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# PASTOR'S AGE, COUCH GROWTH & VITALITY: WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP

May 17, 2019  
AHSRA Conference  
Oakwood University

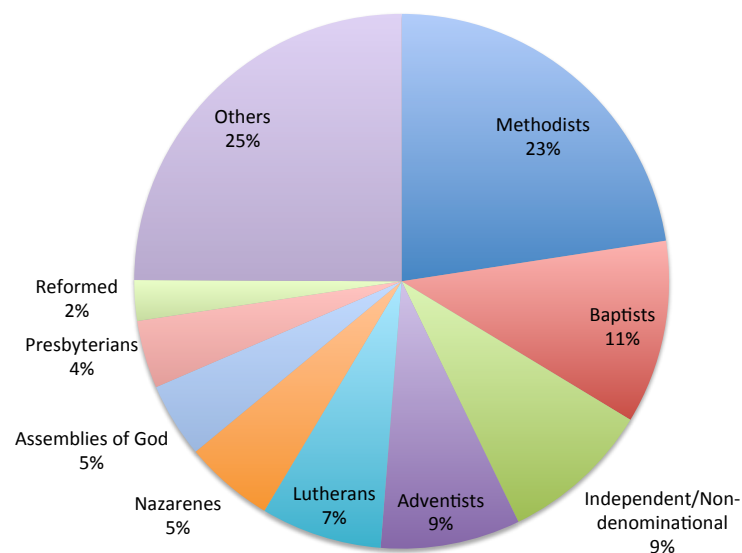


# NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT DATA

[NCDAMERICA.ORG](http://NCDAMERICA.ORG)

- 2008-2017 data
- 9,529 local congregations
- 258,099 surveys

**Church Streams**



**NCD**

**AMERICA**

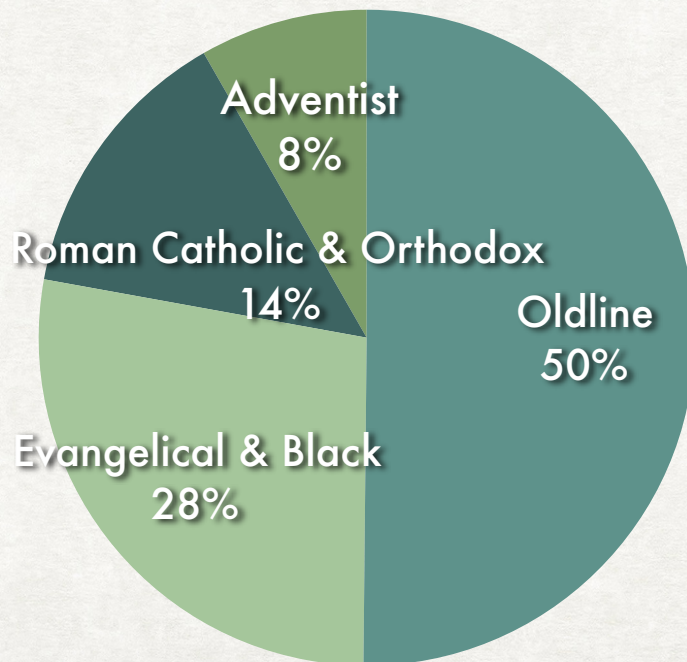
*We Help You Thrive!*



# FAITH COMMUNITIES TODAY DATA

[FAITHCOMMUNITIESTODAY.ORG](http://FAITHCOMMUNITIESTODAY.ORG)

- 2015 data
- 3,847 local congregations
- 3,847 surveys



FAITH  
*Communities*  
TODAY



# AGING PASTOR ?

## PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How are selected measures of a church's wellbeing related to the pastor's age?
  - Church size, age of churches
  - Church growth trajectories?
  - Measures of congregational health?
  - Age of the members and groups in churches?
  - Leadership style of the pastor?

