

# **Reality Check: The Social and Demographic Context and the Episcopal Church**

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# Context: Rapid Change

- Rate of technological change is rapid, and speeding up
- More change will occur in the first 15 years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century than in the entire 20<sup>th</sup> Century
- Changes in technology and communication affect how we live, work and relate to the church
- Avoidance is a way we deal with change--hoping it will somehow not affect us

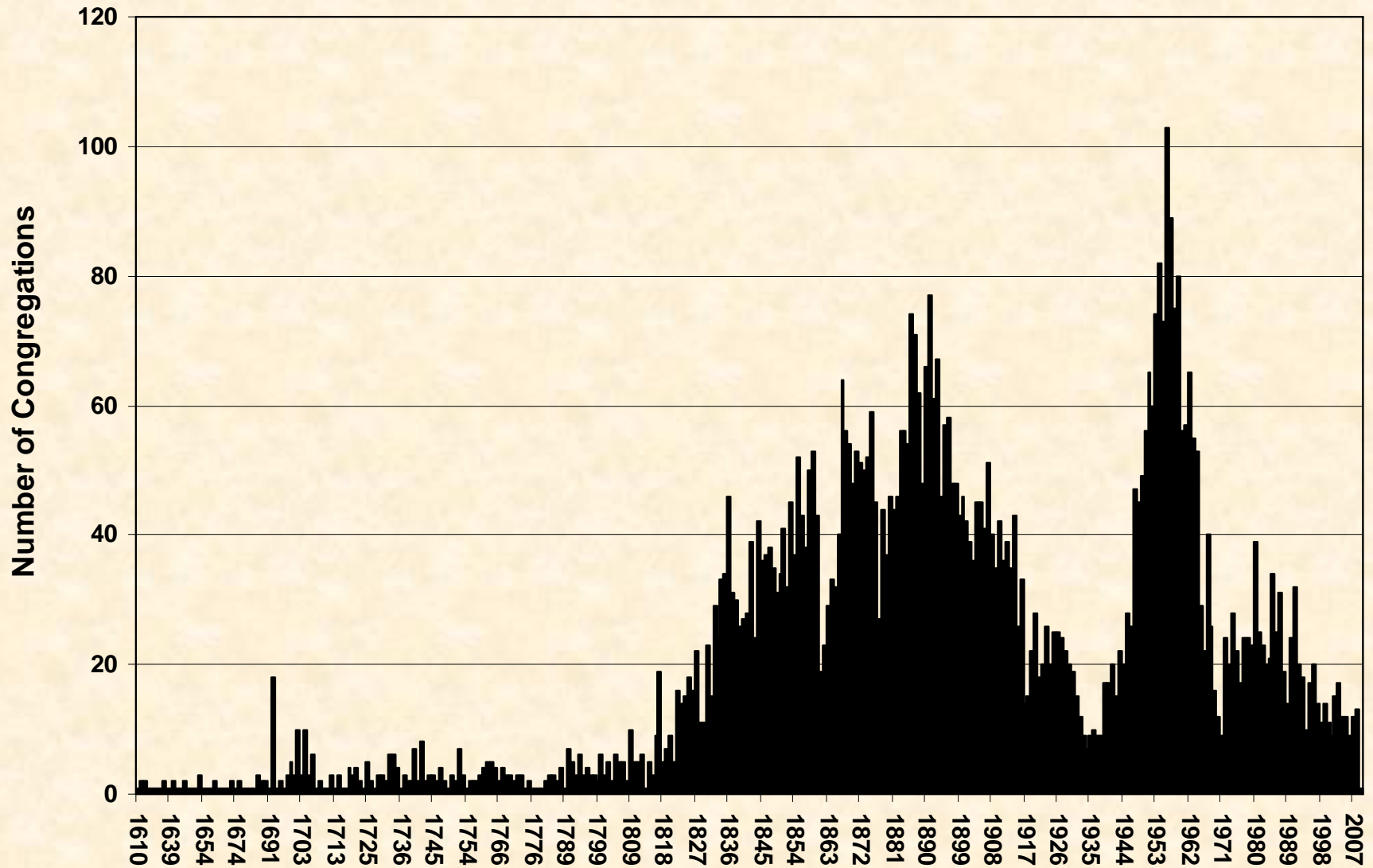
# Recent Life-Changing Inventions

- 100 Years Ago, few automobiles or electric lights
- 60 Years ago, few televisions or suburbs in which to watch them
- 40 Years ago, The Pill was illegal in 22 states
- 25 Years ago, few personal computers
- 15 Years ago, no World Wide Web, no email; spam came in a can. Text messages were typed on paper.
- 10 Years ago, 27 million cell phones in USA. At the end of 2008 271 million. More cell phones than people in 30 countries. 4.1 billion cell phones worldwide.
- Web-enabled smart phones now account for 28% of all cell phone sales in the USA

# Setting up the Demographic Dilemma: The Baby Boom and its Aftermath

- Baby Boom began in 1946, with birth rates and population growth unusually high through 1962
- Episcopal church growth was more than 3% a year from 1955-1957; growth was more than 2% a year from 1946-1962
- US population grew 1.8% a year from 1955-1957; growth averaged 1.7% a year 1946-1962
- Doubling rate: 1% a year, double in 70 years; 2% a year, double in 35 years

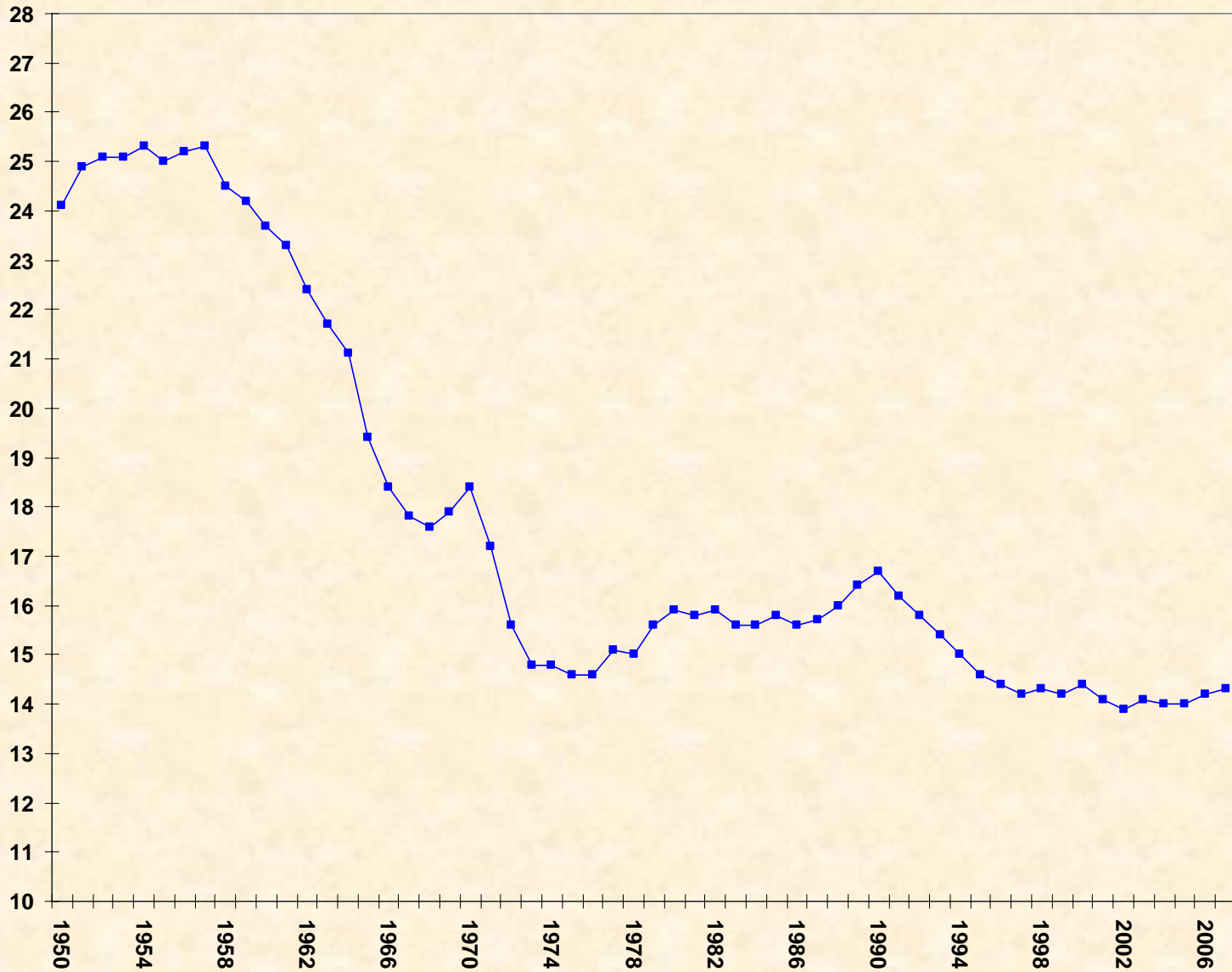
# Number of Episcopal Congregations by Year Organized: 1610-2009



