried out and deteriorated until one day the car could no longer run. Beautifully polished, however, it nevertheless sat in the garage until the owner died and the family sold the car.**

© Keith B. Brown 2001 from On the Road Again, Managing Evangelism and Stewardship for the Kingdom

Parable of the Broken Crankshaft:

- **Once there was a warm and friendly family who longed to go for a drive. However, their car had a broken crankshaft. Over many potluck suppers they discussed and even tried many alternative ways to repair the car at a lower cost. They even attempted to run the car on cheaper and lower octane gas. Only when the family finally acknowledged that they needed to replace the broken crankshaft and actually repaired it, did the car run once again. The family then went for the drive they had desired for so long.**

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Church Vision made simple for parishes:

Vital parishes build upon a Godly vision:

A Godly vision answers key questions:

- ***Who are you?***
- ***Where are you?***
- ***Where are you going?***
- ***Why are you going there?***



A godly vision is not severed from the past!!!

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always to the close of the age”

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20)



Action steps: Assess Congregational Vitality:

- *Appreciative inquiry need not preclude honest evaluation of challenges*
- *“If you’re going to treat a mule, you’ve got to know what it looks like and which end kicks!”*
- *Congregational challenges cannot be treated unless honestly acknowledged*
- *Be willing to listen, accept inevitability of conflict, take measured risk*
- *Vital parishes are not afraid of change*



Action Steps:

Assess current Worship. Program, and Facilities:

■ *Two fundamental questions:*

■ *“Who are you trying to reach”*

■ *“What kind of invitation are you sending?”*



Actions steps: Assess Realities:

- ***Congregational healing may occur through “doing”.***
- ***Act the size you are called to be!***
- ***Congregations (and clergy) often “downsize” to their level of comfort.***
- ***Vibrant, growing congregations already live at the “next level”.***
- ***Vibrant, growing congregations redefine the “status quo”!***
- ***Effective Stewardship begins with a Godly vision***
- ***Quality ministry should be financially sustainable***



What determines congregational “growth”?

- ***Many explanations, studies, but consensus answer elusive***
- ***Growth factors complex; “no silver bullet” or simple answer; vary by church size and style of worship, denomination***
- ***However, good pastoral relationship, fellowship with participation and sense of belonging, spiritual meaning, shared leadership, multi-generational community, and future vision seem to be commonly agreed elements***



Learning from one another:

- *Vibrant large churches are “federations of small churches”; have learned “to be as well as to do”*
- *Vibrant small churches have mission and vision of future; have learned “to do as well as to be”*
- *Vibrant churches “act the size they want to become”*
- *Vibrant churches learn from others, are willing to accept help, and are willing to move forward!*

