

called to be

**pallbearers** and

*midwives*



part one:

**the death**

**of the church culture**



*And the Church must be forever building,  
And always decaying,  
And always being restored.*

*--TS Eliot*

“The current church culture in North America is on life support.

It is living off the work, money, and energy of previous generations from a previous world order.

The plug will be pulled either when the money runs out (80% of money given to congregations comes from people age fifty-five and older) or when the remaining three-fourths of a generation who are institutional loyalists die off or both.”



**“If the horse is dead, dismount.”**

We have been called to be both  
*“pallbearers”* and *“midwives.”*

- pallbearers of a dying church culture; and
- midwives of an emerging and missional church

**This is our calling –  
our task, our burden  
and our privilege**

*And the Church must be forever building,  
And always decaying,  
And always being restored.*

*--TS Eliot*

# Always Decaying

*indicates that every organic entity  
diminishes and decays over time.*

*In fact, in both the biological and  
spiritual world, decay is often  
necessary for new growth to  
appear.*

**“If you as leaders are not passionate, visionary, and hopeful about the fact that God placed you here and now – in this time in history – for a purpose and to make a difference, then your congregations will drift along and you’ll simply be managing decline.”**

**Bishop’s Address – 2010 Council**

**Every year in the United States:**

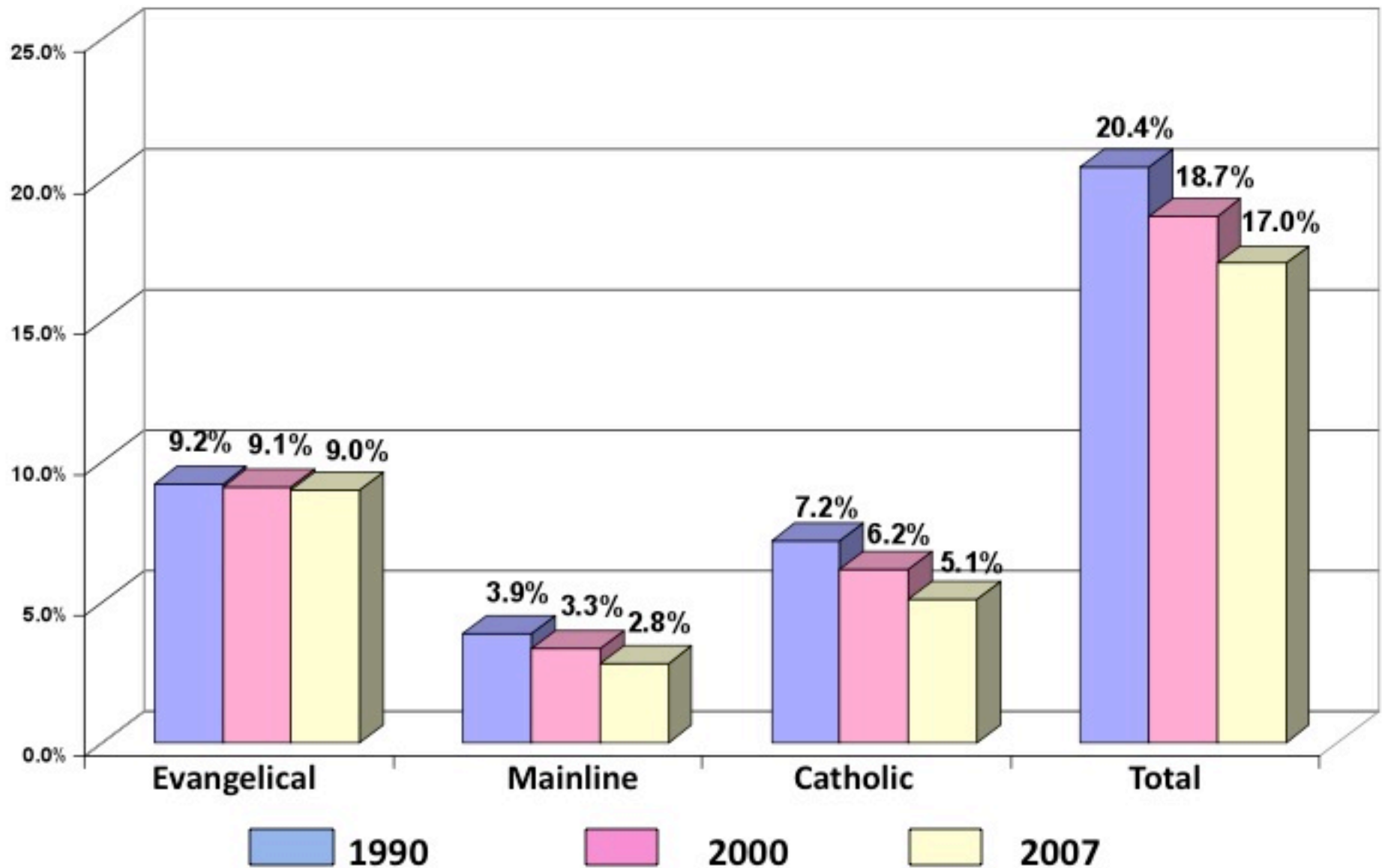
**about 1,000 new churches are  
planted**