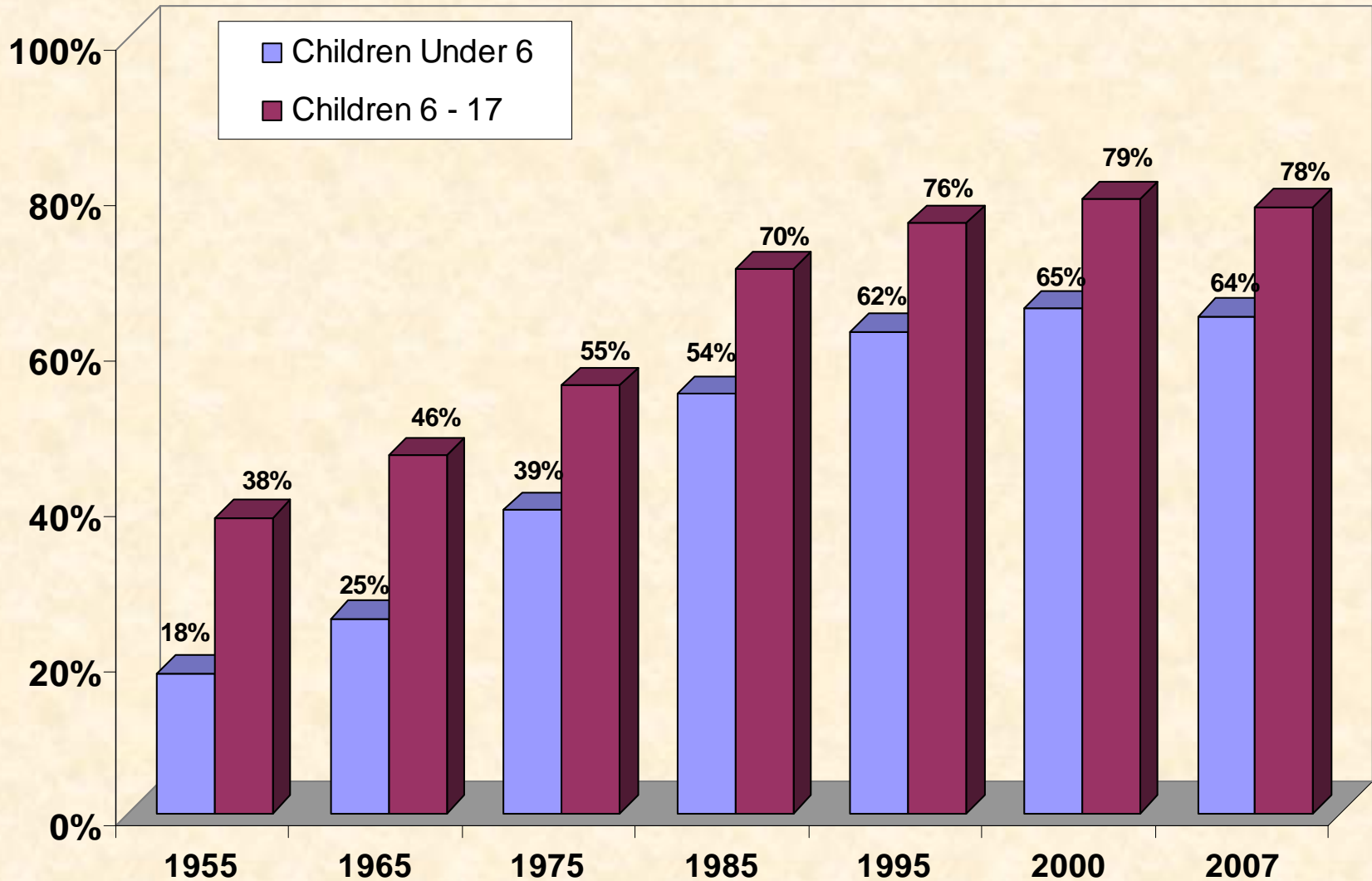
# Society Giveth . . . and Taketh Away

- The Pill
- More women in the labor force & fewer in labor
- Changing household structure (more 1 person households & non-family households)
- Decreasing household size
- Changing racial/ethnic character of the population
- A culture supportive of the church changed into a non-supportive culture in the 1960s, 1970s and now

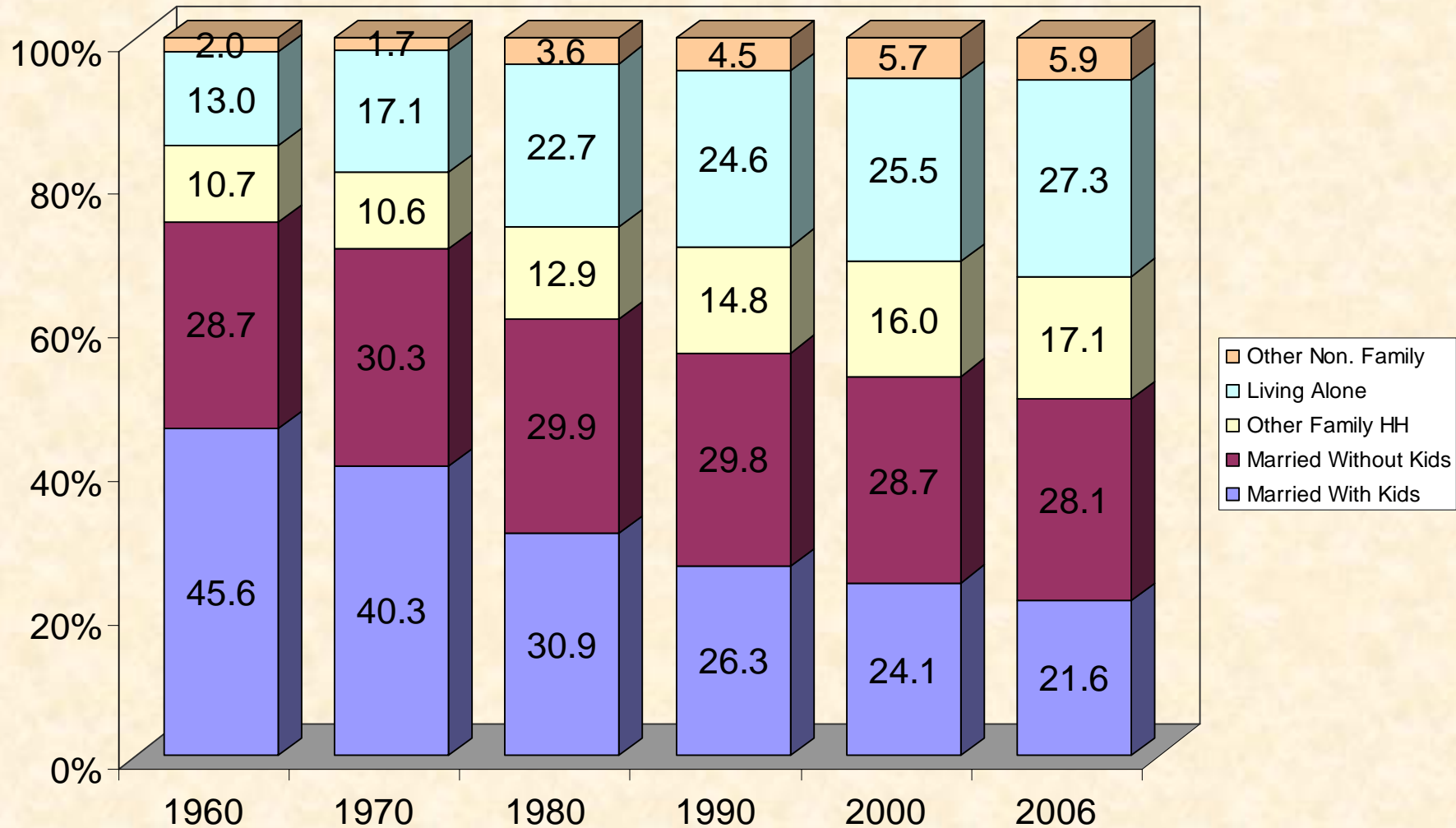
**Trends in the U.S. Birth Rate (Births per 1,000 Persons): 1950-2007**