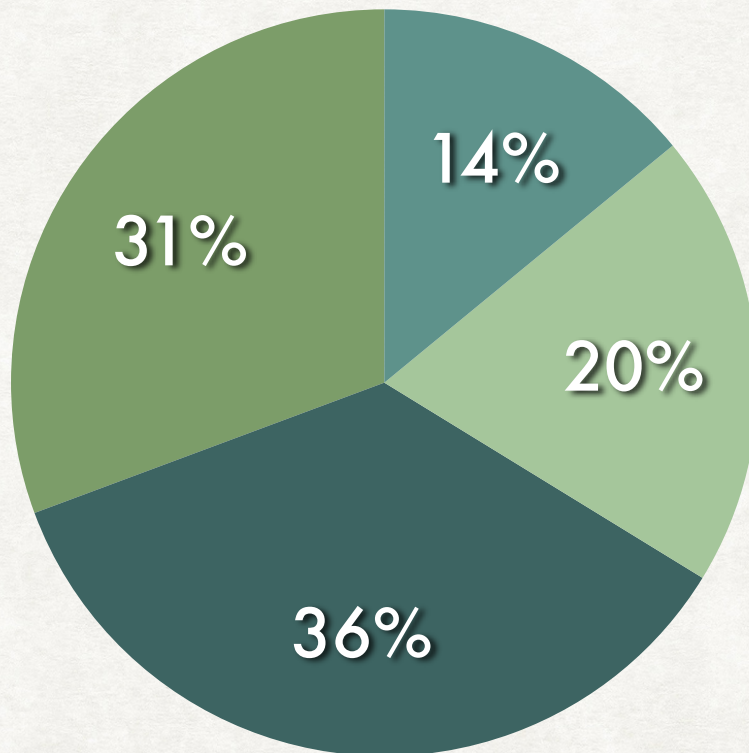


# PASTOR'S AGE CATEGORIES

FACT 2015 AND NCD 2008-2017

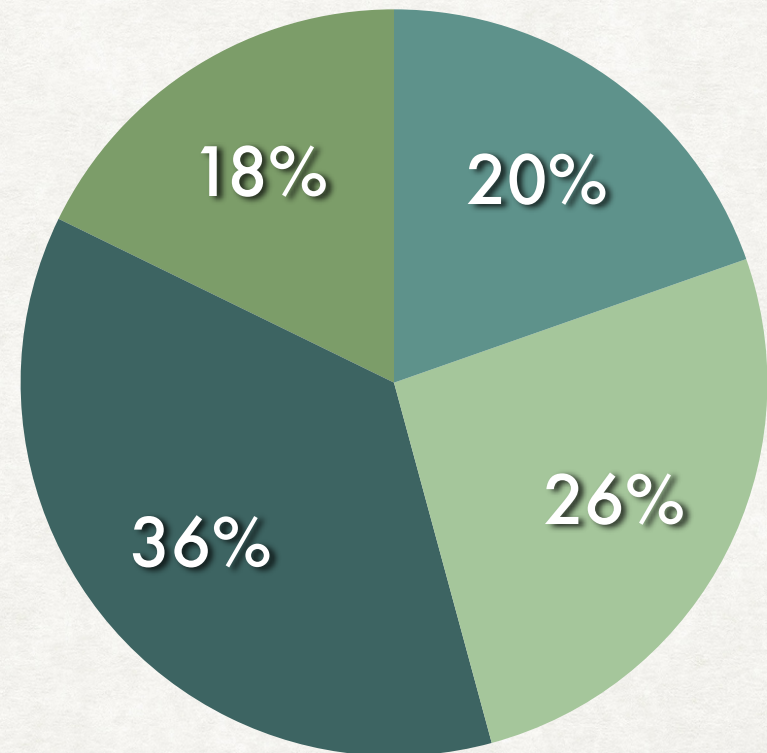
FACT 2015

N = 3374



NCD 2008-2017

N = 8824

