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# 2011 NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC SURVEY

a report prepared by

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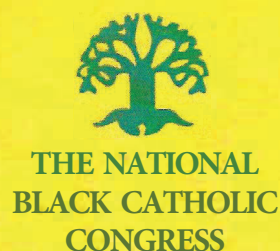
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## Executive Summary

As the first national survey of African American Catholics, the National Black Catholic Survey (NBCS) reveals important insights into individual religious engagement and parish life. While the primary focus is on African American Catholics, the survey includes a sizeable comparative component, making it possible to isolate specific influences of culture and religion. Methodological limitations notwithstanding, previous attempts to understand the attitudes and beliefs of African American Catholics highlight the central theoretical constructs upon which the NBCS builds.

A major finding of the NBCS indicates that, contrary to anecdotal accounts, African American Catholics are highly involved with their religion and parish life, and the academic literature shows that a high level of religious engagement has always been a trait of African American Catholics. White Catholics, on the other hand, stand out for their egregiously low level of religious commitment.

Compared with other religious and racial groups, African American Catholics behave and look like African American Protestants. But African American Protestants are clearly more highly involved by every measure of engagement. This pattern is taken as suggestive of a *cultural effect*, as opposed to a *Catholic effect*, whereby the historical and cultural norms of the African American community weigh just as heavily on African American Catholics as on African American Protestants.

Religious engagement among African Americans and whites is enhanced through the extent to which individuals are socially networked and value social interactions in their parishes and churches. The challenge on the parish level is to find ways to reconnect individuals in parish life outside of Mass. Strengthening social connectedness enhances religious engagement. Formal registration in a parish is a significant way to intensify religious engagement and parish life, because it is one of the first steps in building an attachment and identity with a parish community. Becoming a formal member creates an identity from which individuals gain esteem and connect with others.

Among the possible reasons people give for leaving their parish or church, African American Catholics cite a gradual drift away from religion, moving to a new community, the clergy sexual-abuse scandal, and spiritual needs not being met.

African American young adults, both Catholic and Protestant, are more religiously engaged and consider religion to be more important than whites of the same age. Older individuals are more religiously engaged than younger adults, and there is an age gap, but African American young adults are also religiously engaged. Whatever disengagement exists among African Americans, it cannot be attributed to a generation gap. White Catholic young adults, by contrast, have an extremely low level of religious commitment.

Although African American Catholics are highly engaged, they do perceive challenges with the scope of racial inclusiveness in the Church. In the areas of emphasizing black saints, promoting black bishops, targeting black vocations, supporting issues like affirmative action, calling attention to problems in Africa, and promoting racial integration, African American Catholics express some dissatisfaction. However, on direct questions of racism in the Church, African Americans overwhelmingly do not consider the Church racist. About one in four African American Catholics report some form of personal intolerance in their parish, such as being avoided because of their race, the reluctance of others to shake hands, and the insensitivity of priests on issues of race.

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## African American Catholics: Questions of Authenticity

Growing out of a period of obscurity, African American Catholics are now viewed with a certain level of curiosity and bewilderment. Fueled by perceptions of Catholicism as a predominantly white, authoritative, rigid, and dogmatic religion and by perceptions of African Americans' religiosity as charismatic, malevolent, and angry, African American Catholic identity has been challenged by questions of authenticity. Underlying this perceived inconsistency is a presumption that African American Catholics are religiously disengaged, uninvolved, and spiritually deprived. Also contributing to this image of African American Catholics is their relatively small number, which many interpret as suggestive of a seeming incompatibility and a tenuous religious identity.<sup>1</sup>

African Americans were once considered outsiders in the Catholic Church, but the history of African Americans in the Church also reveals incredible faith and forbearance (Davis 1990). To withstand being unwelcomed in churches, segregation at Mass, and the last to receive Communion required a certain amount of fortitude and faithfulness. Although the Church became more inclusive and egalitarian as the society as a whole evolved, African American Catholics fought to be included and acknowledged as equal citizens deserving of equal treatment. In *The History of Black Catholics in the United States* (1990), Davis contended that "the story of African American Catholicism is the story of a people who obstinately clung to a faith that gave them sustenance, even when it did not always make them feel welcome. Like many others, blacks had to fight for their faith; but their fight was often with members of their own household" (p. 259). Thus, without any concerted effort to evangelize African Americans, their attraction to Catholicism occurred during a time when it would have been easy to abandon their faith.

Another factor challenging a perceived weak identity and religious disengagement among African American Catholics is the cultural elements of the African American community that compel higher levels of religiosity. A remarkable and consistent finding in the academic literature is that on almost every conceivable measure of religious engagement, ranging from religious beliefs to practice, African Americans are more religious than most other Americans. While explanations of this religiosity are rooted in the social-emotional

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Pew Forum U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (2008), only 5% of African Americans are Catholic. Representation in the clergy is worse: 350 black priests and 700 black nuns represent less than 1% of the total clergy, and only 12 of the 400 bishops are black.

atmosphere of the Church providing comfort or solace from the harsh societal realities, African American Catholics are also part of a larger historical and cultural community that considers faith and its institutions vital to their survival. Hence, the same marginalizing forces that produce a religiously engaged African American community also affect African American Catholics.

The most reliable approach to examining the religious engagement of African American Catholics is to conduct a deliberate, systematic, and comparative analysis of their attitudes and beliefs. As a departure from previous attempts, such an approach cannot be tangential or serendipitous to the study of others, but rather, it has to be purposefully configured to capture the complexities of African American Catholicism. Phelps observed that too often "the presence of Black Roman Catholics [has been] ignored, compacted, or footnoted within major historical and statistical research about either Roman Catholics or African Americans in the United States (2002, 19)."

Herein lies the interest in moving beyond anecdotal observations and impressions to create a national survey of African American Catholics. As the first national survey of its kind, the 2011 National Black Catholic Survey (NBCS) was intended to assess the level of religious engagement of African American Catholics. Since it is practically impossible to systematically observe religious engagement across a sufficiently large number of people to make reliable and generalizable inferences, public opinion surveys are reliable approaches to measure individual attitudes, which happen to be the best predictor of individual behavior. Yet, surveys are neither perfect nor without error.

Several questions motivate this report, but perhaps the most important are; To what extent are African American Catholics religiously engaged in the Church? Can their level of religious engagement be interpreted as an indicator of a willingness to abandon their Catholic faith and identity? Is there a *cultural effect* and a *Catholic effect* influencing the level of religious engagement among African American Catholics? And finally, if their faith and identity are somewhat tenuous, what are the particular characteristics of African American Catholics that might strengthen their Catholic faith?

The next section reviews the attitudinal research on African American Catholics. Previous studies have investigated the religious attitudes and behavior of African American Catholics, and it is important to situate the NBCS in this larger theoretical context.



## Attitudinal Research on African American Catholics

Attitudinal research on African American Catholics centered on two crucial questions (Feagin 1968): (1) Why were African Americans drawn or attracted to Catholicism? (2) To what extent did African American Catholicism represent an incidental affiliation, as a consequence of urbanization, status mobility, and educational interests, or was African Americans' Catholic identity driven by intrinsic religious motives? These questions were responses to a seeming increase in African American Catholic converts during the early to mid-twentieth century (Dolan 1985). Outside a few areas in the South, where the largest number of African Americans resided, the Catholic Church's presence was virtually nonexistent and Catholicism was not an option for most African Americans. But as African Americans migrated to Northern cities seeking a better life and settled in poor, urban, immigrant Catholic enclaves, they were attracted to that religion (Hunt and Hunt 1976).

In one of the earliest empirical studies of African American conversion to Catholicism, Collins (1971) utilized participant observation, life histories, and in-depth interviews of twenty-four converts in Durham, North Carolina. African American converts were observed as being highly educated and enjoying high socioeconomic positions. Moreover, African Americans' conversion to Catholicism seemed to be as much about their previous church experience as about their perceptions of Catholicism. Research subjects pointed to being theologically challenged by Catholicism as a positive attraction and the emotional appeal of their previous church as a negative factor. Collins' converts also saw that the Catholic church was oriented to intrinsic experience, while their prior church services seem to be oriented to public display. Ritual in the church was essential to African American converts. While sermons were seen as emotional, often digressing into personal attacks, and egocentric, the Catholic Mass was viewed as calm and sacred, in which Communion was central.

While African American converts appear to have made a calculated decision, the focus-group nature of this study turns the conclusions into interesting hypotheses. The study by Alston, Alston, and Warrick (1971) suffers from the same weakness by including only 20 African American Catholics in their sample.

Pursuing a similar set of hypotheses, Nelson and Dickson (1972) sampled a single black Catholic parish (n = 74) and Protestants (n = 73) in Louisville, Kentucky.<sup>2</sup> Compared with African American Protestants, African American Catholics had higher levels of education, had higher incomes, and were more likely to be in white-collar occupations. African American Catholics scored higher on devotionality or religious engagement than Protestants. Reflecting a preference for different worship styles, African American Catholics showed lower support for sectarian beliefs (literal interpretation of the Bible, testifying as part of worship, and a belief that God send misfortune as punishment for sins) than African American Protestants. However, it is highly unlikely that a single parish, let alone a small number of people, can reflect the varied opinions of African Americans generally.

Hunt and Hunt (1975) sampled students enrolled in Baltimore schools in 1968 to examine differences between African American Catholics and Protestants in their personal achievement and social status. These data yielded 326 Protestants and only 86 Catholics. Underlying this analysis, Protestantism was considered to reinforce the social status, while Catholicism offered a social context that legitimized individualism and a distance from communal bonds. Their analyses suggest that, particularly among the middle class, African American Catholics have higher achievement motivation and a less salient black identity than African American Protestants. This would be a remarkable result given the sample of school-age children, but the data limitations make the results circumspect.