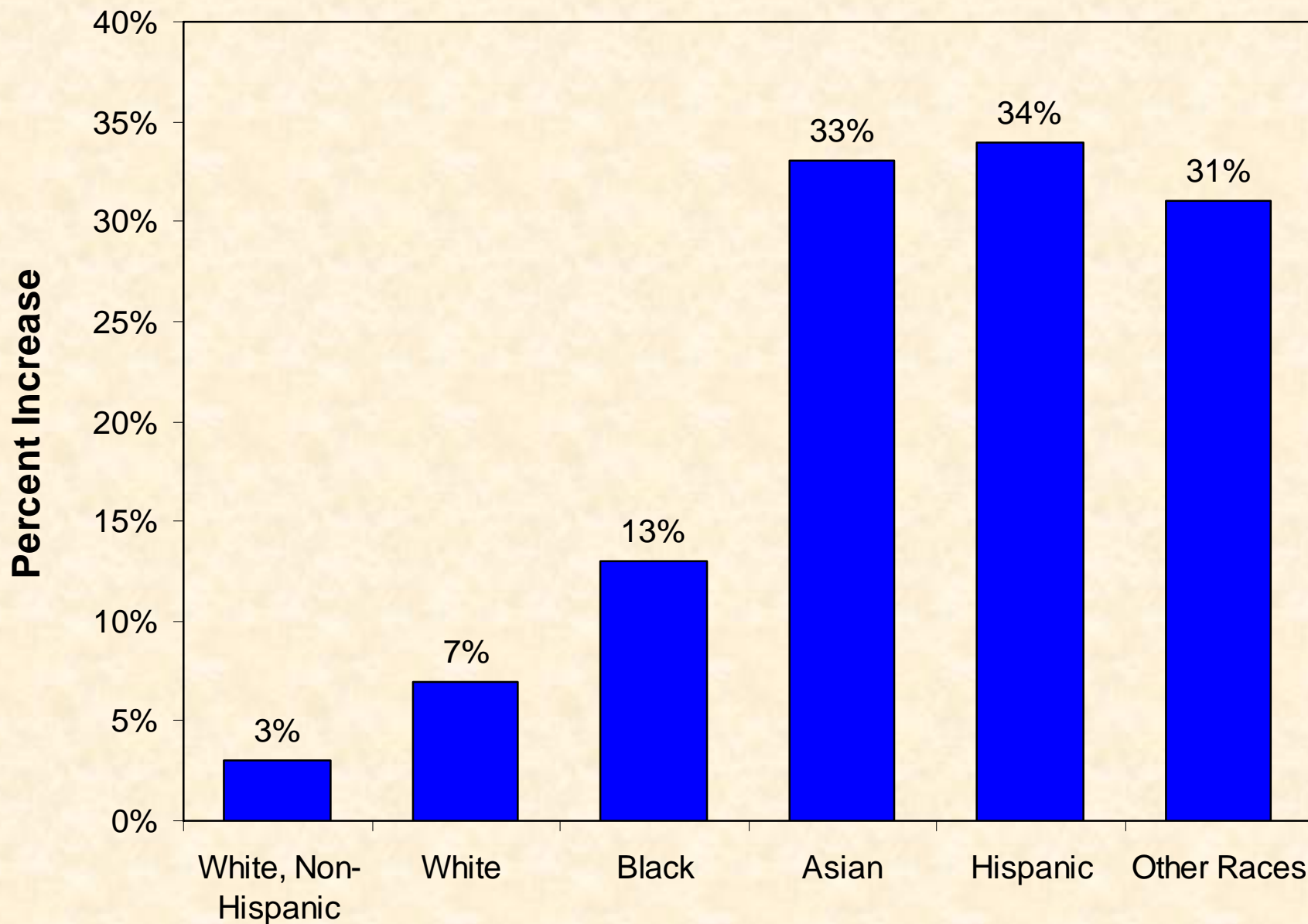
# Percent of Women in the Labor Force by Age of Youngest Child



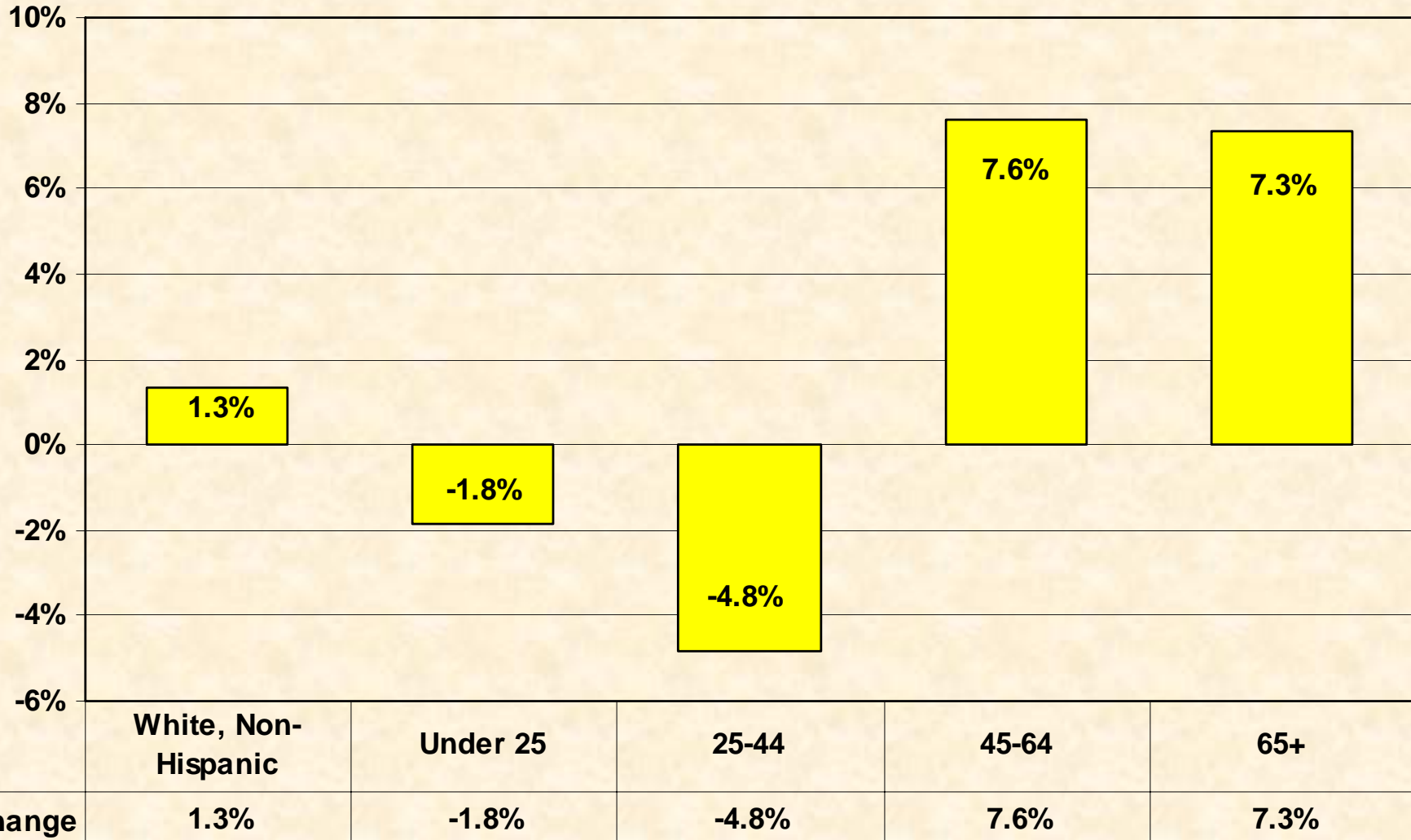
# The Changing Structure of Households in the United States