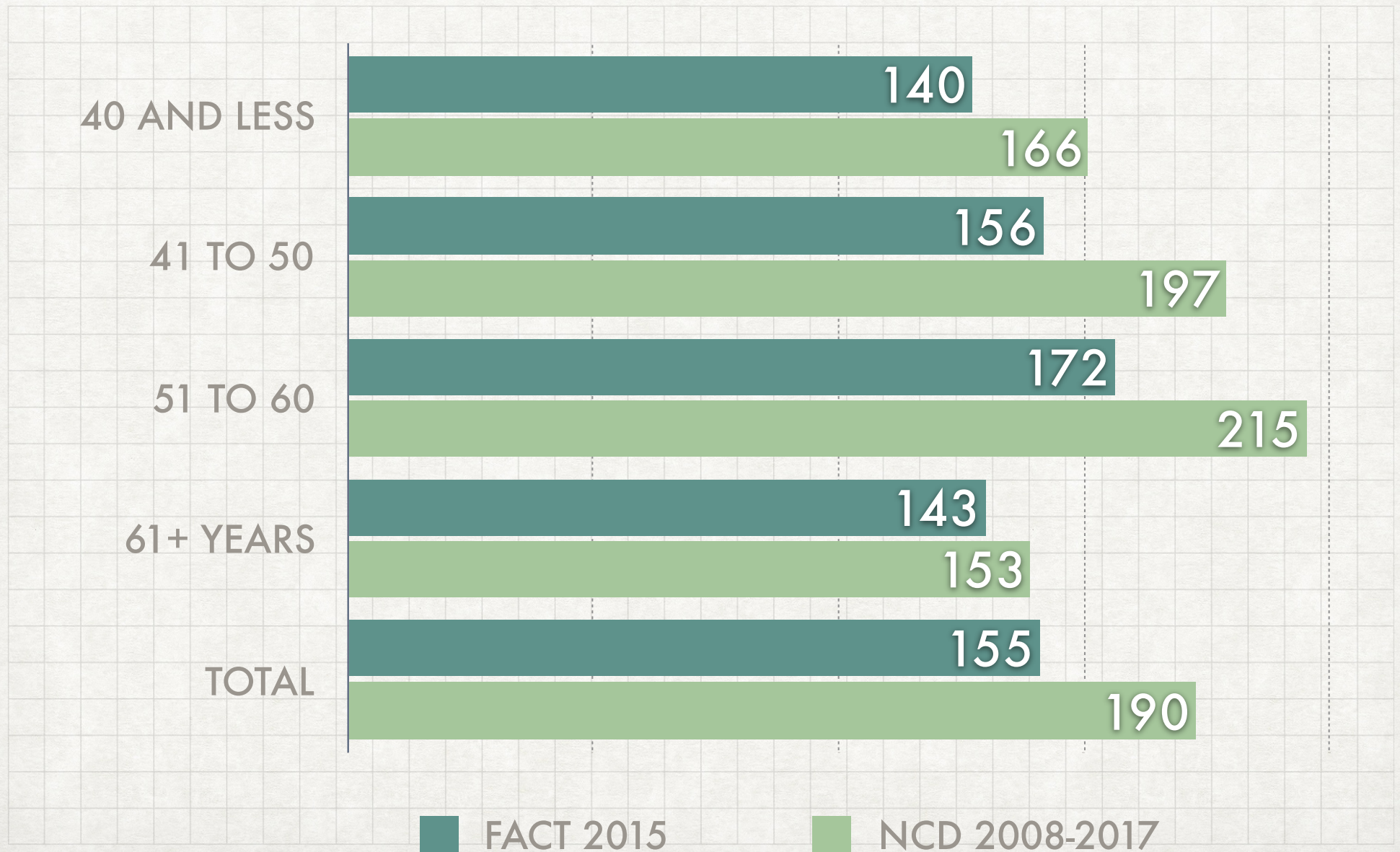


● 40 AND LESS ● 41 TO 50 ● 51 TO 60 ● 61+ YEARS



# AVERAGE ADULT ATTENDANCE

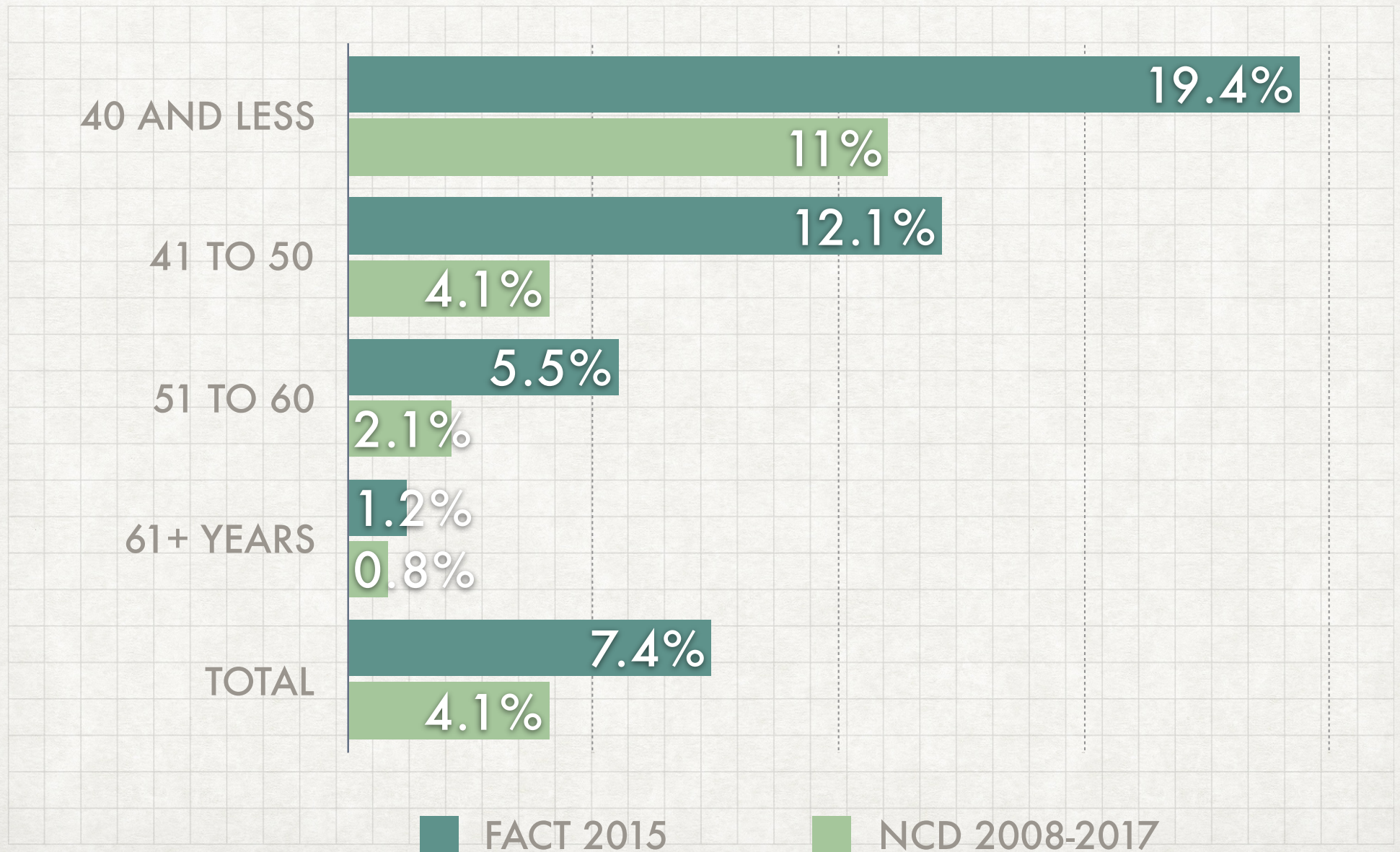
BY THE AGE OF PASTOR