Beeghley, Van Velsor, and Bock (1981) aggregated the General Social Survey from 1972 to 1978 to examine denominational differences in the relationship between socioeconomic status and religiosity. This study confirms the expectation that socioeconomic status and age are the two most important predictors of church attendance when controlling for other factors. African American Catholics and Methodists reflected a similar pattern, but the relationship did not hold for black Protestants. The attempt to increase the number of African American Catholics by compiling separate surveys into a single survey is commendable, because it acknowledges the limitations of studies using a small number of African American Catholics, but even the aggregation of surveys cannot produce a sufficient

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<sup>2</sup> Supplemental data on African American Catholics were obtained by aggregating 28 Gallup Polls from 1957 to 1969 to assemble a sizeable number of African American Catholics.

number of African American Catholics to explore the variance among them nor to make conclusive explanations about them.<sup>3</sup>

Ellison and Gay (1990), using the 1980 National Survey of Black Americans, identified a distinct black Catholic effect in their analysis of religion and life satisfaction. African American Catholics, particularly those living in the South, enjoyed significantly higher levels of life satisfaction than unaffiliated African Americans. That is, the relationship between religion and life satisfaction could not be explained by denominational differences, personal religiosity, or socioeconomic status. The Catholic Church's emphasis on an individualistic ethos, African American Catholics' seeming distance from the black community, and a distinctive organizational structure were suggested as possible explanations for these findings.

Ellison and Gay (1990) acknowledged that the small number of African American Catholic participants could be sensitive to idiosyncratic characteristics of sampling. Despite a large national survey devoted exclusively to the study of African Americans, the conclusions drawn for subgroups, such as African American Catholics, are unconvincing because of the small number of participants.

In another national sample (i.e., the National Alcohol Survey), Hunt and Hunt (1996) compared African American Catholics, African Americans who came from Catholic backgrounds, and African American Protestants. Their findings suggest that outside of the South, African American Catholics exhibited higher socioeconomic status than African American Protestants. Although African American Catholics were more likely than Protestants to come from residentially integrated areas, the higher status of African American Catholics was attributed to their greater participation in integrated church settings. Unfortunately, this survey was not designed to assess religious attitudes and behavior, and as a result, the relevance for understanding African Americans' religious engagement is speculative.

More recently, Cavendish, Welch, and Leege (1998), using data from a mail questionnaire of Catholics and a black Catholic oversample ( $n = 249$ ), compared African American Catholics with white Catholics on issues of devotionism, spirituality, and social integration in parish life.<sup>4</sup> Building on previous attitudinal research, Cavendish, Welch, and

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<sup>3</sup> Survey aggregation is no panacea, because other problems result from assuming that all aspects of the surveys are similar, including question format, question wording, question placement, and sampling frames.

<sup>4</sup> These data were part of the Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life.

Leege showed that African American Catholics were more likely than white Catholics to display higher levels of evangelical (i.e., participation in Bible studies, praying with friends) and traditional Catholic devotionalism (i.e., participation in benediction, confession, and novena) and a higher frequency of spiritual experiences. African American Catholics were characterized as more comprehensively religious than white Catholics. Among the various factors proposed to explain religious engagement, the extent to which both blacks and whites were socially integrated in their parish was more influential than other factors. A social network, feelings of attachment to the parish, the number of close friends who are also members of the parish, and the frequency of conversations with the pastor and other members of the parish appeared to matter more to African Americans than to whites. According to Cavendish, Welch, and Leege (1998), "social ties enhance religious expression precisely by fostering a form of community that sustains religious practice" (p. 405).

Methodological flaws notwithstanding, these studies reflect a valiant attempt at understanding the complex attitudes and behavior of African American Catholics. While many of these studies acknowledge that their results are inconclusive, they put forward important hypotheses to consider. Clearly, a major challenge to studying African American Catholics lies in collecting a sufficient number in order to make reliable comparisons and broader generalizations (Leege and Welch 1989). But public opinion research is not just about sampling, although it is an important component. In addition to sample size, comparative studies of African American Catholics, which depend on obtaining sizeable samples of whites and other religious denominations, provide greater leverage in determining the extent of a distinct Catholic effect or cultural effect. Also, the ability to ask questions that capture the complexities of the African American Catholic experience is critical.

The next section describes the NBCS and the attempt to overcome the weaknesses of earlier studies.

### **The Design of the 2011 National Black Catholic Survey**

As suggested by the previous review of the academic literature, a survey of African American Catholics cannot be treated as an afterthought or as serendipitous to the study of religion. While surveying African Americans normally involves several challenges, particularly around sampling and including the right questions, surveying African American Catholics presents even greater challenges.

First, a survey of African American Catholics requires a sufficient number of respondents to be able to make reliable inferences. Acquiring that sample requires a deliberate and planned approach. Without a deliberate effort to survey African Americans, let alone African American Catholics, a sufficient number is not likely to result from a routine national sample.

Second, the study of race often implies a comparison with other groups, and the examination of African American Catholics is no different. Understanding the social and religious dynamics of African American Catholics will depend on the dynamics of other groups, such as African American non-Catholics, white Catholics, and white non-Catholics. While African American Catholics may be the primary interest, any survey will be as much about the religious beliefs and experiences of others as it is about theirs.

Third, a serendipitous approach to surveying African American Catholics, and African Americans more generally, is not likely to include questions that reflect their unique experiences. The reason for being interested in African Americans in the first place is because it is believed that their attitudes and experiences are different, but little is gained by relying solely on questions written from others' perspectives.

The 2011 NBCS is a deliberately planned and executed national survey. Conducted by Knowledge Networks, the NBCS was fielded from July 7 to August 1, 2011. As a national probability-based online survey, Knowledge Networks' process involves the selection of households by using address-based sampling methods. The main sample is recruited through the mail using English and Spanish materials. This address-based sample is drawn from the U.S. Postal Service's Computerized Delivery Sequence file that covers approximately 97% of the physical addresses in all 50 states. This method was used because of declining response rates to random digit dialing and the growing number of cell-phone-only households that are outside the traditional random-digit-dialing landline-telephone frame. The address-based sample represents all households, whether they have cellular telephone service only, a landline telephone, or no telephone service.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Research by Link et al. (2008) indicates that although ABS over-represents non-Hispanic white and people with higher levels of education, ABS results in higher response rates, provides access to all cell phone only households, and offers significant cost savings over RDD. See also the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Cell Phone Task Force report (2010):

Once households are recruited for the panel, they are contacted by email for survey taking or panelists visit their online member page for taking the survey, instead of being contacted by phone or postal mail. This approach allows surveys to be fielded quickly and economically and *it* reduces the burden placed on respondents. Only persons sampled through these probability-based techniques are eligible to participate in the KnowledgePanel, unless they are invited. No one on their own can volunteer to be on the panel. Sampled non-Internet households, when recruited, are provided a laptop computer and free Internet service so they may also participate as online panel members. To minimize panel attrition, surveys are usually kept short, from 5 to 20 minutes in length. For surveys requiring 16 or more survey minutes, survey participation is rewarded with a variety of incentives (small cash awards, gift prizes, raffle opportunities).

For the NBCS, the overall sample was obtained from KnowledgePanel, and to contribute to an African American Catholic oversample, there was an email opt-in panel and an email list from the National Black Catholic Congress. The target population consisted of noninstitutionalized adults age 18 and over residing in the United States who are white and African American.

The overall completion rate of the NBCS for the Knowledge Networks panel was 64%, while the completion rate for the opt-in panel for African Americans was 12% and for the email list from the National Black Catholic Congress was 6%.

There are also several sources of survey error that are an inherent part of any survey process, such as noncoverage and nonresponse due to panel recruitment methods and to inevitable panel attrition. These sources of sampling and nonsampling errors are addressed using a panel demographic post-stratification weight as an additional adjustment.

The National Black Catholic Congress, the Institute Church Life at the University of Notre Dame, and the Office of the President at University of Notre Dame sponsored the survey.

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## Demographic Analysis

An analysis of the demographics of the weighted data from the NBCS reveals important racial and denominational distinctions.<sup>6</sup> Consistent with other attitudinal and demographic data, the racial gap in these data is remarkable. African Americans are less likely to have a bachelor's or higher degree compared with whites: 18.3% of African Americans and 31.3% of whites report having a bachelor's degree or higher. While a slightly larger percentage of African Americans report having graduated from high school and having some college experience, there is a noticeable difference between the percentages of African Americans (13.6%) and whites (8.0%) with less than a high school education.

*[Table 1 About Here]*

The distribution of males and females in the data also shows sizeable racial differences, but it is important to note that this distinction is not unique to the NBCS (Asher 2007). African American females are more likely to participate in public opinion surveys than African American males. A 10-percentage-point difference exists between the percentages of African American males (44.7%) and females (55.3%) in the data. A great deal of attention has been devoted to the disproportionate number of households headed by single females in the African American community.<sup>7</sup> As a result of this disparity, the probability of a male being selected in a public opinion survey is lower than that for a female, particularly among African Americans. Another possible explanation may involve the time of day that public opinion surveys are conducted. That is, daytime requests to participate in surveys are more likely to obtain female respondents because of the higher proportion of males who work outside the home. Although not to the same extent, this dissimilarity is evident among whites-51.5% white females and 48.5% white males compose the sample. Nevertheless, a likely side effect is that gender might be more of a prominent factor in substantive opinions among African Americans than among whites.

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<sup>6</sup> This analysis is based on a survey question about religious identity. Protestant includes individuals who identified as Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, or Pentecostal. Although excluded from most analyses, the "none" category comprises individuals who indicated no attachment to a religious denomination. Other categories include Jews, Muslims, Mormon, and self-reported others. It is probably a gross overgeneralization to treat the Protestant religions as a single category, but in the interest of simplifying the analysis and focusing on African American Catholics, we relied on one Protestant category.