**and 4,000 close their doors.**

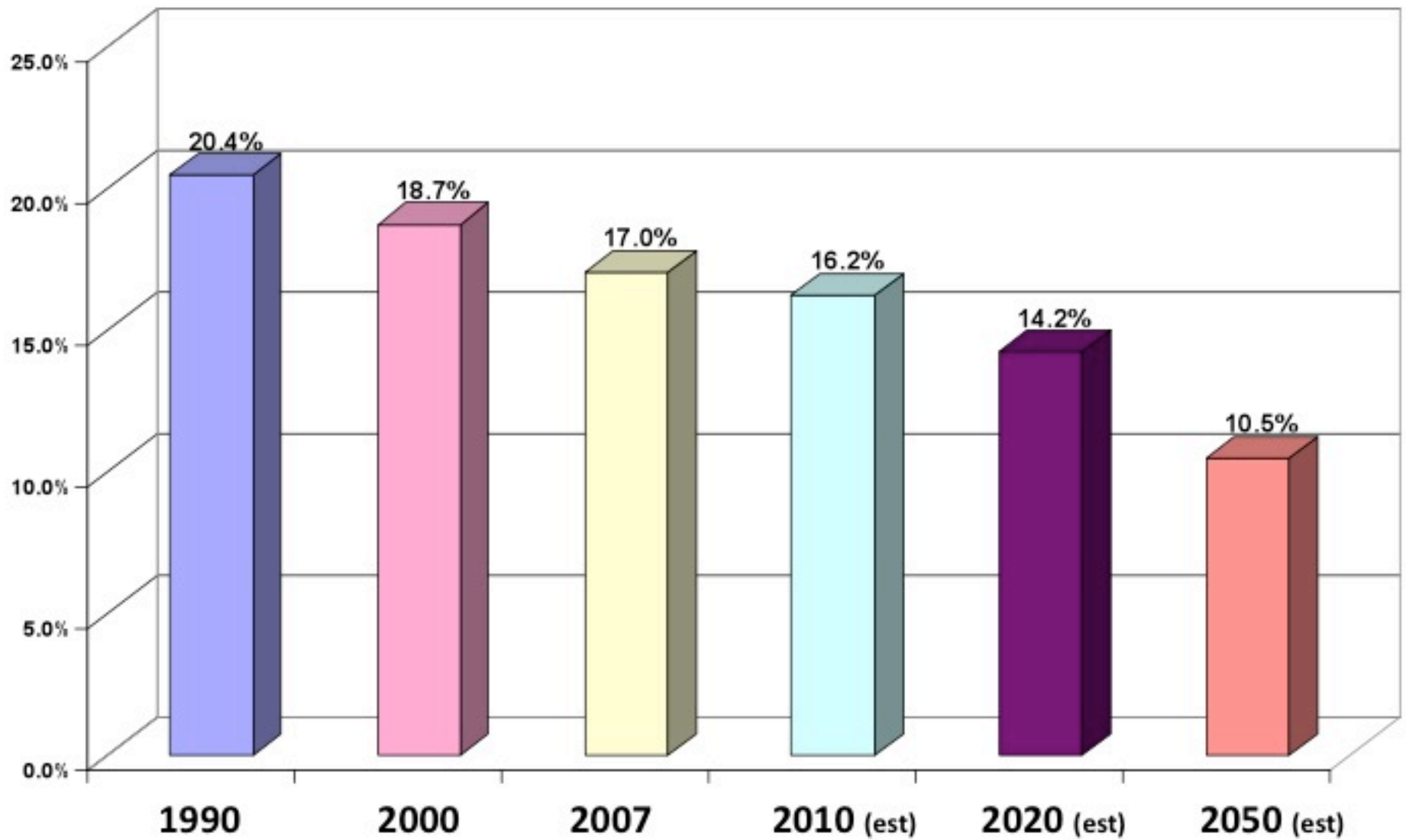
· From 1990 to 2000, the combined membership of all Protestant denominations in the USA declined by almost 5 million members (9.5 percent), while the US population increased by 24 million (11 percent).

