



MARCH 10, 2020

FIRESIDE CHAT

The Church & Civic Involvement

Congregational Census & Survey

STUDY AREA

Grand Rapids + Kentwood + Wyoming

GOALS

Analyze trends over time in the congregational ecology of our urban area and gather information on the main characteristics of religious leaders and their congregations.

TIMELINE

Census

2016

July-November

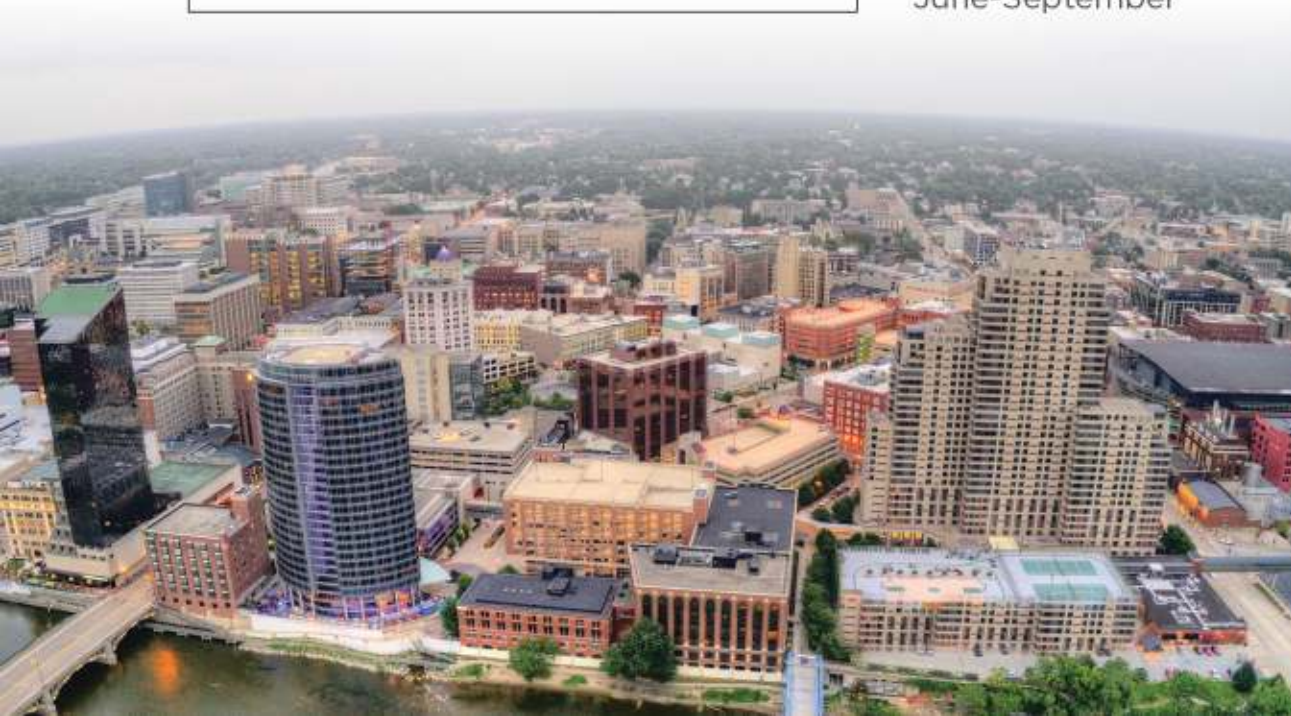
Survey

2017

June-September

Process

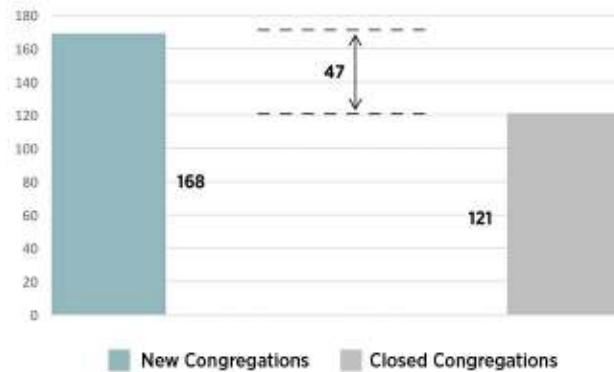
- Canvassed more than **90 square miles** of roads and walkable districts
- Used existing lists, maps, and online research to compile a list of all known congregations
- **Surveyed 348 of the 532 congregations** from the master list, or 65% of the study-eligible congregations