<sup>7</sup> Recent census data show that the share of African American households headed by women (30.3%), mostly single women, exceeds African American households with married couples (28.8%). (U.S. Census Bureau 2007).

The age distribution in the NBCS reflects broader racial trends in the general population. According to the U.S. census, the African American population contains a larger proportion of young individuals than does the white population, and the median age of African Americans is roughly nine years younger than that of whites. This outcome is also true in the survey: 46% of African Americans and 57.4% of whites are 45 years of age and older.

The region of the country sampled in the NBCS may have an effect on religious engagement and perceptions, since there is somewhat of a Southern slant in the sample. Over half of the African American sample (56.1%) resides in the South. And while 17% of African Americans reside in the Northeast and 17% in the Midwest, a relatively small percentage lives in the West. According to the U.S. census, more U.S. citizens reside in the South, and since 1990, that population has grown by 21.7%.

Reflecting another national pattern, racial differences in marriage are significant in the NBCS. In the NBCS, 34% of African Americans are married and 14% are divorced. Similarly, in the U.S. census, 34.2% of African Americans are married and 11.7% are divorced. For whites in the NBCS, 57.2% are married and 11.2% are divorced. The census indicates that 57.3% of whites are married and 10.7% are divorced.

Employment status is another area in which African Americans and whites differ in predictable ways in the NBCS. When queried about their employment status, 54.3% of African Americans and 64.9% of whites indicated they were employed. This sizeable difference shows up among those unemployed in national census data. More than twice as many African Americans (19.5%) as whites (8.4%) indicated they were unemployed.

In short, the weighted demographic data reflects very closely national patterns on the racial distribution of demographic data. At the same time, an inspection of these data is suggestive of reasonable explanations for religious engagement and identity.

### **Denominational Differences**

Building on the analysis of demographic factors, denominational differences on these key variables are insightful for understanding the attitudes of African American Catholics. Among the latter, the evidence is stronger for the influence of culture, in the sense that they are similar to African American Protestants, although there is also evidence of a uniquely



Catholic identity. These findings will be helpful in understanding the racial and denominational differences in religious engagement.

In the educational arena, African American Catholics (25.5%) are more highly educated (bachelor's or higher degree) than African American Protestants (18.4%), though both levels are lower than the percentage of white Catholics (34.2%). African American Protestants have twice the percentage of individuals with no high school diploma as African American Catholics.

The income distribution reflects a similar pattern. A large percentage of white Catholics possess incomes in the top three highest categories, followed by white Protestants, African American Catholics, and African American Protestants: 55.3% of white Catholics, 44.3% of white Protestants, 44.1% of African American Catholics, and 20.1% of African American Protestants make at least \$60,000 per year. Thus, while the percentage of African American Catholics making at least \$60,000 per year is equivalent to that of white Protestants, the percentage of African American Protestants making at least \$60,000 is less than half that for African American Catholics.

An issue related to education and income is employment status. Although perhaps not as highly correlated now as they were in the past given the present economic downturn, there is still a positive relationship among these traditional indicators of social class. Viewed in this light, African American and white Catholics and white Protestants have a higher percentage who are employed than African American Protestants. White Catholics have a higher percentage who are retired and a lower percentage of unemployed than the others.

Taking education, income, and employment results together, there is an obvious and significant gap in socioeconomic factors that is beginning to highlight important differences between African American Catholics and African American Protestants. It is probably inappropriate in this analysis to identify whether there is a unique characteristic about Catholicism or a factor highly correlated with it that motivates African Americans. The view that Catholicism was perceived as affluent and attractive to African Americans has been challenged (Collins 1971; Ellison and Sherkat 1990; Hunt 1996).

African American Catholics and African American Protestants in the data are younger than whites. While 52.6% of African American Catholics and 53.3% of African American

Protestants are at least 45 years old, 63.2% of white Catholics and 62.0% of white Protestants are at least 45 years of age.

Large racial differences in marital status were noted, in which a smaller percentage of African Americans (34.0%) were married than whites (57.2%). Despite the Catholic Church's teaching on marriage, the percentage of African American Catholics who are married is lower than for white Catholics but slightly higher than for African American Protestants. Since African American Catholics mirror African American Protestants' marital status, cultural norms may be more of a factor in explaining this trend. White Catholics in the data have a higher percentage of married individuals (53.9%) but a lower one than white Protestants (62.2%).

Considering that a larger percentage of African Americans reside in the South, it is reasonable to expect that in the NBCS, a larger percentage of African American Catholics (43.3%) and African American Protestants (60.1%) will reside in the South. Even though Catholicism among African Americans has historically been thought of as primarily a Northern and urban phenomenon, a larger percentage of African American Catholics are located in the South. This is in contrast to Protestantism, which has been thought of as a largely Southern religion. White Catholics in the survey are more numerous in the Northeast (34.2%) and Midwest (29.4%) than the South (22.5%) and West (13.9%).

In terms of an indicator of urban areas (Metropolitan Statistical Area), a higher percentage of African American Catholics (95.0%) and white Catholics (87.7%), compared with their counterparts, reside in metropolitan areas. Previous literature suggests that Catholicism in the United States has had more of an urban-type evolution than rural, given the residential patterns of Catholic immigrants.

### **Religious Engagement**

Religious engagement is defined in different but related ways: as a psychological motivation and as its behavioral manifestations. First, religious engagement is a feeling of positive fulfillment and contentedness with various aspects of one's religion and church. Because one's church and religion may provide spiritual, emotional, and social fulfillment, among other forms as well, religious engagement may be thought of as reflecting different dimensions. Such dimensions do not have to be related, but to the extent that the various dimensions are positively correlated, they reveal a stronger psychological source of religious engagement. Second, following from this first component of religious engagement is a

behavioral component, such as going to church regularly, being active in the church, and tithing. The NBCS attempted to capture these various dimensions of religious engagement.

The following questions were created to assess psychological engagement:

- In general, how strongly or weakly engaged in your church, synagogue, or parish do you feel?
- How emotionally engaged are you in your church, synagogue, or Catholic parish?
- How spiritually engaged are you in your church, synagogue, or Catholic parish?
- How socially engaged are you in your church, synagogue, or Catholic parish?
- In general, how well does your religion meet your spiritual needs?
- In general, how well does your religion or spiritual beliefs meet your emotional needs?
- In general, how well does your religion or spiritual beliefs meet your social needs?

*[Figure 1 About Here]*

The response percentages to these psychological engagement questions are shown in Figure 1. From this analysis, individuals are more spiritually engaged in their parish or church than they are emotionally or socially engaged. Emotional engagement in the parish or church is second to spiritual engagement, while social engagement is relatively the weakest form of engagement. This result is worth noting, because the level of social engagement among Catholics will be a consistent theme in this analysis.

A clear pattern running through these religious-engagement questions is evident in other questions in the survey. First, African American Protestants are the most highly religiously engaged religious identifiers. A larger percentage of African American Protestants indicate they are more spiritually engaged (65.6%), emotionally engaged (54%), and socially engaged (45.1%). Second, African American Catholics follow a similar, albeit shallower, pattern of engagement to African American Protestants. Among African American Catholics, 58.4% are spiritually engaged, 44.1% are emotionally engaged, and 33% are socially engaged. That African Americans are more religiously engaged, despite religious differences, is indicative of the significance of cultural norms. African American Catholics are part of the same social and political environments as most other African Americans, and they can be expected to

exhibit similar cultural norms. Third, further enhancing the cultural explanation of religious engagement, white religious identifiers (both Catholics and Protestants) show lower levels of religious engagement. White Catholics have significantly lower percentages than white Protestants: 40.3% are spiritually engaged, 28.2% are emotionally engaged, and 18.4% are socially engaged.

*[Figure 2 About Here]*

Figure 2 shows a different measure of religious engagement, albeit with a similar pattern. While a higher percentage of religious identifiers appear to have their spiritual and emotional needs met, the percentage of individuals who have their social needs met is noticeably lower. That the issue surrounding social aspects of engagement in their parish or church was seen in the previous questions is especially noteworthy.

The extent to which a parish or church meets one's spiritual, emotional, and social needs taps a different dimension of engagement. Presumably, those who are more satisfied with their parish or church will also be more religiously engaged. An obvious difference with these questions is that they receive a higher level of support than the previous religious-engagement questions. Religious identifiers across the board appear more satisfied, beyond what might be expected from their levels of religious engagement. Despite the high level of satisfaction, a larger percentage of African American Protestants have their spiritual needs (85.5%), emotional needs (83.1%), and social needs (75.5%) met. While African American Catholics' and white Protestants' needs are high and statistically indistinguishable, a significantly lower percentage of white Catholics' needs is being met by their parish or church. For instance, only 40.5% of white Catholics' social needs are being met, whereas 62% of African Americans' and 63.2% of white Protestants' social needs are being met.

Moving beyond the psychological engagement, the following questions were created to capture the behavioral manifestations of psychological engagement:

- It does not matter what church, synagogue, or parish I go to, because all churches are alike.
- How satisfied are you with your church, synagogue, or parish?
- How frequently do you attend religious service?
- How upsetting would it be for you if you had to move and were forced to leave your church, synagogue, or parish?