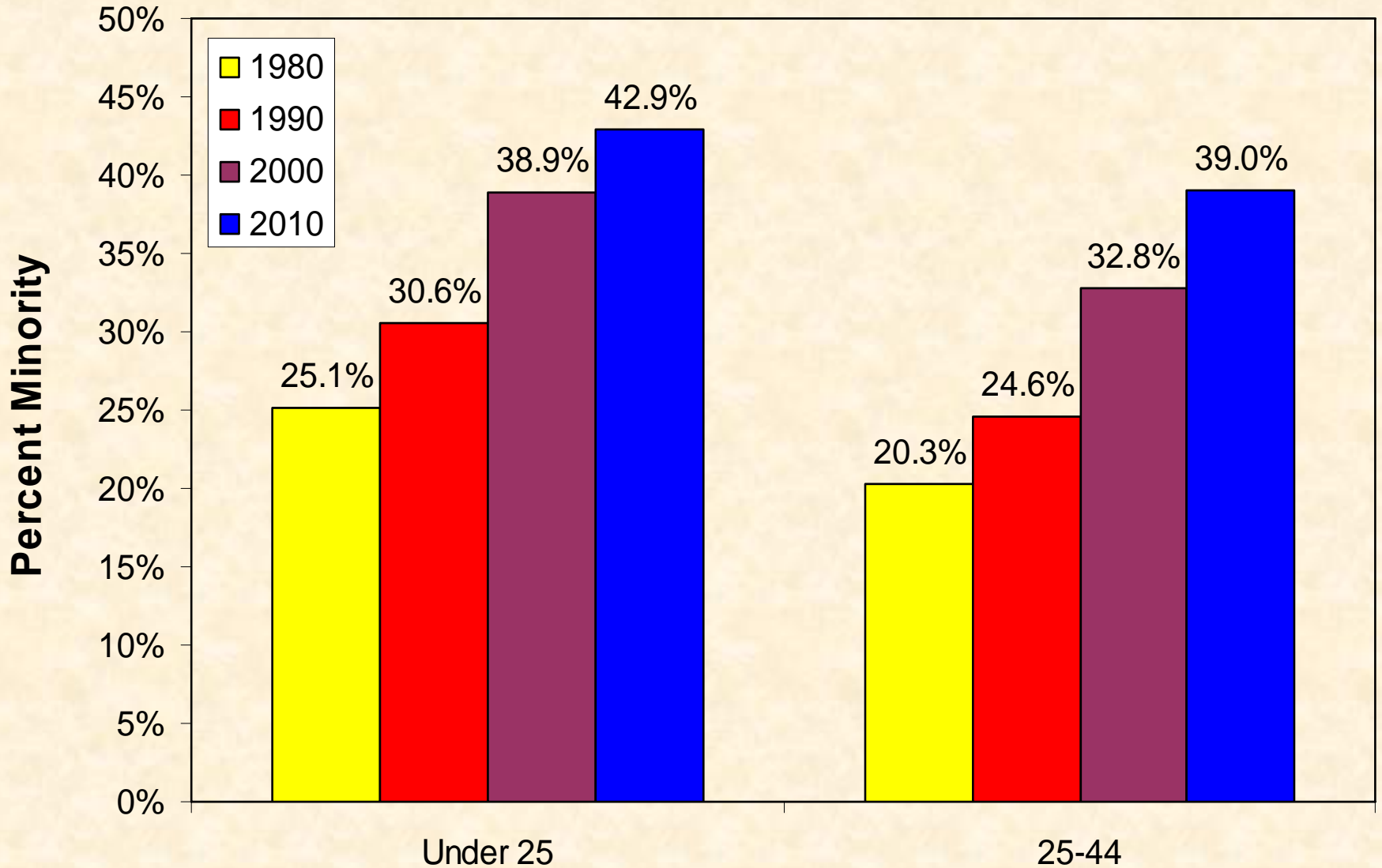
# Projected Growth: 2000 to 2010



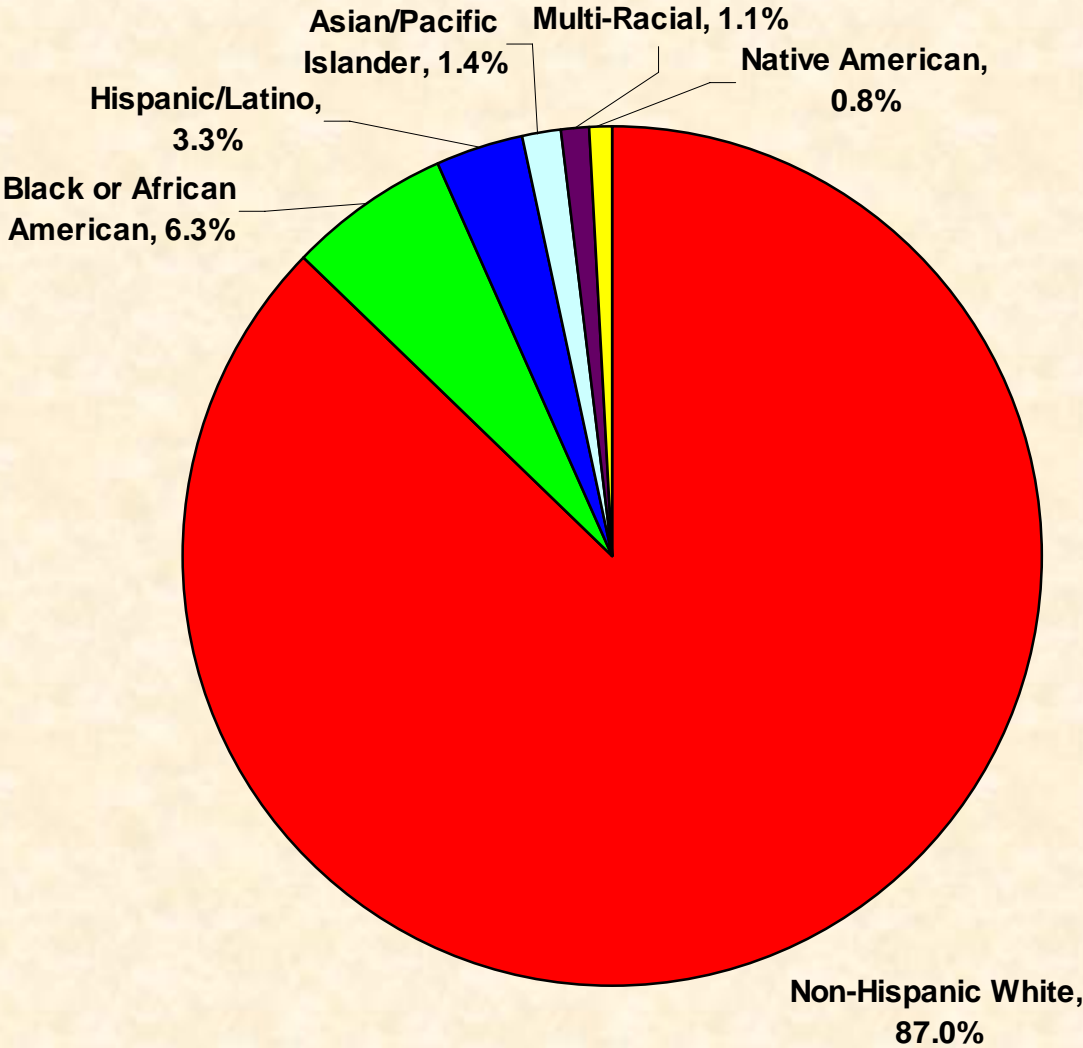
# Projected Change in Non-Hispanic White Population by Age Group: 2005-2010