· The percentage of people attending church on a given Sunday has steadily declined.

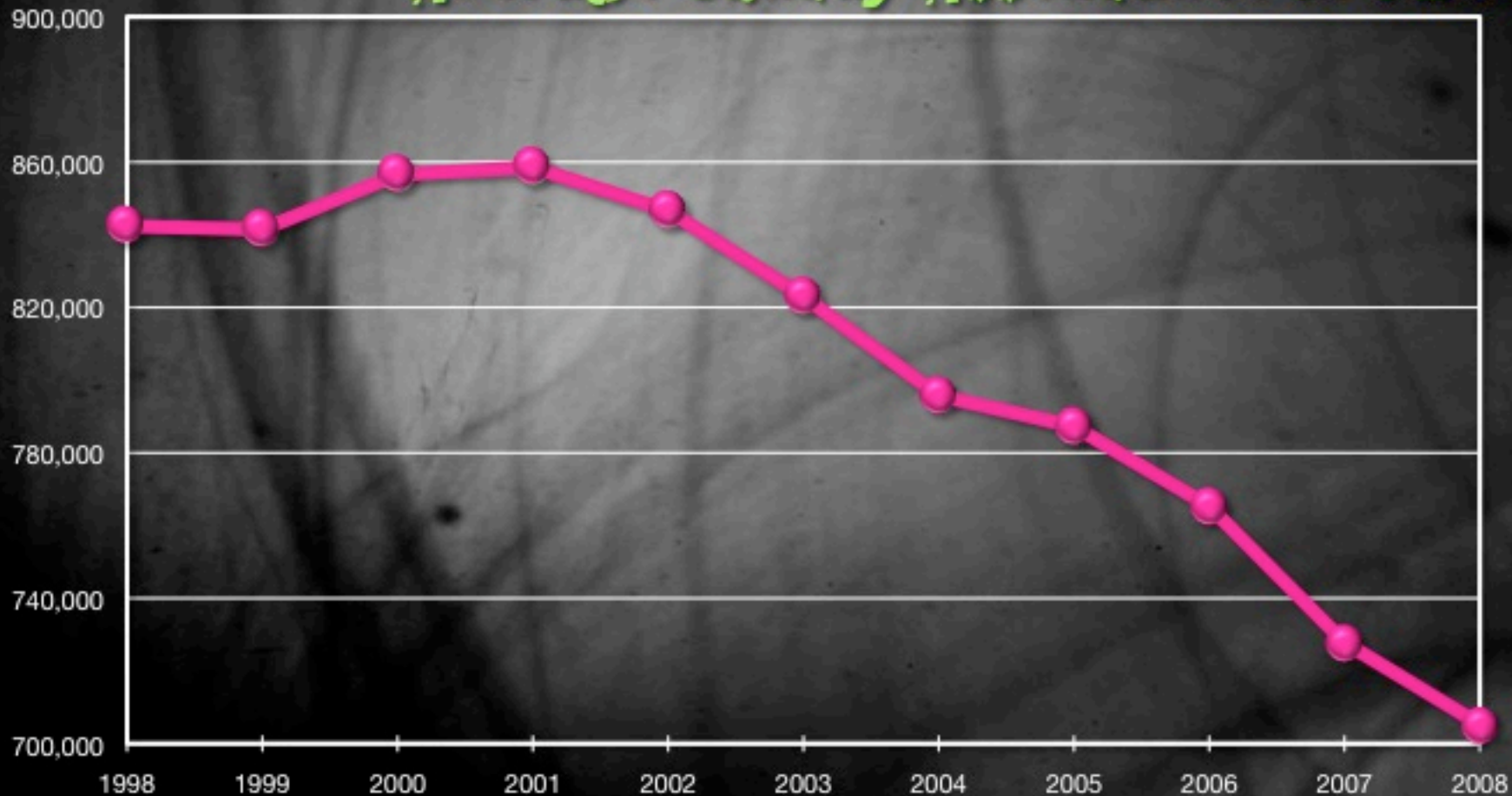
**Percentage of the Population Attending Church  
on any Given Weekend in 2007**