- **Interviewed the leaders of 75% of Hispanic and 72% of Black churches**
- Included **14 primarily Black and primarily Hispanic congregations** that are located directly adjacent to the study area
- Used Key Informant Method, which relies on a key leader to describe an organization
- Included demographic information from the American Community Survey (ACS), an ongoing project directed by the U.S. Census Bureau



2007 + 2017 COMPARISONS

We located **518 congregations** in Greater Grand Rapids in 2017, compared to **471 congregations** in 2007.

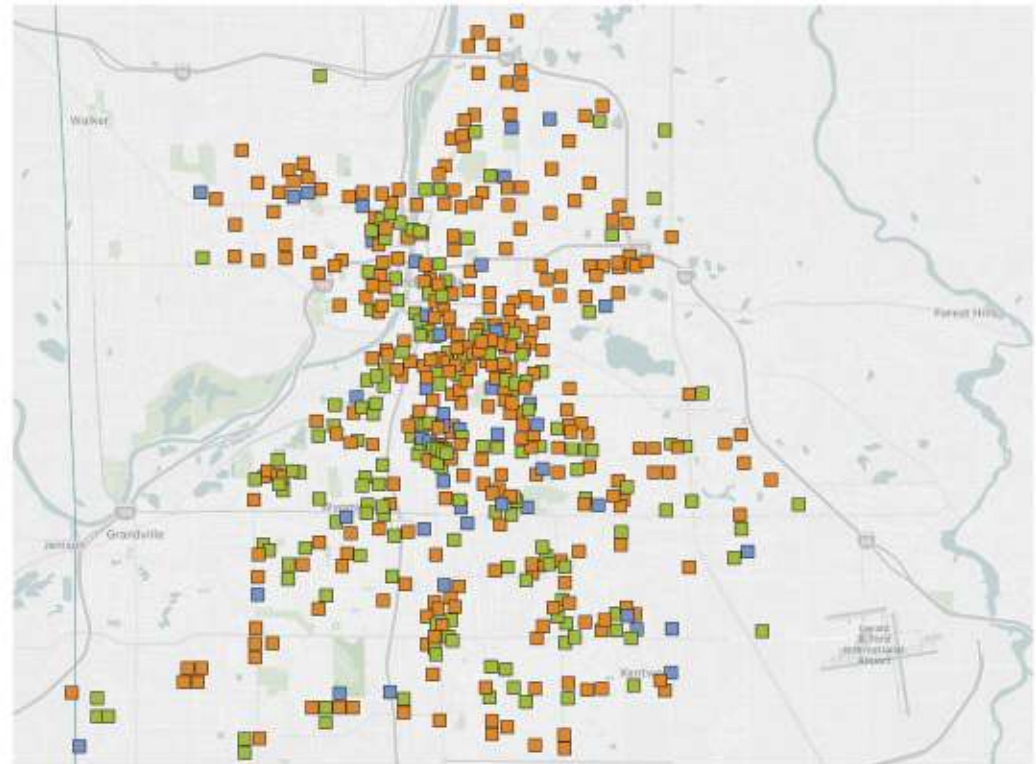
Changing Conditions



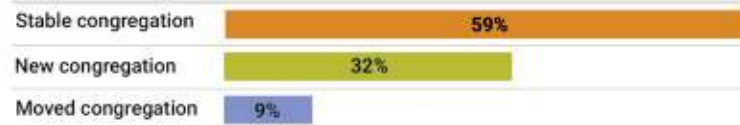
A net growth of 47, or a 10% increase, in the number of religious congregations.