# 5 YEARS GROWTH RATE

BY THE AGE OF PASTOR





# 5 YEARS GROWTH RATE

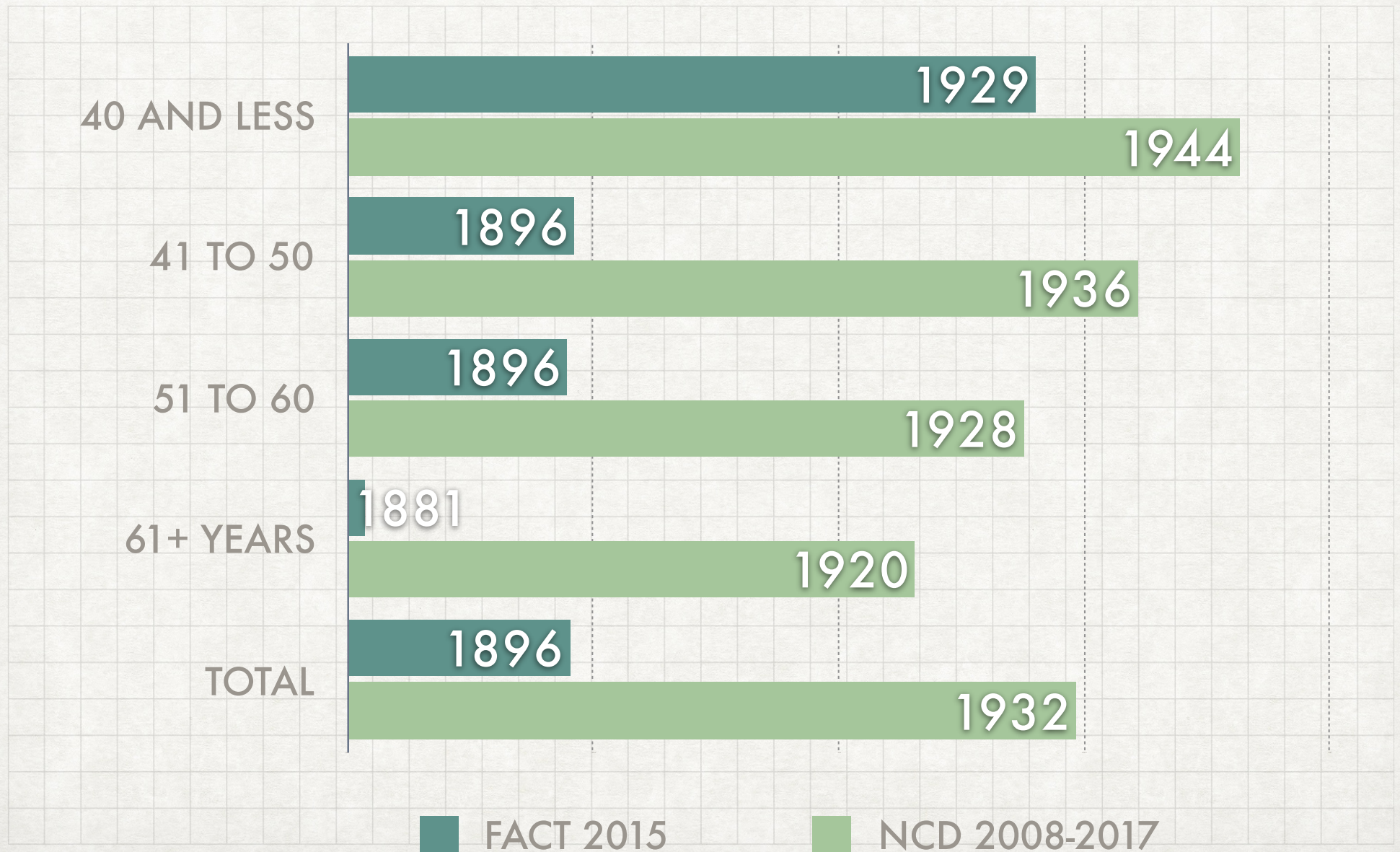
## BY THE AGE OF PASTOR

- Age of pastor and 5 Years Growth Rate
  - FACT 2015
    - $r = -.095, p = .000, N = 2430$
  - NCD 2008-2017
    - $r = -.076, p = .000, N = 8079$
- Age of pastor and 5 Years Average Annual Growth Rate
  - NCD 2008-2017
    - $r = -.154, p = .000, N = 7077$