The frequency of church attendance is a traditional and important indicator of religious engagement and religiosity. It is probably the most popular measure used in public research to measure religiosity. From a practical standpoint, it is one thing for religious identifiers to say they are religiously engaged, but it is a different matter for them to act on their psychological engagement. Attending church requires effort.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of responses by religious identification to the question of frequency of church attendance. Among the various religious identifiers, a larger percentage of African American Protestants (22%) attend church several times a week compared with 10.6% of white Protestants, 8.6% of African American Catholics, and 3.9% of white Catholics. However, a sizeable percentage of African American Catholics (39.6%) attend church once a week compared with 28.5% of African American Protestants, 26.5% of white Protestants, and 26.7% of white Catholics.<sup>8</sup>

*[Figure 3 About Here]*

Another way of looking at church attendance would be to combine the first two categories (e.g., attend once per week and attend several times a week). Done this way, a clearer and similar pattern emerges in which 50.5% of African American Protestants, 48.2% of African American Catholics, 37.3% of white Protestants, and 30.4% of white Catholics attend

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<sup>8</sup> An analysis by Gallup (Saad 2009) shows a dramatic decline in church attendance among Catholics. In the 1950s, 75% of Catholics attended church at least once a week, but in the early 1990s this number was around 50%. In 2003, the percentage leveled off to 45%. Church attendance among Protestants during the same time period stayed roughly the same, from about 42% to 45%.

church at least once a week.<sup>9</sup> Once more, African American Catholics and African American Protestants look very similar on this dimension of religious engagement.

A virtually equivalent percentage of African American Catholics and African Protestants never attends church. Equally important, a slight larger and statistically significant percentage of white Catholics (24%) than white Protestants (20%) never attends church.

The second series of survey questions, in different forms, assesses the meaningfulness of one's parish or church among religious identifiers. Phrasing survey questions in different ways conveys different frames of reference and the different wording of questions leads to different responses. Figure 4 reports the percentage of responses to a question concerning how upsetting it would be if a person had to leave or were forced to leave one's parish. Here, again, a consistent theme emerges: African American Protestants (48.3%) would be the most upset, followed by African American Catholics (40.5%), white Protestants (32.2%), and white Catholics (21.4%). Despite religious differences, African Americans appear more attached to their church than whites, and as a result they would suffer the most if they were forced to leave.

*[Table 4 About Here]*

For a question asking about general satisfaction with one's parish or church, the overall pattern is not as evident in the chart, but it still exists. These numbers are not low and they do not reflect an overall dissatisfaction. Actually, these numbers should be viewed as extremely positive: African American Protestants (77%) are the most satisfied with their church compared with white Protestants (72%) and African American Catholics (70%), although all three groups are statistically indistinguishable. And all have significantly greater satisfaction than white Catholics. The focus here is on black Catholics, but white Catholics stand out in their disintegration.

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<sup>9</sup> Despite the cross-sectional nature of the NBCS, it is tempting to conclude that the comparatively low levels of religiosity and engagement are recent occurrences among white Catholics. Evidence from Gallup suggests that the factors involved in the secularization of Catholics began in earlier decades, between 1955 and 1975 (see Gallup (April 9, 2009) *Churchgoing Among U.S. Catholics Slides to Tie Protestants*). Over the past six decades, the percentage of Catholics indicating they attend church in the past seven days dropped from 75% to 45%, while the percentage of Protestants remained relatively stable around 45%.

*[Figure 5 About Here]*

Still focused on aspects of religious engagement, the next question queried the extent to which individuals possessed a cynical view about churches: whether it mattered what church they attend and whether they considered all churches or parishes to be alike. Religious identifiers who disagree with this perception can be taken as an indication of an attachment to their church. To a certain extent, churches may not be interchangeable or substitutable. This may be interpreted in different ways. If a person is dissatisfied with their church or parish, they may also take the view that all churches or parishes are different from their church. Likewise, if a person is satisfied with their church or parish, they may also reasonably think that they cannot reproduce their parish experience elsewhere. The data shown in Figure 6 suggest that religious identifiers do not perceive their churches or parishes as substitutable. Among religious identifiers, 87.7% of white Protestants, 82.5% of African American Protestants, 81.3% of white Catholics, and 74.5% of African American Catholics disagree with the assertion that all churches are alike.

*[Figure 6 About Here]*

### **Multivariate Analysis**

What are the factors driving religious engagement? Are the factors driving religious engagement among African American Catholics the same as those driving religious engagement among African American Protestants and white Catholics? Do those factors have the same influence? These questions can be answered using multivariate analyses—the simultaneous estimation of factors considered to account for religious engagement. Multivariate analyses make it possible to control differences on a set of explanatory factors. For instance, it is quite possible for the racial differences in religious engagement to be a function of racial differences on other factors, such as education, age, or income, that are also related to engagement.

Based on multivariate analyses of religious engagement (reported in the appendix), race is independently related to religious engagement and not due to differences on other factors. Thus, controlling for other factors, African Americans are significantly more religiously engaged than whites. Being Catholic is not significantly related to the level of religious engagement.

It is important to note that there are certain similarities across the various groups. The effect of age on religious engagement is consistently positive across groups, which suggests that religious engagement increases as age increases. Registration in a parish or church matters significantly for individual religious engagement. For many individuals, becoming a formal registered member is a meaningful first step in their commitment to their faith and community. Social network is significant across groups, which suggests that the extent to which individuals feel socially integrated in their parish or church provides meaning for their level of religious engagement.

There are also several unique factors. Being married is a significant factor for African Americans, since those who are married are more likely to be religiously engaged. Higher levels of income or social status among whites depress religious engagement. Religious engagement is significantly lower for whites residing in the Midwest and the Northeast.

### **Summary**

The evidence from these various measures of religious engagement, from the abstract psychological to the attitudinal, leads to several important conclusions. African American Catholics are not disengaged compared with other religious identifiers. While African American Catholics are not as religiously engaged as African American Protestants, both are more religiously engaged than their white counterparts. The racial and cultural norms of the African American community that result in the greater importance of religion, spirituality, and church affect African American Catholics in the same way as they do African American Protestants. Differences can be expected because of dissimilar beliefs and demographics, but these differences do not produce big discrepancies in the relative importance African Americans place on religion and church. In this respect, race is seen as more defining for them than religious identification, although religious identification is not unimportant.

White Catholics are distinctive among religious identifiers because of their relatively low levels of religious disengagement. On almost every measure, white Catholics stand out in a disconcerting fashion.

### **Reasons for Leaving the Church**

The NBCS asked questions regarding why people might leave their religion and church or reasons that might provide a good explanation for them. Not all rationalizations for leaving one's religion are equal, and it is quite possible for people to believe that there are legitimate



reasons for leaving one's religion or parish. The type of reasons given and the level of support for that reason are important to explore, because they provide insight into the potential motivations for religious disengagement.

To begin a process of explaining the variability in the different measures of religious engagement, the NBCS included similar measures. The interest here is in uncovering the underlying motivations or explanations for why religious identifiers may fall away from their parish or church. The following series of questions were asked in the NBCS:

People have told us many reasons for why they are no longer religious or are beginning to lose their faith. Please indicate whether or not each of the following is a good explanation for why you may no longer feel engaged in your religion or if you think it would be a good explanation for you.

- Just gradually drifted away from religion
- Stopped believing in the religious teachings
- Spiritual needs not being met
- Clergy sexual-abuse scandal
- Married someone from different faith
- Dissatisfied with clergy at congregation
- Moved to a new community
- Religion drifted too far from traditional practices such as Latin Mass
- Became separated or divorced

The response percentages on these questions are reported in Figure 7. The data suggest that people fall out of favor with their parish or church for basically the same reasons and that there are essentially no denominational differences in the explanations. With perhaps one or two exceptions (e.g., white Catholics' gradual drift away from religion), the same forces work similarly on religious identifiers. Gradually drifting away from religion, the clergy sexual-abuse scandal, dissatisfaction with clergy, and moving to a new community are the top explanations for why religious identifiers would leave their parish or church. These explanations were reordered when individual religious identifiers were taken into consideration. African American

Catholics do not stand out in terms of a single identifiable issue for why they would leave the Church, and they look similar to other religious identifiers. Also, African American Catholics do not reflect the pattern of African American Protestants. Among the variety of different reasons for leaving the church, gradually drifting away from religion (37%), spiritual needs not being met (34.3%), being relocated to a new community (36.6%), and the clergy sexual-abuse scandal (34.9%) resonate with African American Catholics. White Protestants are somewhat similar in their responses.

White Catholics are noticeably different. Over half of white Catholics (55.7%) identify a gradual drift from religion, the clergy sexual-abuse scandal (37.6%), and dissatisfaction with clergy (31%) as their top reasons for why they would leave the church. These explanations may begin to unravel the mystery around white Catholics' religious disengagement.

African American Protestants' potential reasons for the leaving the church involve the clergy sexual-abuse scandal (42.7%), moving to a new community (41.3%), spiritual needs not being met (40.2%), and dissatisfaction with clergy (39.6%).

*[Table 7 About Here]*

### **Reasons for Attending Mass or Church**

People attend Mass or church for a variety of different reasons, and some of these reasons reveal important insights into how people feel about religion. The NBCS included several questions pertaining to the reasons for attending Mass or church and the level of importance people place on those reasons. The following questions are used to assess the motivations for attending Mass or church:

People attend religious services for different reasons. From the list below, please indicate how important each reason is for you to go to religious service.

- My church, synagogue, or parish requires that I attend
- I enjoy being with other persons in our church
- I feel a need to hear God's word
- I feel spiritually uplifted

Taken as a whole, the need to hear God's word and to feel spiritually uplifted are the two most accepted motivations for attending Mass, as shown in Figure 8. The percentages are quite high, indicating that religious identifiers attend Mass and church out of a desire to be closer to God, as opposed to wanting to feel closer to others or out of feelings of obligation.