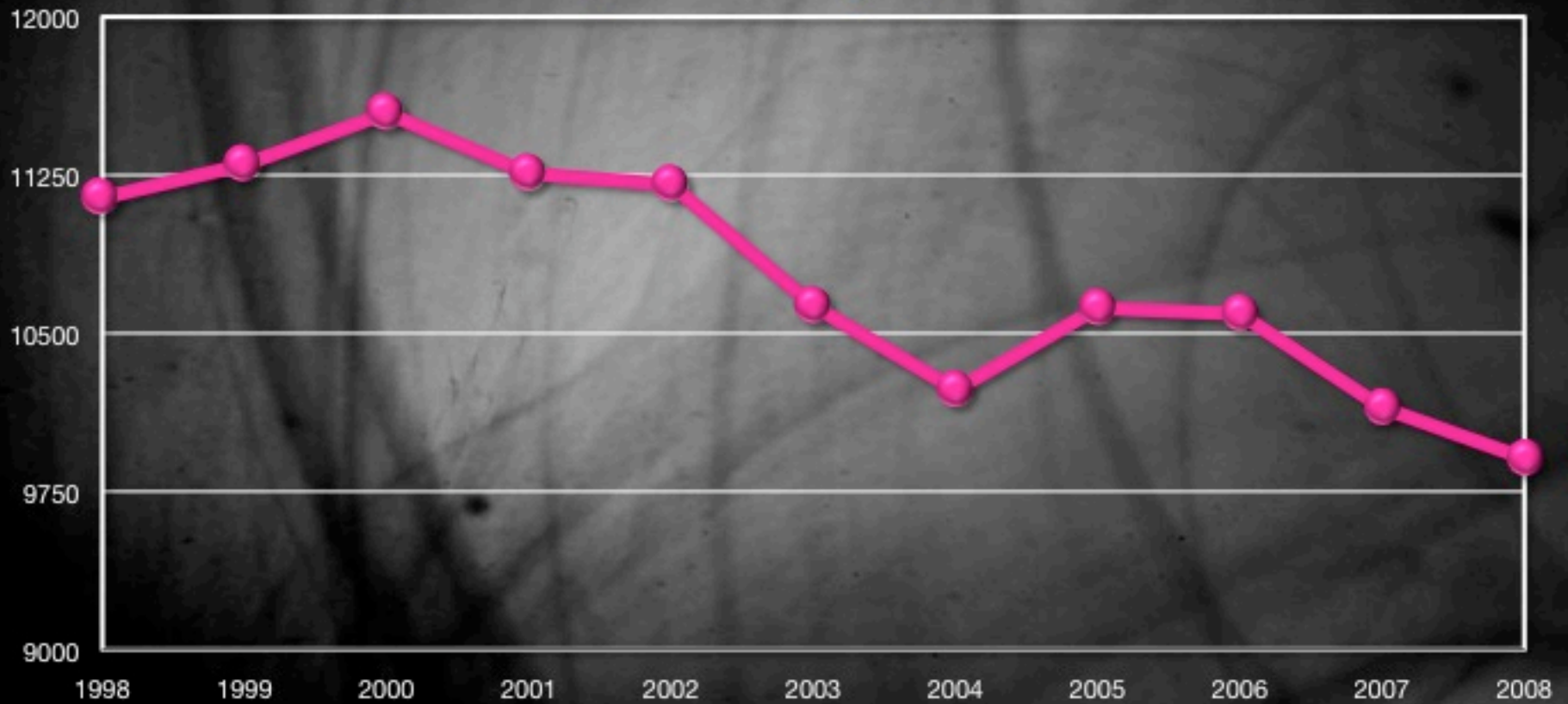
**This is the Future of the American Church Attendance Percentage  
if Nothing Changes**