# YEAR OF FOUNDING THE CHURCH

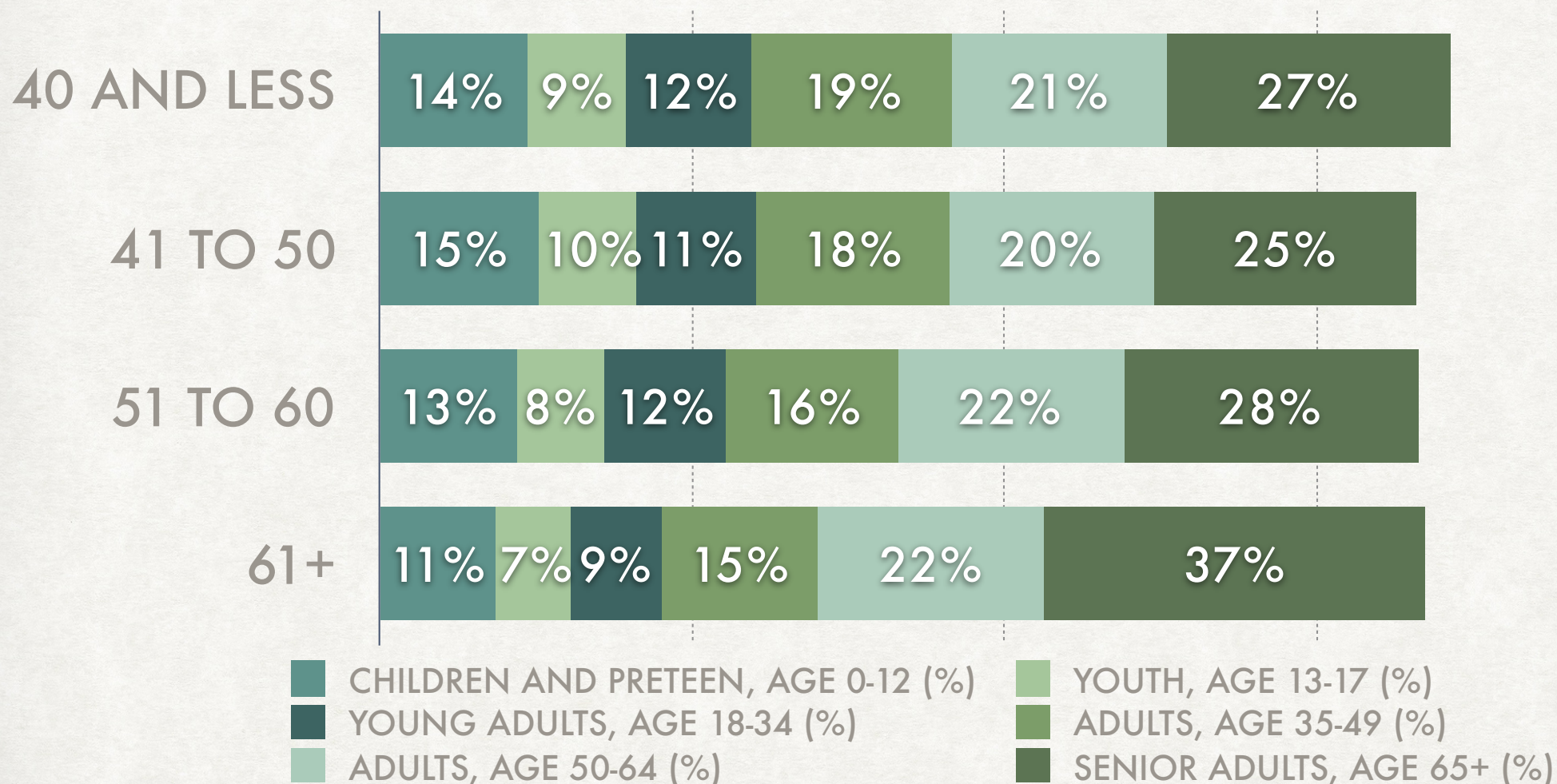
BY THE AGE OF PASTOR





# DISTRIBUTION OF AGE GROUPS IN CHURCH

BY THE AGE OF PASTOR  
FACT 2015





# RATE OF PRESENCE OF AGE GROUPS

BY THE AGE OF PASTOR  
NCD 2008-2017

Pastor's Age	Children	Youth	Young Adults	Young Fam.	Middle Age	Senior citizens
40 and less	52.5%	28.0%	21.3%	52.3%	79.6%	50.8%
41 to 50	52.3%	39.0%	19.6%	48.7%	85.0%	54.7%
51 to 60	48.0%	34.0%	18.5%	43.7%	87.8%	62.2%
61+	39.8%	28.4%	15.4%	35.9%	85.2%	72.7%
Total	48.6%	33.1%	18.8%	45.3%	85.0%	59.8%



# AGE GROUPS OF SELECTED PARTICIPANTS IN THE SURVEY

BY THE AGE OF PASTOR  
NCD 2008-2017

Pastor's Age	40 and less	41 to 50	51 to 60	61+
40 and less	37.7%	17.5%	19.4%	25.3%
41 to 50	28.4%	23.1%	21.0%	27.5%
51 to 60	23.0%	18.1%	26.0%	32.8%
61+	18.7%	15.3%	22.3%	43.9%
Total	26.5%	18.8%	22.8%	32.0%



# CORRELATION OF AGE GROUPS IN THE CHURCH AND THE AGE OF THE PASTOR

SENIOR ADULTS 65+

R = .179, P = .000, N = 3011

ADULTS AGE 50-64

R = .050, P = .006, N = 3014

ADULTS AGE 35-49

R = -.140, P = .000, N = 3007

YOUNG ADULTS 18-34

R = -.088, P = .000, N = 2982

YOUTH AGE

13-17 R = -.127, P = .000, N = 2976

CHILDREN 0-12

R = -.153, P = .000, N = 2992

YOUNG ADULTS, PERCENTAGE OF ATTENDING WORSHIP

R = -.136, P = .000, N = 2504

YOUNG ADULTS, PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPATING IN

OTHER PROGRAMS R = -.183, P = .000, N = 2374

AGE OF SELECTED PARTICIPANTS IN THE SURVEY AND

PASTORS AGE R = .156, P = .000, N = 248030