Variability across religious identifiers reflects a consistent theme. African American Protestants (86.2%) said they attend church to feel spiritually uplifted, while 82% of African American Catholics, 74.1% of white Protestants, and 61.7% of white Catholics felt similarly. These percentages are quite high for all religious identifiers, but the relative percentages tend to be more informative. African American Catholics are more similar to African American Protestants than to the other religious identifiers.

Reactions to "the need to hear God's word" show a comparable high level of support and pattern. African American Protestants (88.6%) are more highly likely to say they go to church "to hear God's word" than African American Catholics (79.1%), although more African American Catholics than white Protestants (72.6%) say so, and white Catholics are the least likely (56.6%).

A sizeable percentage admit to "enjoying being with others in church" as a motivation. On this question, 58.3% of African American Protestants, 52.4% of white Protestants, 48% of African American Catholics, and 25.9% of white Catholics reflect this sentiment.

African Americans perceive more of an obligation to attend church or tend to believe they are required to attend Mass or church (40.4% of African American Protestants and 31.7% of African American Catholics), while whites do not (20.4% of white Catholics and 11.3% of white Protestants). To the extent there is a Catholic effect on this question, it may not be very meaningful.

*[Table 8 About Here]*

### **Quality of Religious Service**

A series of questions delved into perceptions of the quality of religious service. These questions begin to assess whether religious engagement may be intertwined with more practical aspects of church service. It is quite possible that religious engagement is influenced by the quality and satisfaction with the various components of the Mass or church service. That is, individuals who are more satisfied with the church service are expected to be more highly

engaged than those individuals who are least satisfied. If the quality of church services is unrelated to engagement, it should be either high or low across the board. The question used to tap satisfaction with religious service is as follows:

Sometimes you hear people express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the way their church, synagogue, or parish religious service. How would you rate the quality of your religious service (that is, music, readings, singing, and praying)?

As shown in Figure 9, the percentages of positive responses to the questions about the quality of the church service are quite high across the board, suggesting that there is broad satisfaction with the various components of the church service. Given the seeming religious disengagement, especially among white Catholics, the level of satisfaction is unexpected. The level of satisfaction with prayers and readings in the church service stand out because even though Catholics are slightly less satisfied, the differences across religious identifiers are small and statistically indistinguishable.

Moreover, a small Catholic effect exists for the satisfaction with preaching and music. While African American Protestants and white Protestants have higher satisfaction levels with the preaching and music, Catholics have recognizably lower levels: 73.2% of African American Catholics and 67.5% of white Catholics are satisfied with the preaching, and 68.3% of African American Catholics and 63.7% of white Catholics are satisfied with the music. Again, these numbers are high and they do not reflect dissatisfaction, but Catholics are not as satisfied with some aspects of their church service as are Protestants.

*[Figure 9 About Here]*

### **Social Networking**

In addition to spiritual and religious components, parishes and churches also represent a community and social network of friends who help to define the context and character of parish environment. Social integration and being embedded in a social network strengthen the bonds and interpersonal relationships. The research literature suggests that the proportion of friends who are members of the same congregation or parish enhances religious beliefs and engagement (Cavendish, Welch, and Legee 1998; Legee 1987; Welch 1993). From a different perspective, the disruption of social ties diminishes church attendance and engagement (Welch and Baltzell 1984). The greater the extent to which religious identifiers become integrated into

that component and share in those experiences, the more meaningful those experiences and attachments.

The NBCS included the following questions to capture the importance of one's friends or social network in their parish or church:

- How important would it be to you if more of your friends attended your church?
- Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement: Without seeing or being with my friends at church, synagogue, or parish, it would not be worth attending.

According to the responses to these questions in Figure 10, African American Protestants (36.5%) find it important to have more of their friends attend their church. A lower percentage of white Protestants (28.3%) and African American Catholics (26.9%) feel the same way. However, the development of a social network through church does not appear important for white Catholics, because only 6.9% consider their friends' presence at Mass as important.

*[Figure 10 About Here]*

Phrasing the question differently to reflect the extent to which religious identifiers feel that church would not be worth attending without seeing their friends sharpens the reactions. In Figure 11, the percentage of individuals endorsing or agreeing with this question is relatively small, as roughly 10% agree. White Protestants (10.4%), African American Protestants (10.1%), and African American Catholics (9.7%) agree that church would not be worth attending if they did not see their friends. Standing out again, white Catholics (3%) are extremely low. These across-the-board low percentages suggest that one's social network may not outweigh other motivations for attending church.

*[Figure 11 About Here]*

### **Priests, Pastors, and Church Leaders**

One of the most important features of being part of a parish or church community is the availability of priests, pastors, and other church leaders to provide guidance and assistance with personal problems. This type of reliance on individuals in the church captures a different,

but equally enlightening, aspect of the importance of the church. The extent to which individuals are willing to reach out to church officials may go a long way in reaffirming the continued relevance of the church in the minds of individual parishioners. The question is, outside of Sunday Mass and church service, how relevant are priests, pastors, and church leaders to religious identifiers? The extent to which individuals are reticent to reach out to the church or limit the church to a small area for direction and education helps to establish how individuals think about their church.

The NBCS included questions that capture the willingness to seek out the assistance of priests and pastors on personal problems across a number of issues. This form of behavior taps into a different form of religiosity. The following questions were created to capture this dynamic:

At one time, it is said that people turned to their pastor, church leader, or priest for help on all sorts of things. Nowadays many churches do not provide such help or people prefer to seek help elsewhere. They turn to friends, special agencies, or professionals outside the church. Here is a list of personal needs or family problems. Please tell me how likely you would turn to your pastor, church leader, or priest?

- Death of a member of my family
- Severe marital problems
- Alcohol/drug abuse
- Counseling at time of sickness
- Religious education for myself
- Family problems

The analyses of these questions are shown in Figure 12. It is clear that individuals are more likely to seek counsel from their priest, pastor, or church leader on certain issues and that certain religious identifiers are more likely than others to seek religious council. For instance, religious education and death in the family are the two most dominant issues for which individuals will seek guidance from a church leader. This result is not very surprising given that these are obvious issues for which there are few alternative options for counsel. To a lesser extent, religious identifiers are likely to seek pastoral or priestly guidance on sickness. Still, on

issues pertaining to personal and family problems, individuals are significantly less likely to seek help from a priest, pastor, or church leaders.

*[Figure 12 About Here]*

An examination of the responses by religious denominations is consistent with previous NBCS findings. On every issue, a higher percentage of African American Protestants are willing to reach out to their pastor: 86.9% on religious education, 84.7% on death in family, 74.8% on issues involving sickness, 60.7% on marital problems, 58.3% on family problems, and 55.6% on alcohol problems. Thus, it is quite clear that African American Protestants have a greater reliance on, and perhaps better associations, with their pastors than most others. African American Catholics are not too far behind them on religious education (82%), death in the family (78.2%), and sickness issues (68%). On the three remaining issues, African American Catholics look similar to white Protestants.

White Catholics stand out in this figure, because they are least likely to seek priestly or pastoral guidance on every measure: 27.7% would seek guidance with marital problems, 25.5% would seek guidance with family problems, and 19% would seek guidance with alcohol or drug problems.

### **Age Differences**

Among the factors associated with the increasing secularization of American society (i.e., increasing educational standards, urbanization, acceptance of scientific explanations), problems in socialization and the generational transmission of beliefs are considered the most serious (Chaves 1989, 1991; Firebaugh and Harley 1991). Young adults are said to have abandoned religion and failed to live up to established religious traditions. However, to the extent that religious engagement is already shallow and there is not a high level of religious engagement to hand down, this explanation may need revising. To what extent is the racial theme uncovered in previous questions evident among age categories? Are younger African American Catholics losing their faith at the same rate as African American Protestants and white Catholics? Figure 13 applies age categories to the previous religious engagement measure, and Figure 14 applies age categories to a religious importance measure.

According to Figure 13, African Americans at all age categories indicate stronger engagement than whites, and African American Catholics are very similar to African American Protestants. Remarkably, young African American adults, regardless of religion, show a

stronger level of engagement than young white adults in the same age categories. The oldest age category (60+) among African American Catholics shows that 74.9% are strongly engaged in their parish, whereas 52.8% of the 18- to 29-year-olds, 52% of the 30- to 44-year-olds, and 55.8% of the 45 to 59-year-olds are.

White Catholics, on the other hand, have significantly lower engagement in all age categories: 55.8% of the 60-year-olds and over, 27.1% of the 45- to 59-year-olds, 24.9% of the 30- to 44-year-olds, and 26.8% of 18- to 29-year-olds are engaged in their parish.

*[Figure 13 About Here]*

Figure 14 takes a different approach by examining age differences on the question, How important is religion in your life? The percentages are relatively high across the board, but there is some variability. Continuing to reflect a cultural effect, African Americans, despite religious identity, consider religion important in their lives. While there are essentially no age effects among African Americans, younger African American Catholics rank somewhat lower than African American Protestants on that question. Still, the percentages are very high.

White Catholics at all age levels are at the low end of the religious-importance measure. It is particularly noteworthy that younger white Catholics are less likely to say that religion is important in their lives: 46% of 18- to 29-year-olds, 55.1% of the 30- to 44-year-olds, 40.9% of the 45- to 59-year-olds, and 70.7% of the 60-year-olds and over say that religion is strongly important in their lives.

*[Figure 14 About Here]*

### **African American Catholics**

Until now, African American Catholics have been situated in a larger religious context by comparing them with other religious identifiers. Important insights into the religiosity of African American Catholics-as well as of white Catholics, African American Protestants, and white Protestants-have resulted from this approach. A common theme running through the various questions tapping into different dimensions and aspects of religiosity suggests that relative to other religious identifiers, African American Catholics do not possess an apparent trait or belief system that questions their Catholic beliefs or identity. The historical and cultural norms of the African American community help to produce a religious and spiritual engagement among African American Catholics that is comparable with that of African



American Protestants. In a sense, there is more of cultural effect than a denominational effect underlying African American Catholics' religious engagement.