# Percent Minority by Age Group

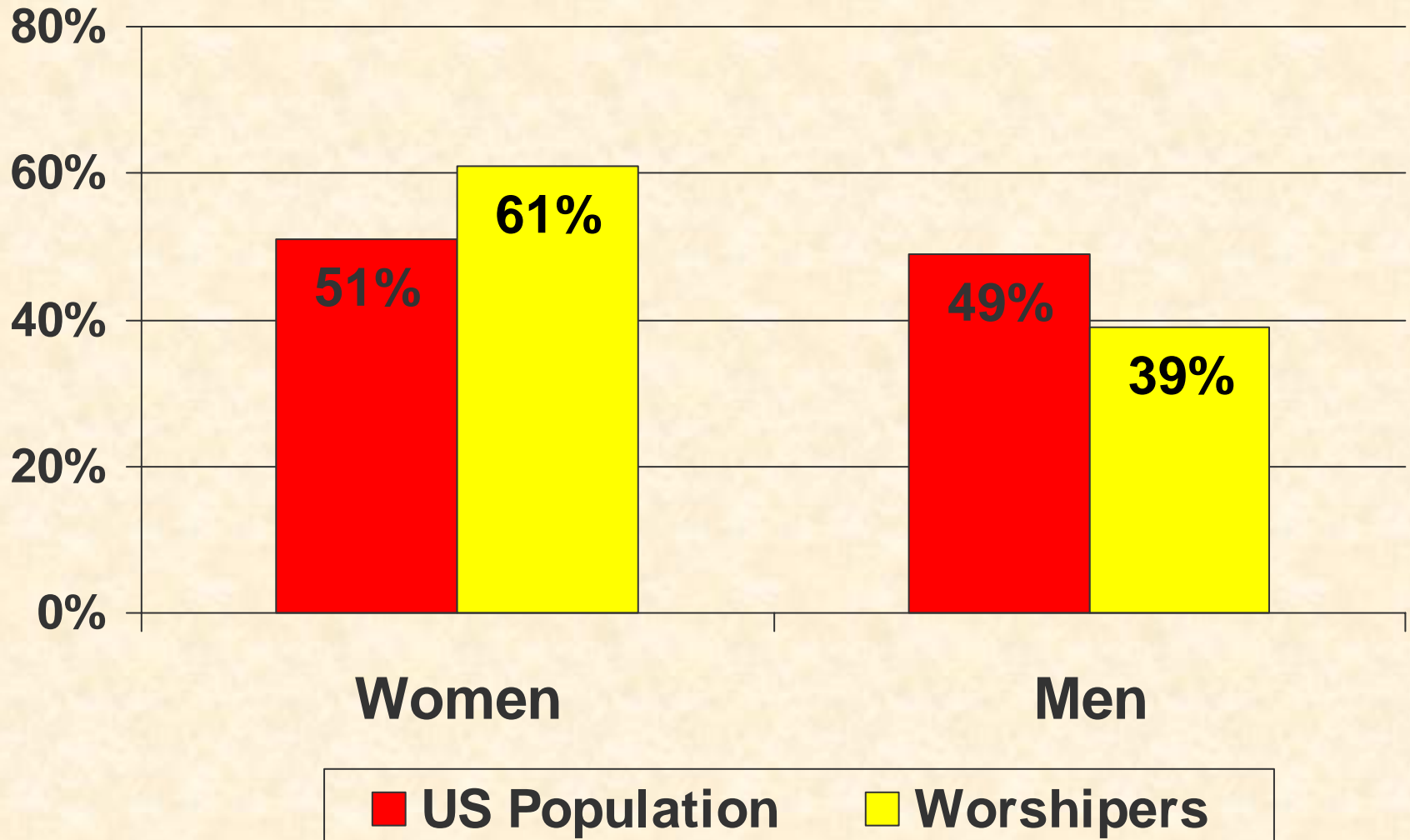


# Episcopal Domestic Racial/Ethnic Membership: 2008

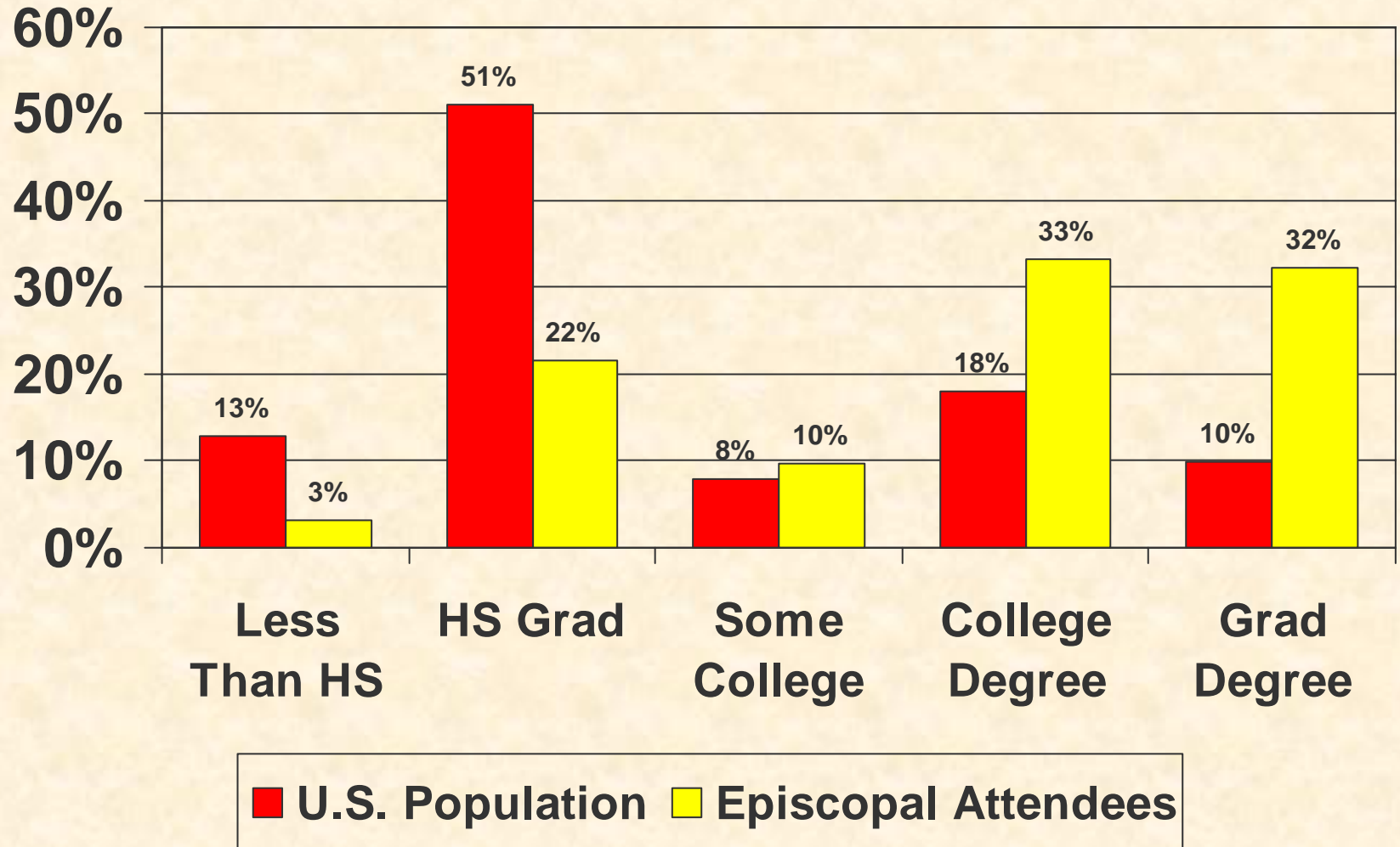


# Who Worships?

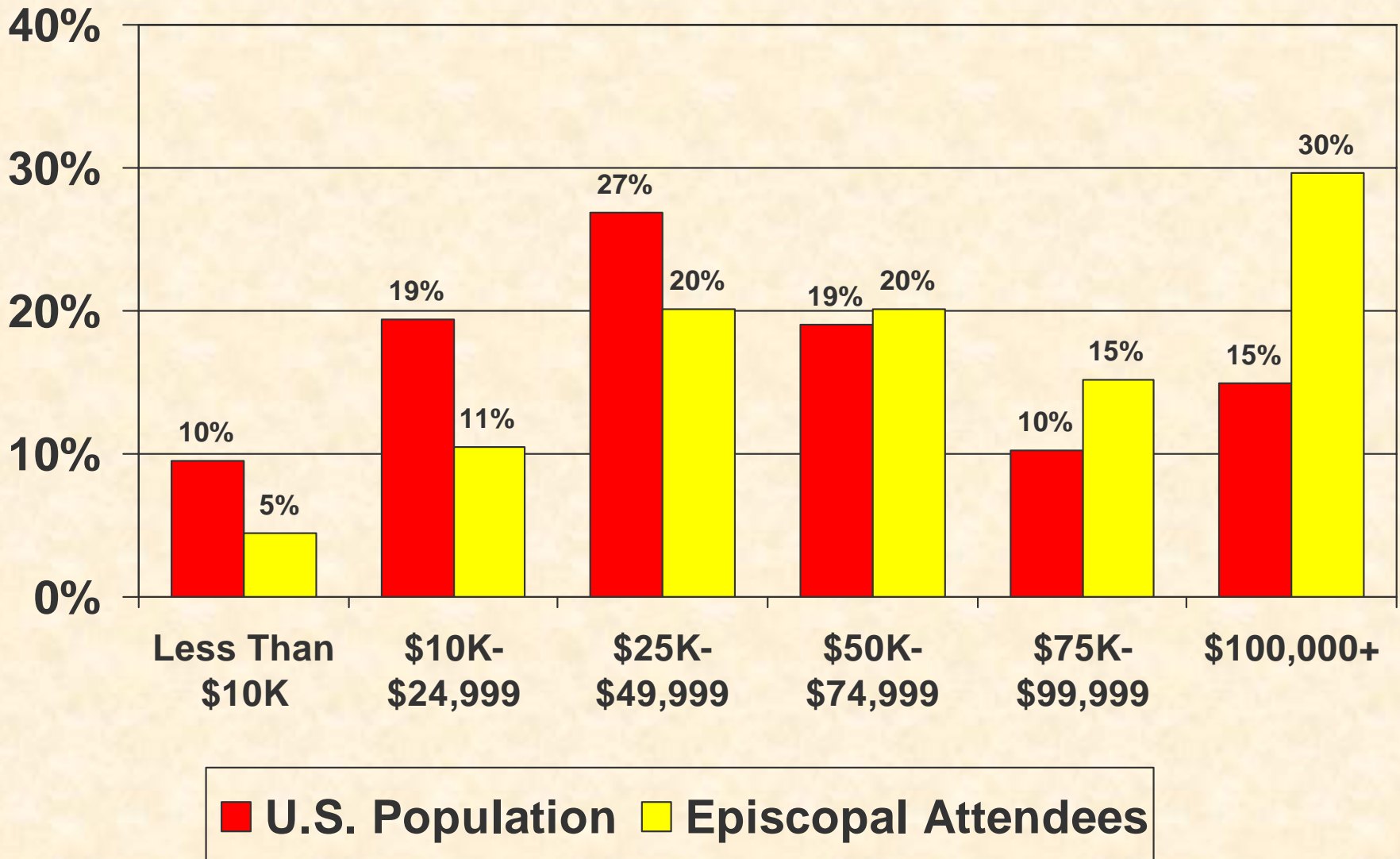
## More Women Than Men



# More Educated Than Most Americans



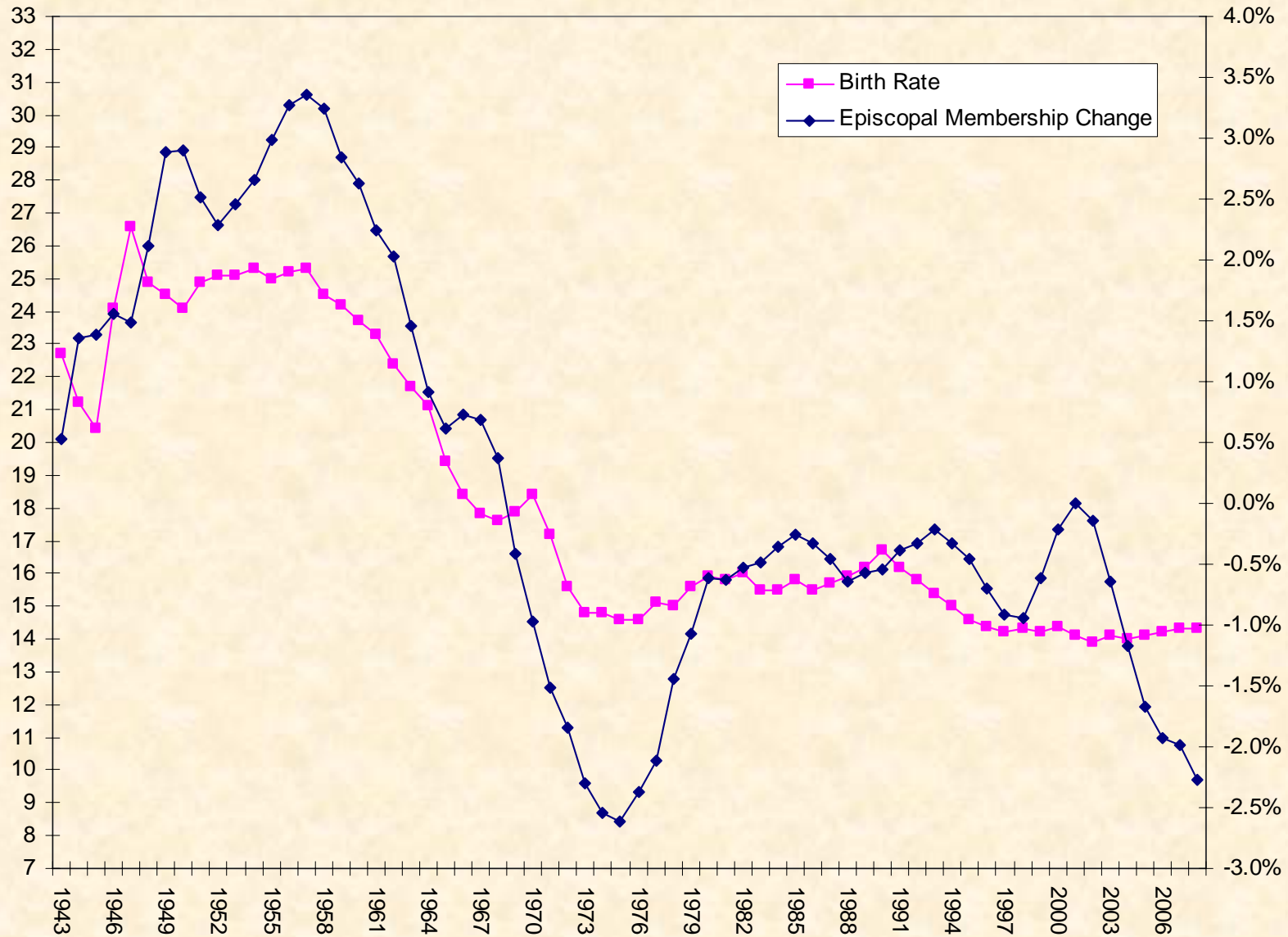