CHANGES IN CONGREGATIONAL ECOLOGY: 2007 TO 2017



■ Stable congregation
 ■ New congregation
 ■ Moved congregation



2007 + 2017 POPULATION

KENTWOOD

9%

INCREASE IN
POPULATION
(2007-2017)

2%

INCREASE IN
CONGREGATIONS
(2007-2017)

WYOMING

7%

INCREASE IN
POPULATION
(2007-2017)

29%

INCREASE IN
CONGREGATIONS
(2007-2017)

GRAND RAPIDS

The population has remained fairly stable in the last decade, **hovering at just under 200,000**. The city's **congregations have grown by 6%**.





The Importance of Civic Involvement

How important is it to your congregation that its members participate in social and political issues?



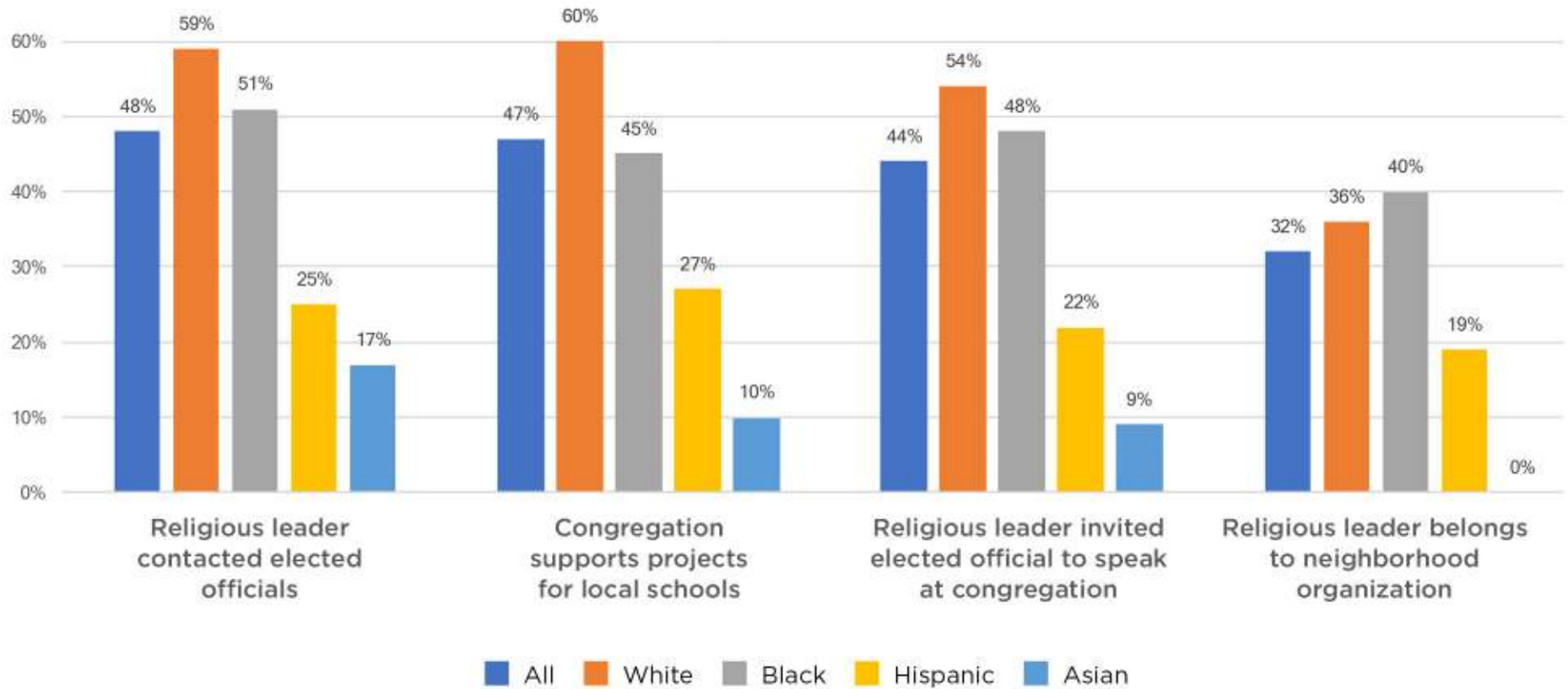
How important is it to your congregation that its religious leaders speak out on social and political issues?