Now that it is established empirically that African American Catholics' beliefs and identity are strong and resilient, new questions pertaining to intragroup variability require examination. That is, the focus on denominational comparisons may mask significant intragroup differences and challenges involved in religious engagement among African American Catholics.

This section refocuses attention on intragroup variability among African American Catholics. The following questions from the NBCS were asked only to African American Catholics.

How strongly do you agree/disagree that the Catholic Church is racist against African Americans?

How important is integrating African-American religious expression into Catholic worship?

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the Catholic Church in the following areas:

- Emphasizing the importance of black saints
- Promoting more black bishops
- Targeting vocations among African Americans
- Supporting issues like affirmative action
- Calling more attention to the problems in Africa or countries in the Caribbean
- Promoting racial integration in the church

Responses to the general racist question are reported in Figure 15. Framing the racist question in general leads to an overwhelming disagreement among African American Catholics: 77.1% disagree. Moreover, a sizeable proportion of this overall percentage (35.1%) strongly disagrees that the Church is racist. Based on this question alone, the perspective of African American Catholics would be positive regarding their perceptions of the racist nature of the Church.

*[Table 15 About Here]*

However, as is frequently the case in public opinion research, the level of support in general questions breaks down when framed in more concrete or specific formats. The responses to specific racial issues and policies are reported in Figure 16. African American Catholics are not generally satisfied with their perceived racial positions of Church. No racial issue receives more than a 45% level of satisfaction. On the specific issues, African American Catholics appear to be the least satisfied with their perceived Church's position on targeting black vocations: only 36.6% are satisfied. In response to the issue pertaining to the emphasis on black saints in the Church, 38.1% are satisfied. Slightly more (39.9%) are satisfied with the promotion of black Bishops. On policies issues external to the Church, the satisfaction with the Church's position is also lukewarm: 40.2% are satisfied with their perceived Church's position on support for affirmative action, 44.2% are satisfied with their perceived Church's position on calling attention to the problems in Africa, and 45.1% are satisfied with the Church's position on promoting racial integration. For African American Catholics, the Church has significant room for improvement when it comes to their perceptions on racial issues, as there do seem to be pockets of discontent. Thus, a different conclusion is reached when racial questions refer to more specific issues.

*[Figure 16 About Here]*

Another important issue addressed in the NBCS is the support for integrating African American religious expression into Catholic worship. In Figure 17, a large percentage of African American Catholics find such an expression important. For instance, combining "Somewhat Important," "Important," and "Very Important" translates into 85.7% who consider African American religious expression important.

*[Figure 17 About Here]*

While this analysis taps into perceptions of the Catholic Church as an institution, another approach explores African American Catholics' personal interactions with fellow parishioners. Perceptions of the larger Catholic Church may be quite different from their personal interactions on the parish level. That is, personal experiences may counteract negative perceptions of the Church.

The following questions were used to investigate this theory:

In the church, synagogue, or parish you attend (or have attended), how frequently have you felt the following:

- Uncomfortable because there were no other individuals of your race or ethnicity there
- People were unfriendly or avoided you because of your race or ethnicity
- People were reluctant to offer you a sign of peace or shake hands because of your race or ethnicity
- Pastor, church leaders, or priests were insensitive to issues important to your racial or ethnic group

In Figure 18, roughly 1 in 4 African American Catholics report racially insensitive experiences in their parishes. While a higher percentage (31.4%) report feeling uncomfortable because they were the only African American in their parish, 25.8% report having people avoid them because of their race, 24.9% report insensitive priests on issues important to their racial group, and 23.5% report people being reluctant to shake their hands. These types of experiences appear to be restricted to African American Catholics, as roughly only 1 in 10 African American Protestants experience similar forms of racial intolerance.

Experiencing these forms of racial intolerance in one's parish is demoralizing. The parish community should be inviting, respectful, and a place for solace. At the same time, however, a vast majority of African American Catholics does not experience racially insensitive behavior in their parishes. Thus, not intending to minimize the perceptions of a sizeable proportion of parishioners, a much larger percentage of African American Catholics has not experienced these forms of racial intolerance and does find their parishes comforting and respectful.

This finding helps explain why African American Catholics' religious engagement is high despite perceptions of racial challenges in the Church. The experiences of African American Catholics within their parishes may not reflect the type of racial insensitivity that they perceive in the larger Church.

*[Table 18 About Here]*

### **The Black Catholic Parish**

African American Catholics' experience in predominantly African American Catholic parishes is expected to be quite different from their experience as a minority in a predominantly white or non-black Catholic Parish. While all Catholic parishes reflect unique histories and cultural traditions, African American Catholics in African American parishes are likely to interact and worship with people who look like themselves and share similar cultural experiences. It is through a shared racial identity that African American Catholics may experience a greater sense of community in an African American Catholic parish than in non-black parishes. Because the galvanizing force is a racialized identity, attending an African American Catholic parish should be associated with a greater sense of disaffection from the Catholic Church.

According to Figure 19, 24% of African American Catholics attend an African American Catholic parish. A different way of looking at this result is that most African American Catholics (76%) do not attend a black Catholic parish. This absence of a shared racialized religious identity are among the factors separating African American Catholics from African American Protestants.

*[Figure 19 About Here]*

Attending a black Catholic parish for African Americans heightens religious engagement. Examining the frequency of church attendance and attending a black Catholic parish shows that 57.6% of black Church parishioners attend church once a week, compared to 33.9% of non-black Church parishioners. Also, in Figure 20, higher percentages of African Americans who do not attend a black parish say they never attend church (14.7%) or attend church once or twice a year (17.7%).

*[Figure 20 About Here]*

Attending a black parish makes a difference in the level of satisfaction with the role of race in Church. That is, on every measure of racial inclusiveness or sensitivity, African American Catholics who attend a black parish are more satisfied than African Americans who do not attend a black parish; 55.5% are satisfied with the promotion of racial integration

compared to 41.0% who do not attend a black parish, 50.7% are satisfied with the emphasis on black saints compared to 33% who do not attend a black parish.

### Conclusion

The motivation of the National Black Catholic Survey (NBCS) was to examine the religious engagement of African American Catholics. Understanding the factors that shape the faithfulness of African American Catholics would be instrumental in creating pastoral strategies to enhance religious engagement. While the NBCS points to areas where greater attention should be devoted, a clear theme in this report is that African American Catholics' faith and religious identity are quite strong. Anecdotal suppositions of African Americans leaving the Catholic Church are not supported. A review of the academic literature suggests that African Americans, including African American Catholics, have traditionally possessed strong religious convictions. The religious roots and cultural foundations in the African American community help shape African American Catholics' religious engagement.

In terms of their level of religious engagement, African American Catholics appear similar to African American Protestants. To be more exact, African American Protestants are more engaged in their religion and church than Catholics and white Protestants. African American Catholics usually are not too far behind on most measures, and they are stronger in their religious engagement and convictions than white Protestants and white Catholics.

White Catholics show egregious signs of disaffection in the NBCS. The NBCS captures this finding, but this level of secularization among white Catholics was set in motion decades ago. Religious disaffection among white Catholics is apparent on a variety of different measures and among age cohorts. But, whatever the process producing this disaffection is not evident among African American Catholics.

Among the factors that influence religious engagement, the extent to which individuals are socially networked in their parish or church is most important. Across the board, the more social relationships individual cultivate within their parish the higher their level of religious engagement. Within a climate of declining civic engagement, the challenge at the parish level will be creating mechanisms to foster meaningful social relationships. Formal membership in a parish or church is also important in increasing religious engagement, as it is the first step in

establishing an identity with a religious community. A stronger attachment or identity with a religious community increases religious engagement.

Despite their high level of religious engagement, African American Catholics are not completely satisfied with the scope of racial inclusiveness in the Church. For instance, a sizeable percentage of African American Catholics think that the Church could do better in emphasizing the role of black saints, promoting black bishops, targeting black vocations, supporting issues like affirmative action, calling attention to problems in Africa, and promoting racial integration. At the same time, however, a very small percent consider the Catholic Church racist against African Americans. Thus, while a larger percentage of African American Catholics are not satisfied with the degree of racial inclusiveness, this perception may not translate into an overall disaffection, as a vast majority does not perceive racial intolerance in their interpersonal interactions in their parishes. Nevertheless, these issues, emphasizing black saints, promoting black bishops, targeting black vocations, supporting issues like affirmative action, calling attention to problems in Africa, and racial sensitivity of priests, reflect real approaches to engaging African American Catholics who are at the margins.

One of the most influential factors enhancing African American Catholics' religious engagement is membership in a black parish. Membership in a black parish reflects shared social and cultural experiences that connect people through a common identity. The importance of social connections of African American Catholics and the influence on religious engagement cannot be overstated.