0.179

0.05

-0.14

-0.088

-0.127

-0.153

-0.136

-0.183

0.156

FACT 2015

NCD 2008-2017



# OUR CHURCH IS SPIRITUALLY VITAL AND ALIVE

BY THE AGE OF PASTOR  
FACT 2015

Pastor's Age	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Neutral / Unsure	Agree/Strongly Agree
40 and less	7.1%	18.7%	74.3%
41 to 50	5.3%	11.5%	83.2%
51 to 60	5.6%	12.3%	82.1%
61+	5.7%	14.4%	79.8%
Total	5.8%	13.7%	80.6%
	$\chi^2 = 28.176, p = .005, N = 3326$		



# THE RATE OF HEALTHY/UNHEALTHY CHURCHES

BY THE AGE OF PASTOR  
NCD 2008-2017

Pastor's Age	Unhealthy (NCD score below 35)	(NCD score between 35 and 65)	Healthy (NCD score above 65)
40 and less	6.9%	68.4%	24.8%
41 to 50	5.5%	72.1%	22.4%
51 to 60	6.3%	75.4%	18.3%
61+	10.0%	76.0%	14.0%
Total	6.9%	73.2%	19.9%
	$\chi^2 = 98.861, p = .000, N = 8824$		



# AGING PASTOR

## CONCLUSION

- Younger pastors appear to be driving the largest share of church growth in the US. Pastors who are under 50 account for more than one-third of the growth in the FACT sample.
- Aging pastors head congregations with predominantly older congregants.
- When pastors rely on congregants, for example to respond to surveys, younger pastors reach out to younger respondents while aging pastors request older adults to respond.
- The churches where younger pastors lead, are rated as healthier than churches lead by older pastors.
- The leadership styles of younger pastors are more oriented towards goals whereas older pastors tend to be more serving and people oriented