■ Very important
 ■ Somewhat important
 ■ Not very important
 ■ Not at all important

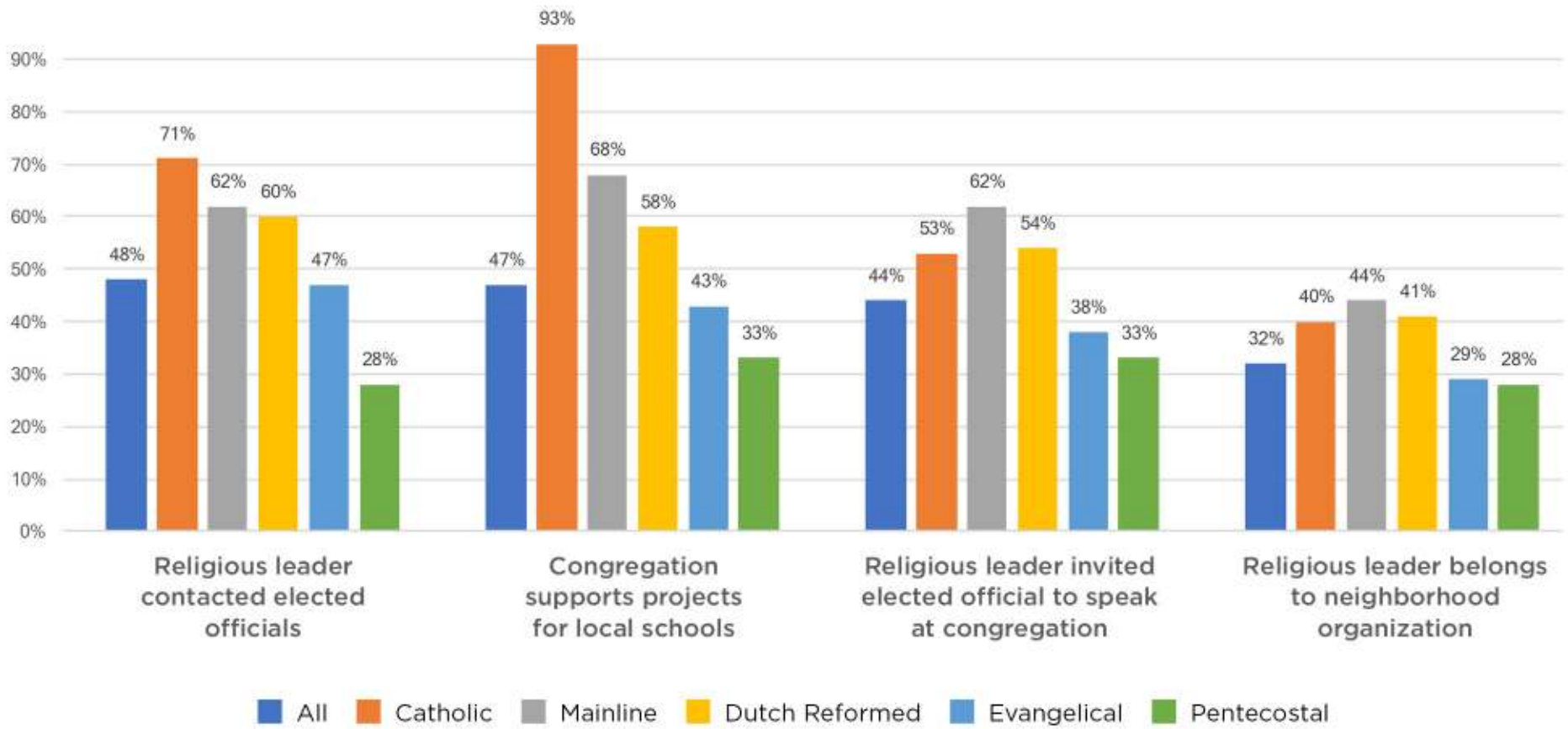
Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Race and Ethnicity



TYPES OF CIVIC INVOLVEMENT

Religious Tradition





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why do you think a high percentage of church leaders are not participating in civic involvement?

How do you think the Scriptures inform the Church on social responsibility?