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**Table 1. NBCS Demographics (Weighted Data)**

	All	African American	White	African American Catholic	White Catholic	African American Protestant	White Protestant
<b>Sample</b> (unweighted N)	3,215	2,104	1,111	884	227	1,079	1,025
<b>Education</b>							
< High School	8.9	13.6	8.0	5.2	6.7	14.8	9.0
High School	32.4	36.7	31.6	20.7	30.8	35.1	36.9
Some College	29.5	31.4	29.1	48.6	28.3	31.7	27.5
> Bachelor's Degree	29.2	18.3	31.3	25.5	34.2	18.4	26.6
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	47.9	44.7	48.5	46.0	47.9	42.0	47.5
Female	52.1	55.3	51.5	54.0	52.1	58.0	52.5
<b>Age</b>							
18-29	20.4	26.4	19.3	20.2	16.1	20.2	17.5
30-44	23.9	27.6	23.3	27.2	20.7	26.5	20.5
45-59	28.7	27.3	29.0	26.8	32.2	30.0	28.1
60+	27.0	18.7	28.4	25.8	31.0	23.3	33.9
<b>Income</b>							
< \$19,999	16.2	33.1	13.1	11.4	8.5	35.6	14.6
\$20,000-\$39,999	20.9	28.1	19.6	23.3	18.0	27.9	24.4
\$40,000-\$59,999	17.5	15.5	17.9	21.2	18.2	16.4	16.7
\$60,000-\$84,999	17.3	10.3	18.6	18.1	19.2	8.1	17.0
\$85,000-\$99,999	6.0	4.1	6.4	7.3	7.2	4.3	6.9
>\$100,000	22.1	8.9	24.4	18.7	28.9	7.7	20.4
<b>Region</b>							
Northeast	19.2	17.7	19.5	29.9	34.2	16.3	13.5
Midwest	24.8	17.0	26.1	14.8	29.4	16.5	27.9
South	37.6	56.1	34.3	43.3	22.5	60.1	44.1
West	18.4	9.2	20.1	12.0	13.9	14.5	14.5
<b>Marital Status</b>							
Married	53.7	34.0	57.2	39.9	53.9	35.2	62.2
Widowed	4.5	3.7	4.6	5.1	6.2	5.1	6.0
Divorced	11.7	14.0	11.2	13.6	10.8	15.3	10.6
Not Married	21.5	37.7	18.7	33.2	21.0	34.8	13.9
Living with partner	8.6	10.6	8.3	8.2	8.1	9.6	7.3
<b>Metropolitan Statistical Area Status</b>							
Non-Metro	18.2	10.1	19.6	5.0	12.3	11.7	25.3
Metro	81.8	89.9	80.4	95.0	87.7	88.3	74.7
<b>Employment Status</b>							
Employed	63.4	54.3	64.9	65.7	64.3	54.3	62.5
Unemployed	10.0	19.5	8.4	11.5	9.0	15.7	7.2
Retired	17.8	11.5	18.9	17.5	21.7	14.2	22.3
Disabled	8.8	14.7	7.8	5.3	5.0	15.8	8.0

Figure 1.  
How Engaged Are You In Your Parish Or Church?  
(Strongly Engaged and Engaged Combined)

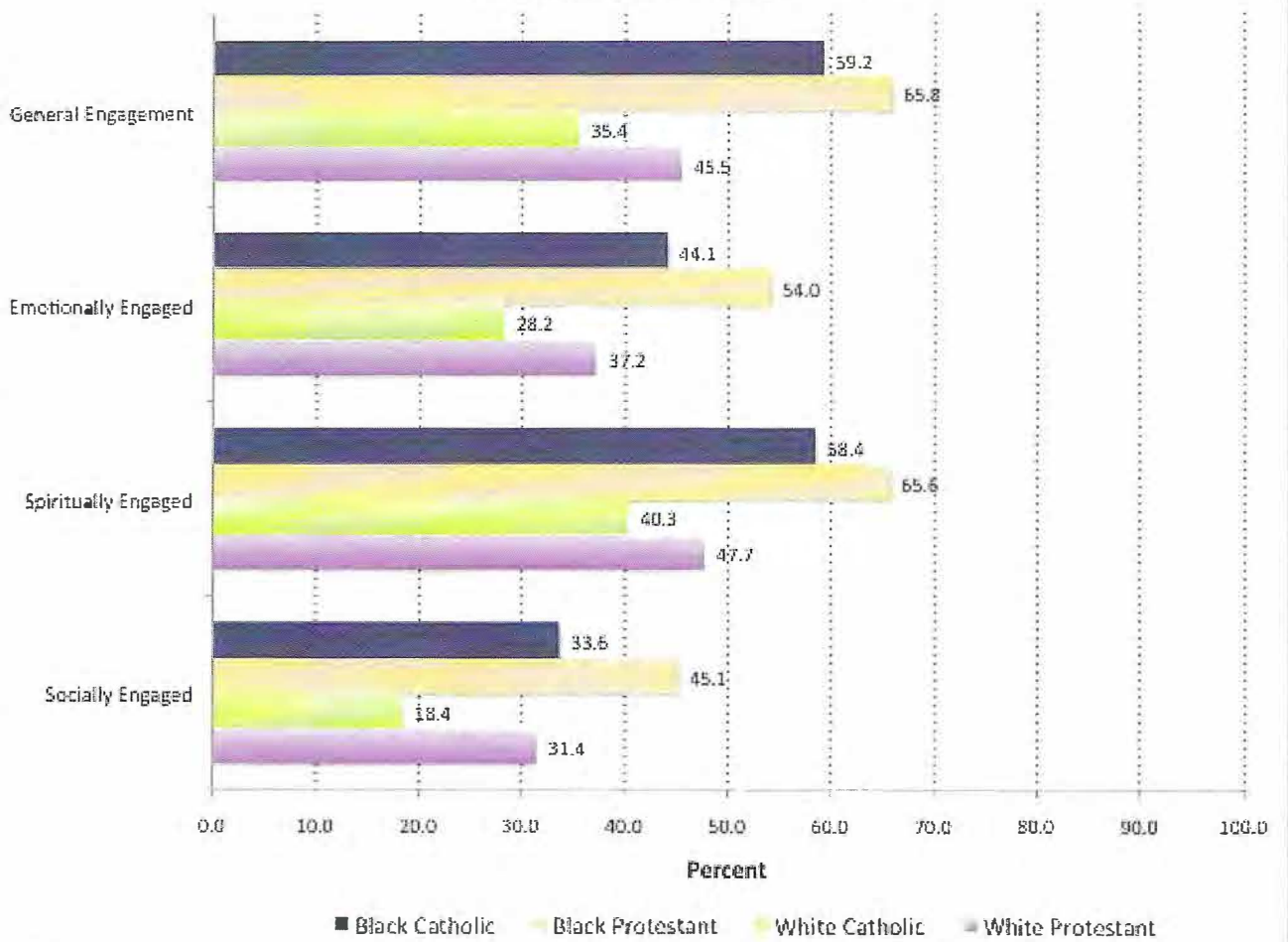


Figure 2.  
 How Well Does Your Parish Or Church Meets Your Needs?  
 (Very Well and Well Combined)

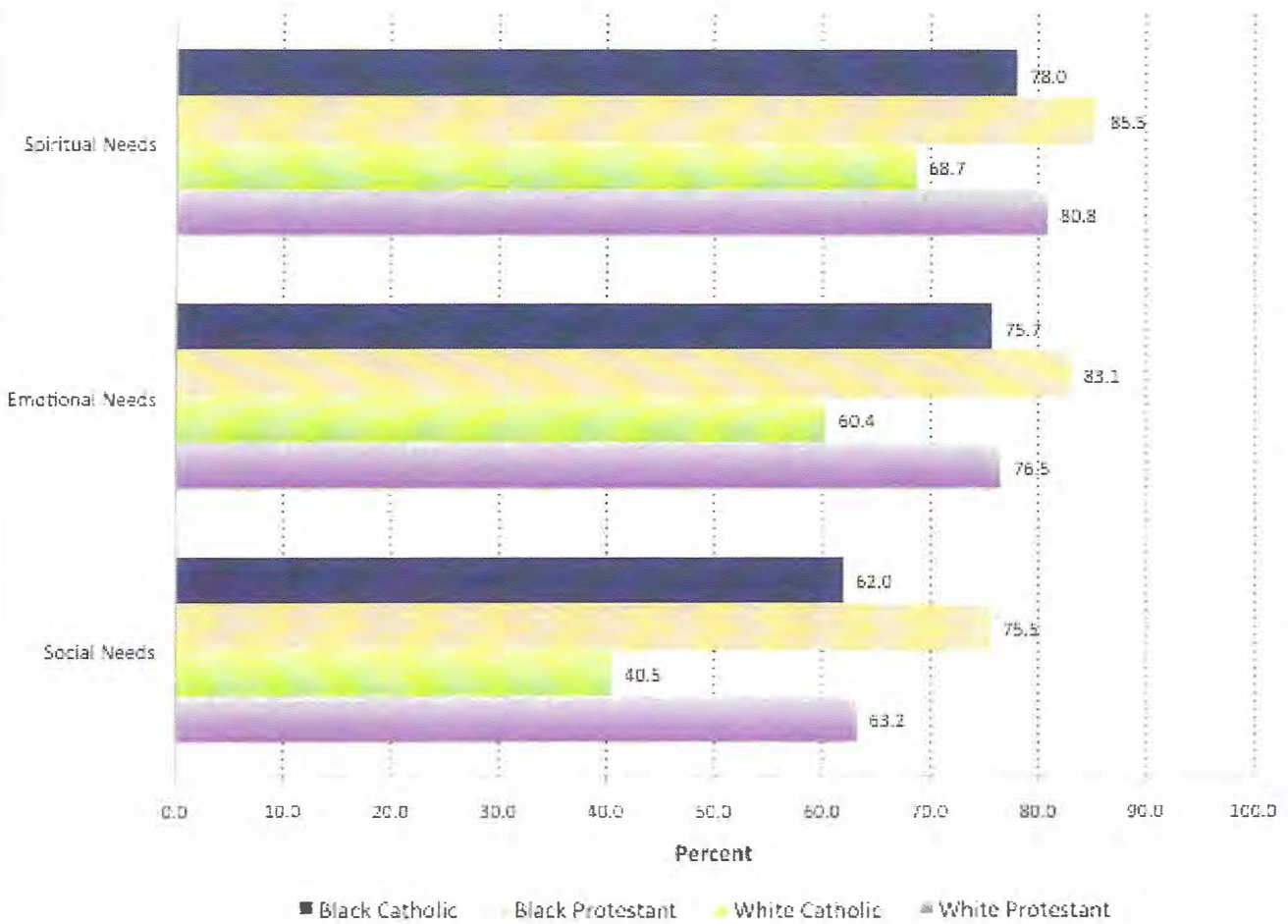


Figure 3.  
How Frequently Do You Attend Mass or Church?