# Higher Incomes



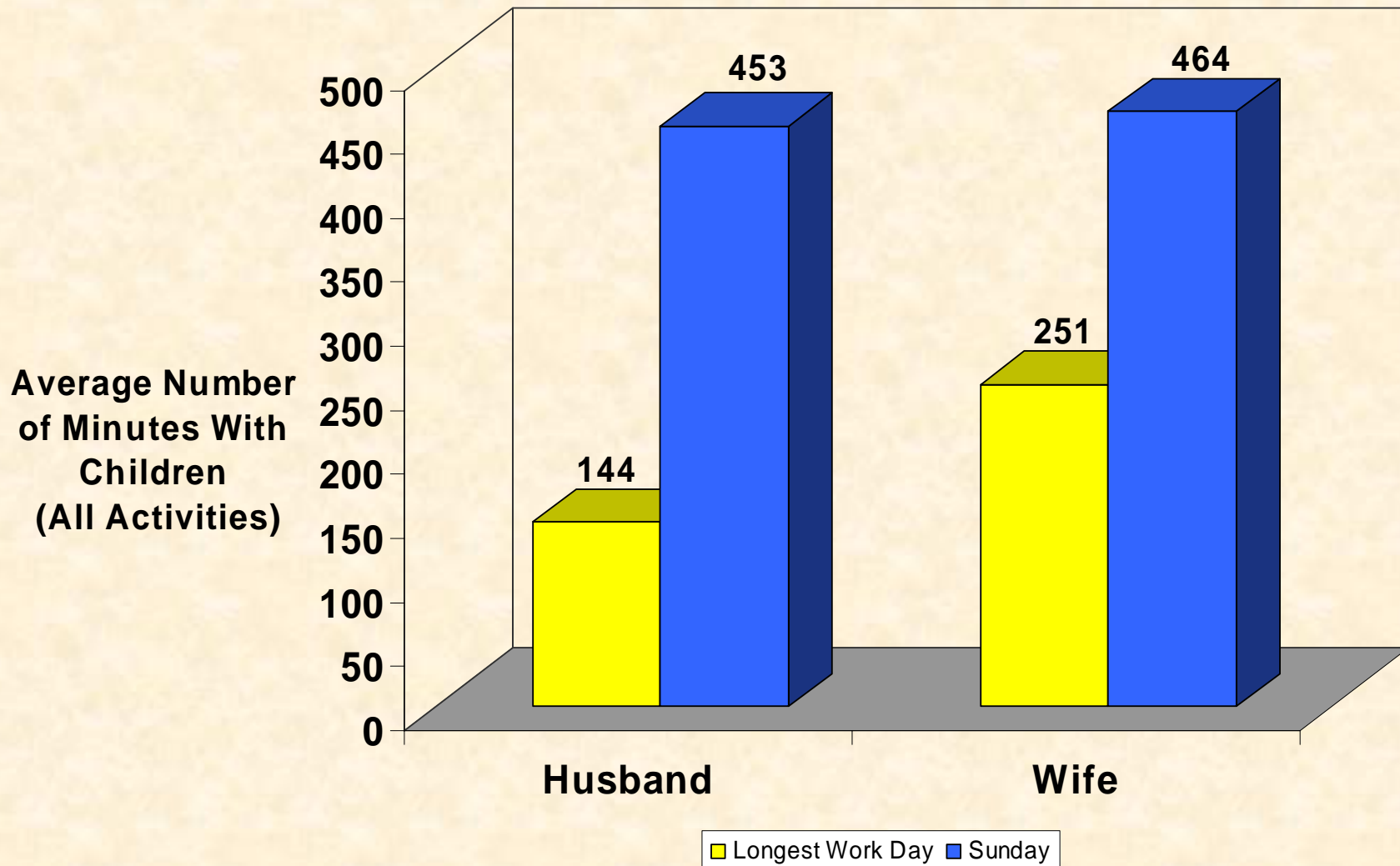
# Consequences for the Church

- Growth problems (Episcopal membership tracks the birth rate)
- Volunteer problems (more women working; more demands on time) but more retirees?