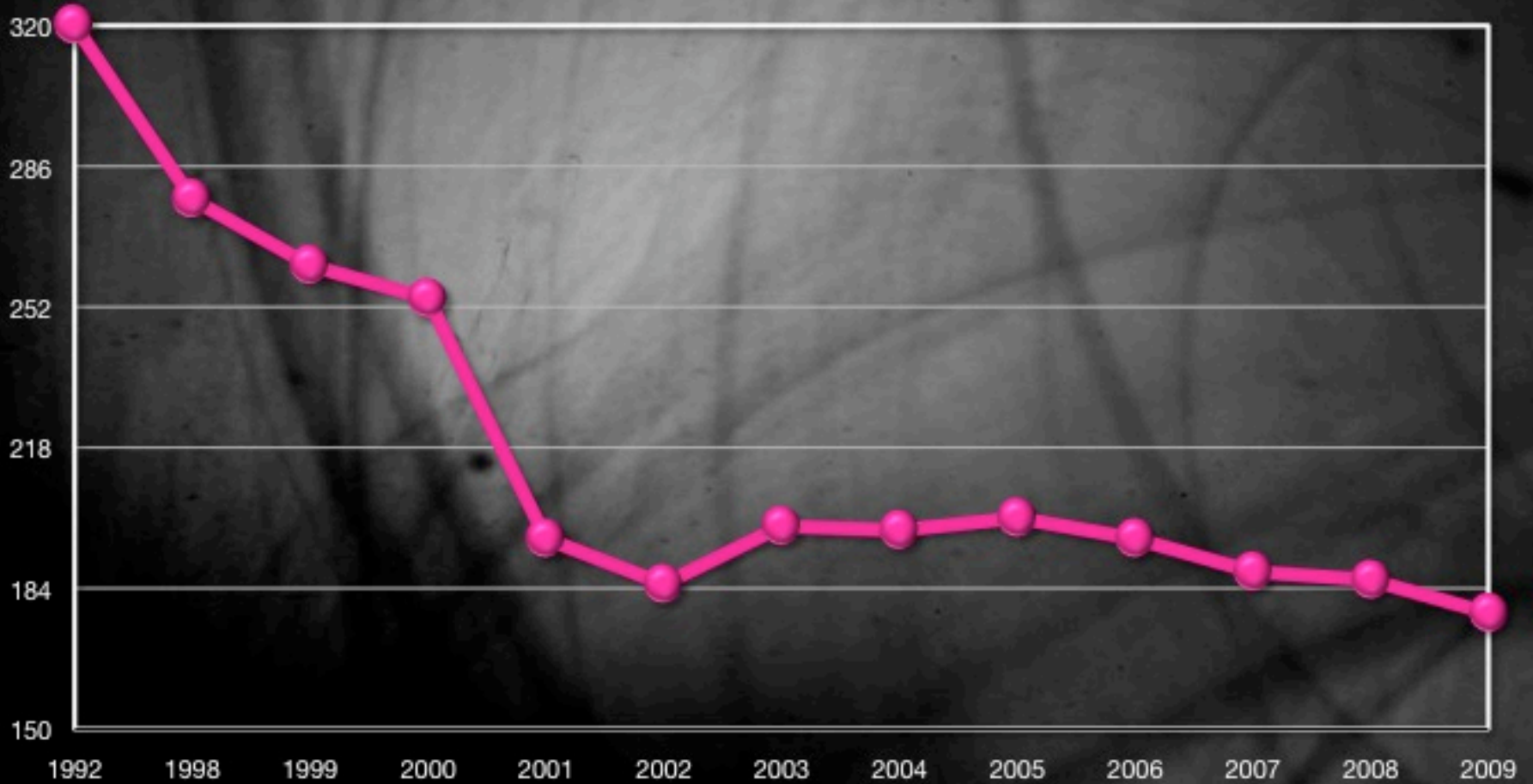
## *Average Sunday Attendance in TFC*



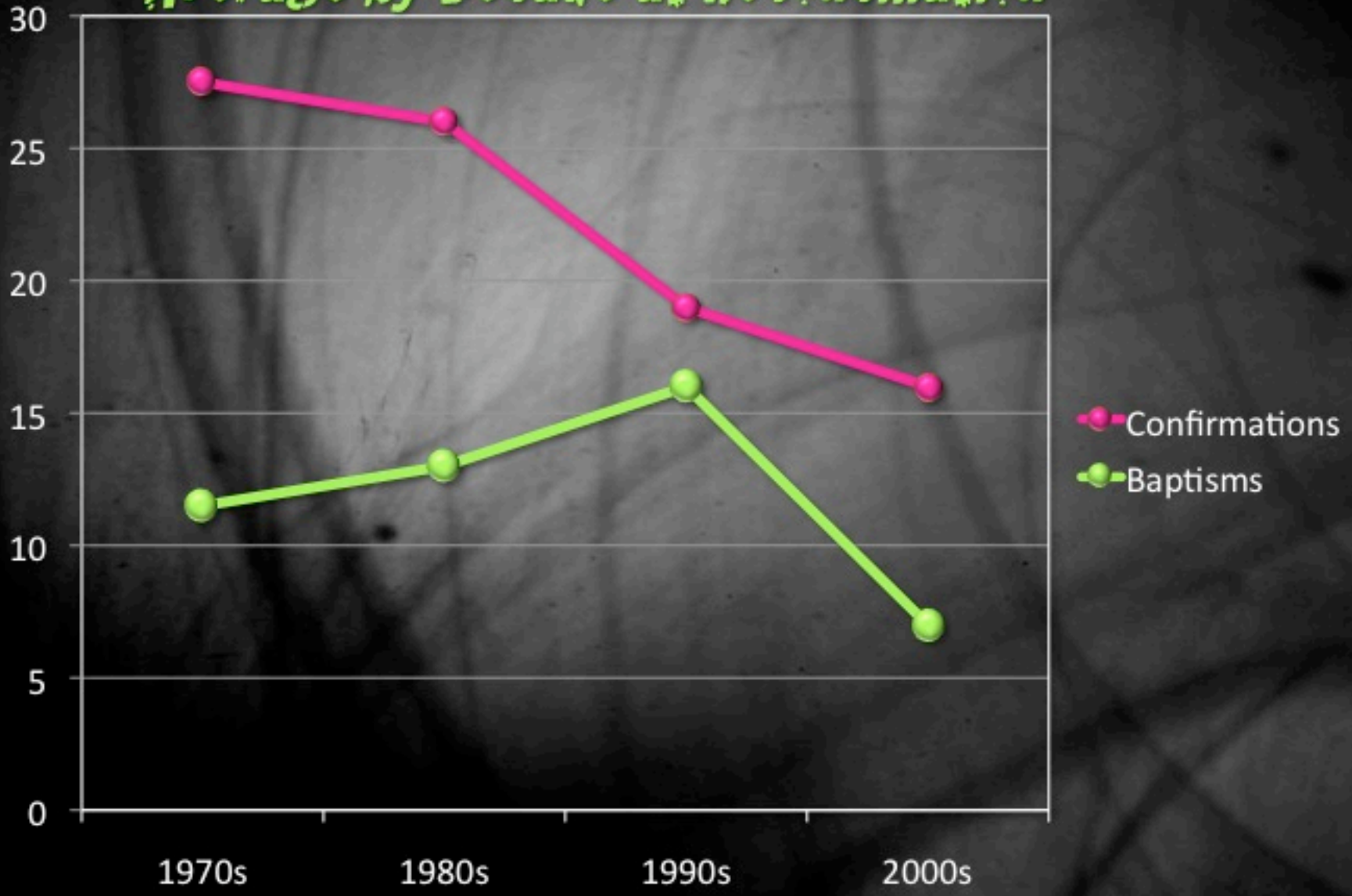
## *Average Sunday Attendance in DWYX*



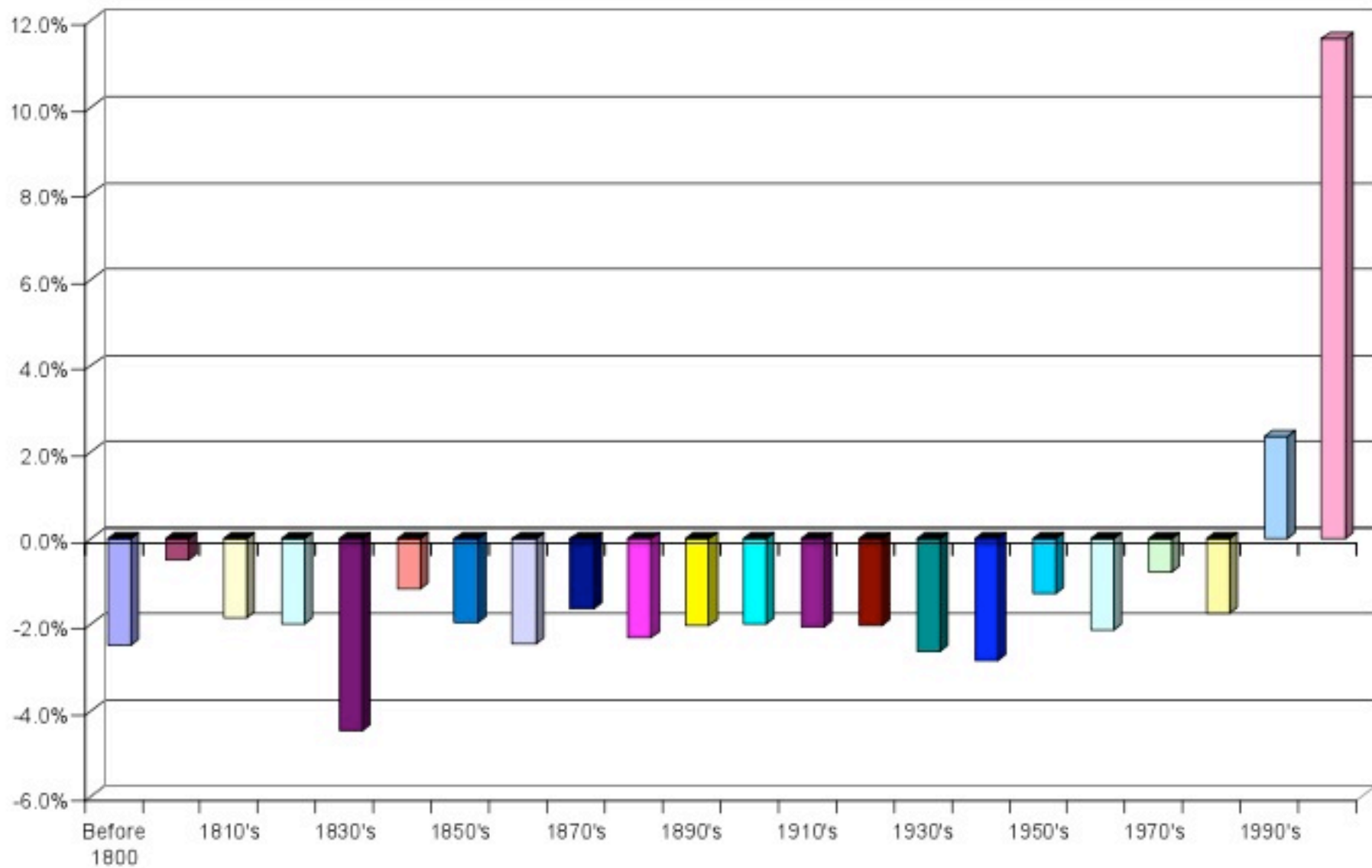
## *Average Sunday Attendance at Rec*



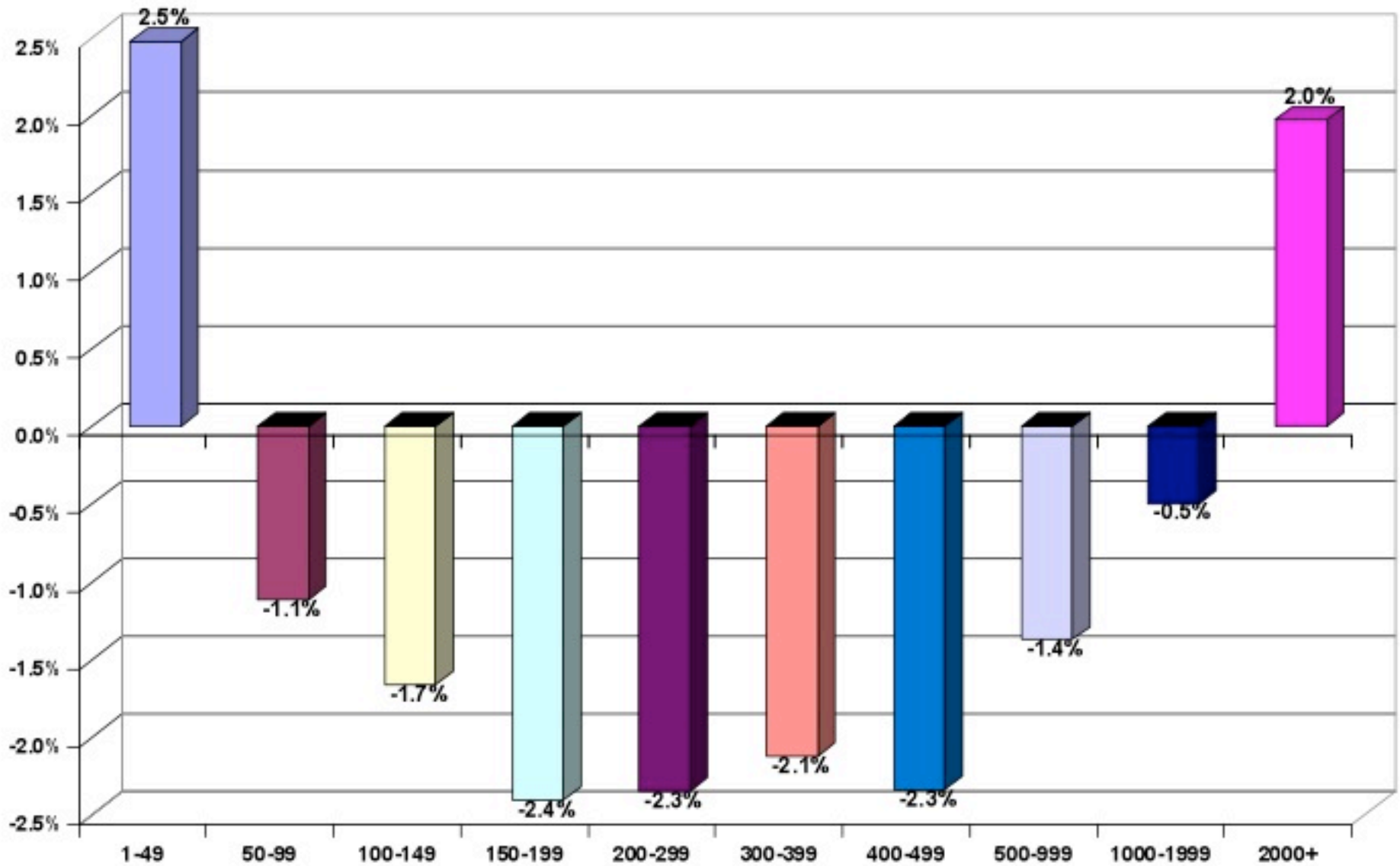
# *Average by Decade at Reconciliation*



2006-2007 Attendance Growth or Decline by Decade Founded



## 2006-2007 Church Attendance Growth by Size



“I believe that the great pastoral reality for the church in the United States is that we are watching the termination of the world we have loved too long and lost- a world of Western, white, male, heterosexual domination, privilege and certitude. It has evaporated before our eyes. Its loss creates acres of rage and anxiety. . . . It is my judgment that the great pastoral opportunity among us is to utter faithful folk *into the abyss* too long denied, and to utter faithful folk *through the abyss* into newness...”

- Walter Bruggeman, Professor of OT at  
Columbia Theological Seminary

**Next Thursday –**

part two:

**generations and icebergs**