- Competition for activity (less family time)
- Constituency problems (fewer traditional families and proportionately fewer white Americans)
- Aging of membership (higher death rate & fewer children)

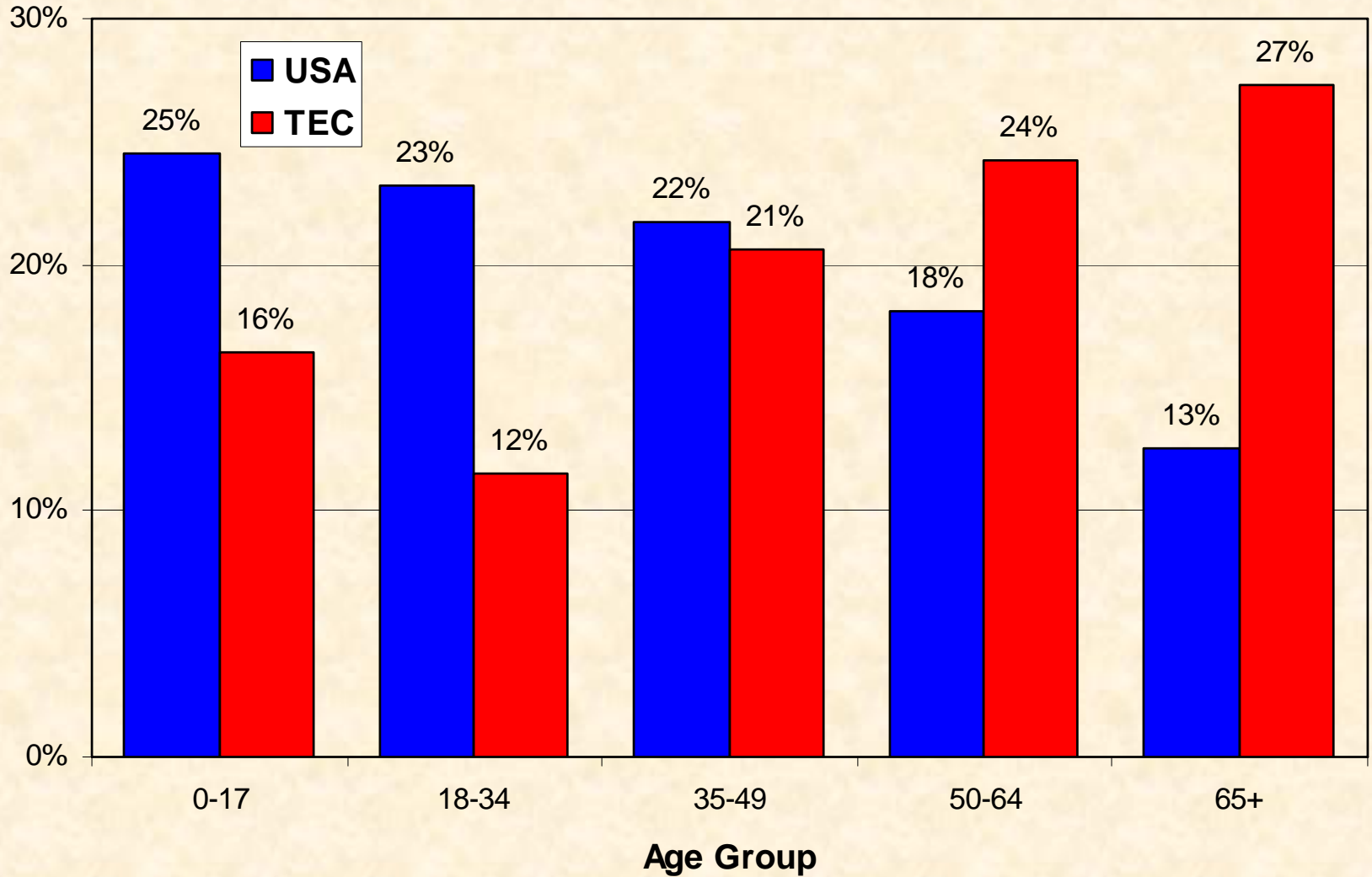
# Episcopal Annual Percent Membership Change and the Birth Rate: 1943-2008



# Average Time (Minutes) Spent With Children on Workdays and Sunday (Dual Earner Family with Preschool Age Children)



# Age Structure of the USA and TEC: 2008



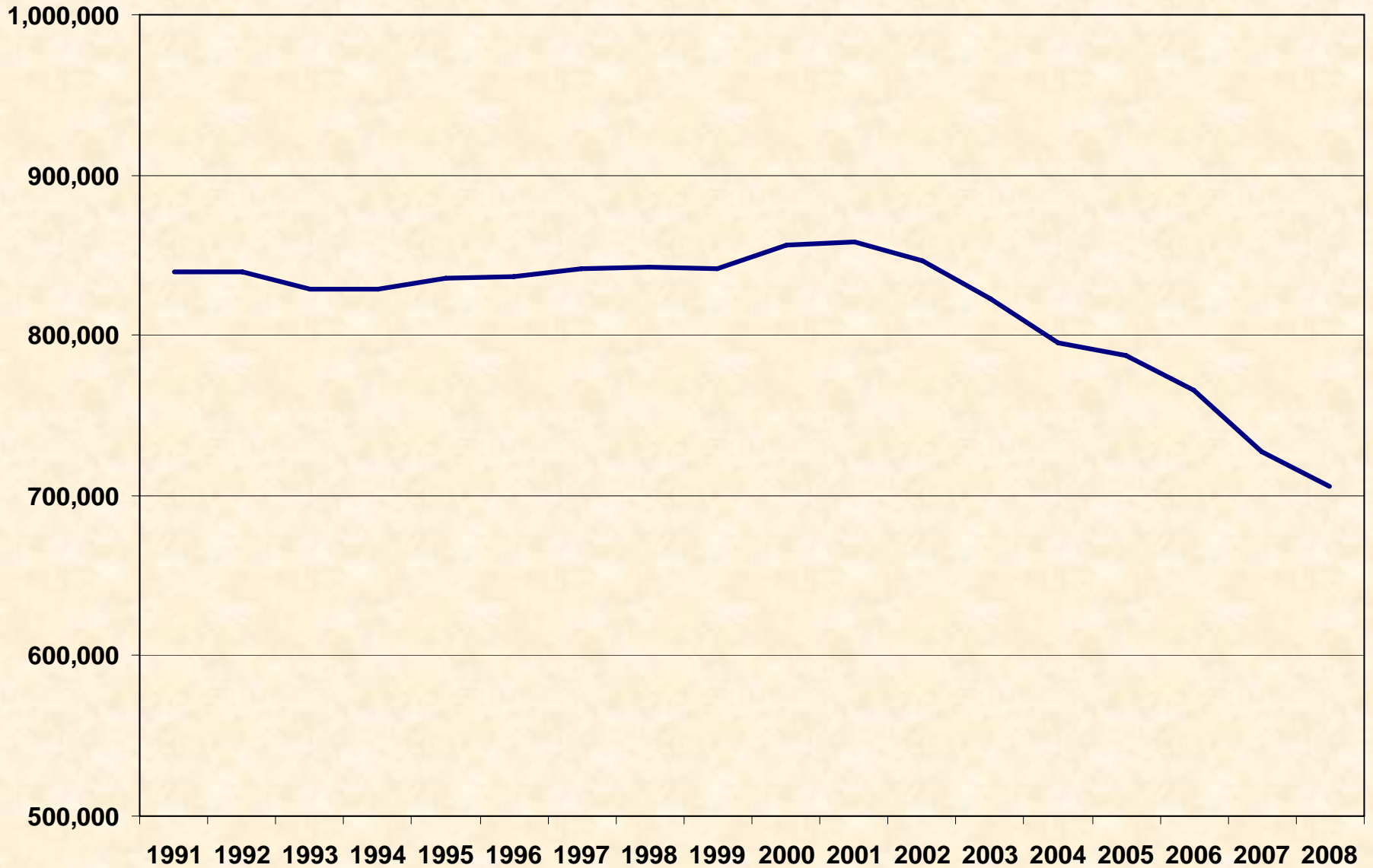
# What Happened 1946-1975?

- Episcopal growth greatly exceeded national population growth in the 1940s and 1950s—formerly unchurched persons joined churches as families (with children)
- Growth turned into decline in 1960s, even as national population continued to grow
- Youth and young adult attendance dropped in 1960s; many left and did not return to the church
- Lower birth rate among those who remained; churches lost the children of those who did not return

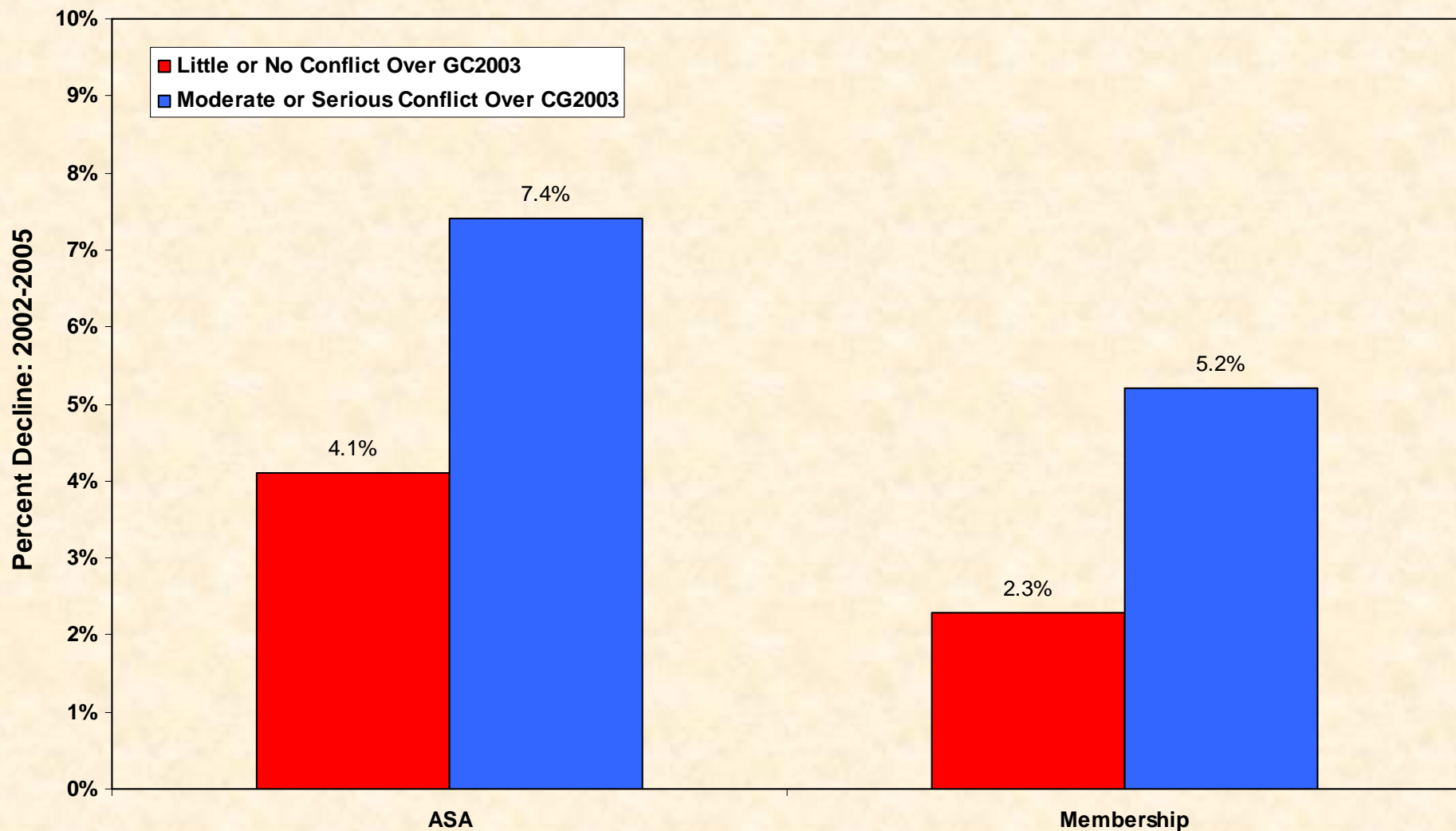
# Current Trends and Looming Issues

- Episcopal attendance trend was stable with some growth until 2002, larger declines in 2003, 2004, 2006-2008
  - Trend away from joining
  - Episcopal Church attracts more converts than are lost to apostasy or to other denominations (we attract seekers, former Roman Catholics & upwardly mobile)
- American youth have had less exposure to the church as children than previous generations
- We do not hold onto our youth very well
  - Those we attract tend to be adults, most past child-bearing years
- Birth rate lowest among our primary constituency (non-Hispanic whites with college degrees)
- Population growth is increasingly Spanish-speaking or Hispanic/Latino origin—through higher birth rate and immigration. Episcopal Church is only 2.7% Hispanic
- Continuing impact of General Convention 2003. Internal conflict and deflected attention=more members leaving and fewer joining

# Episcopal Church Average Sunday Worship Attendance: 1991-2008 (Projected)



# Percent Decline Among Episcopal Congregations by Degree of Conflict Over GC2003



# Pollster's View of American Religion

**86% of Americans claim a religious affiliation**

**63% of Americans claim church membership**

**42% of Americans claim regular worship attendance**

**21% of Americans actually attend worship during an average week**

# What Will it Take for the Episcopal Church to Grow?

- Holding onto our own
- Reaching new populations
  - People who are not highly educated whites
  - The other half (58%) of the population who are not actively involved in churches
  - Hispanic/Latino(a) population
  - Other racial/ethnic groups

# What Will it Take for an Episcopal Parish to Grow?

- That's a different question from the growth of the Episcopal Church
- The same general demographic and cultural trends affect local churches
  - Family structure and family size, greater time demands, greater mobility, fewer children, more pluralistic community
- Local context has greater direct effect on Episcopal parishes