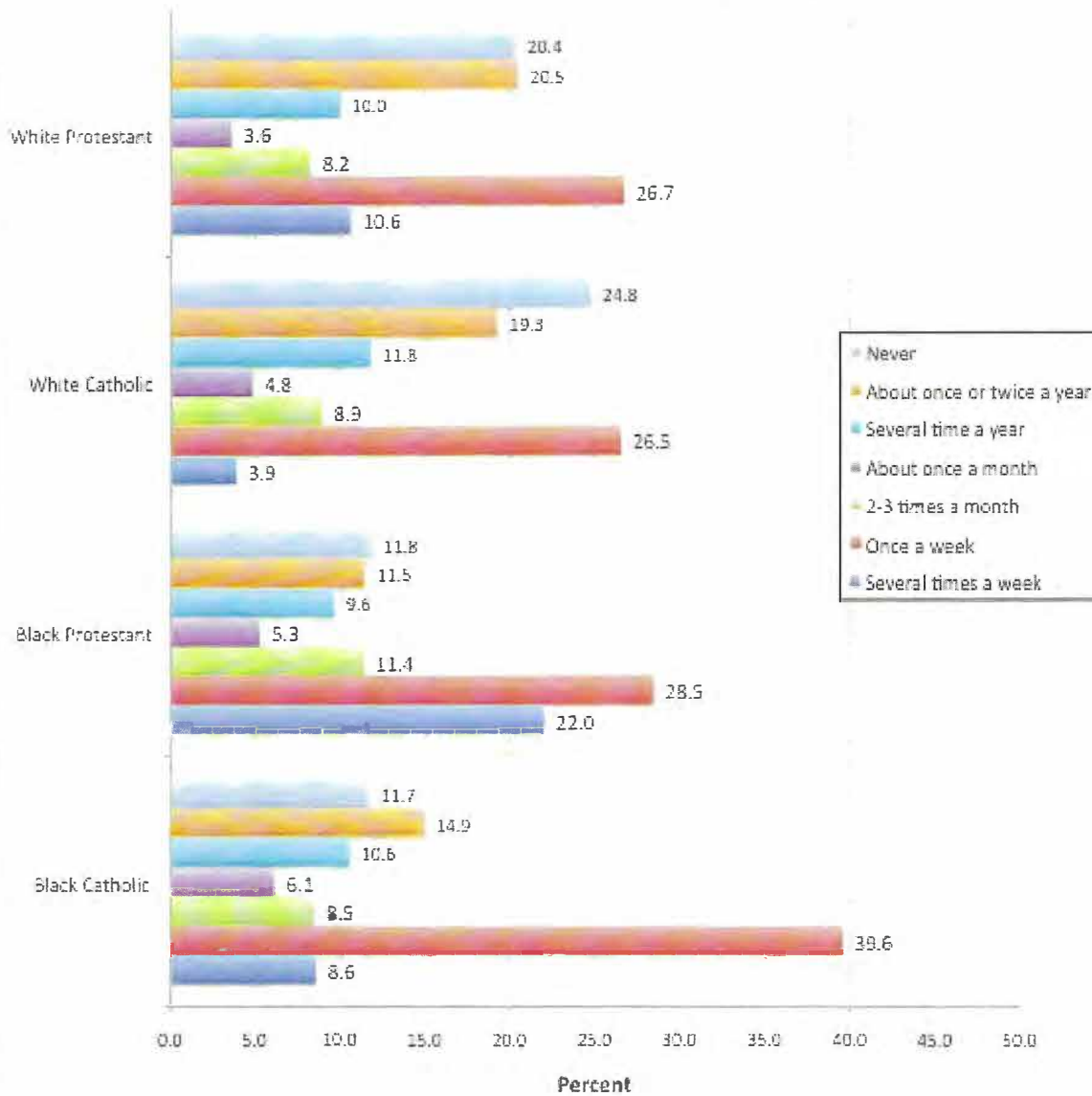


Figure 4.  
How Upsetting Would It Be If You Had To Move Or  
Forced to Leave Your Parish or Church?

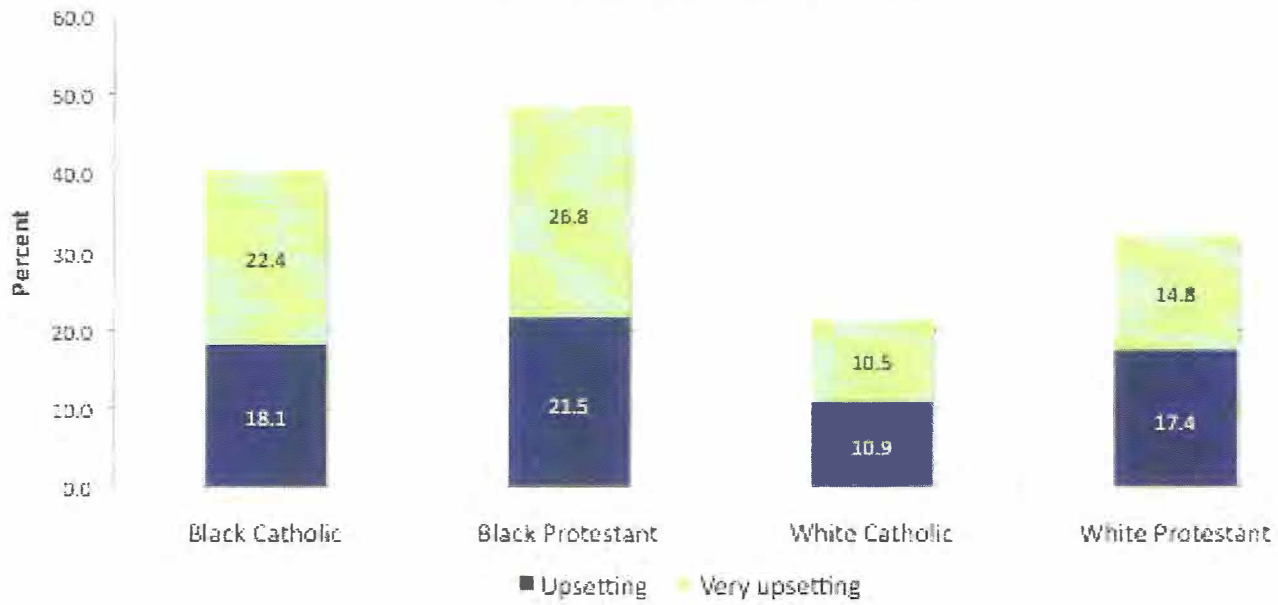


Figure 5.  
How Satisfied Are You With Your Parish or Church?

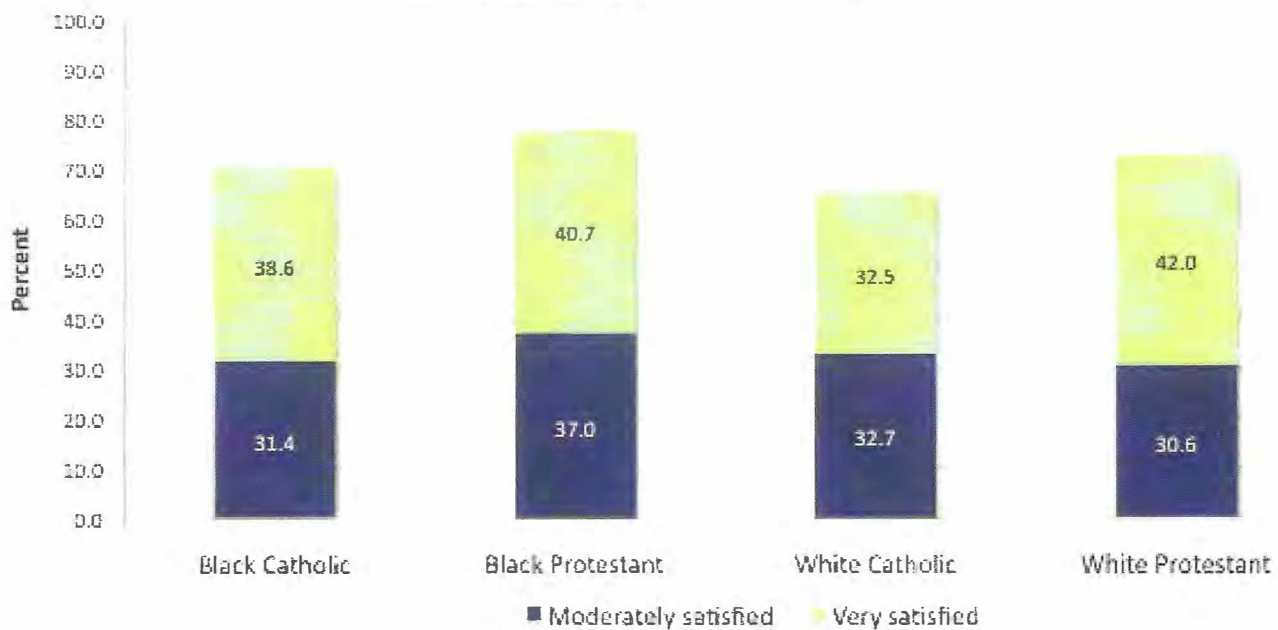


Figure 6.  
It Does Not Matter What Parish, Church, or Synagogue I Go To, All Are Alike?

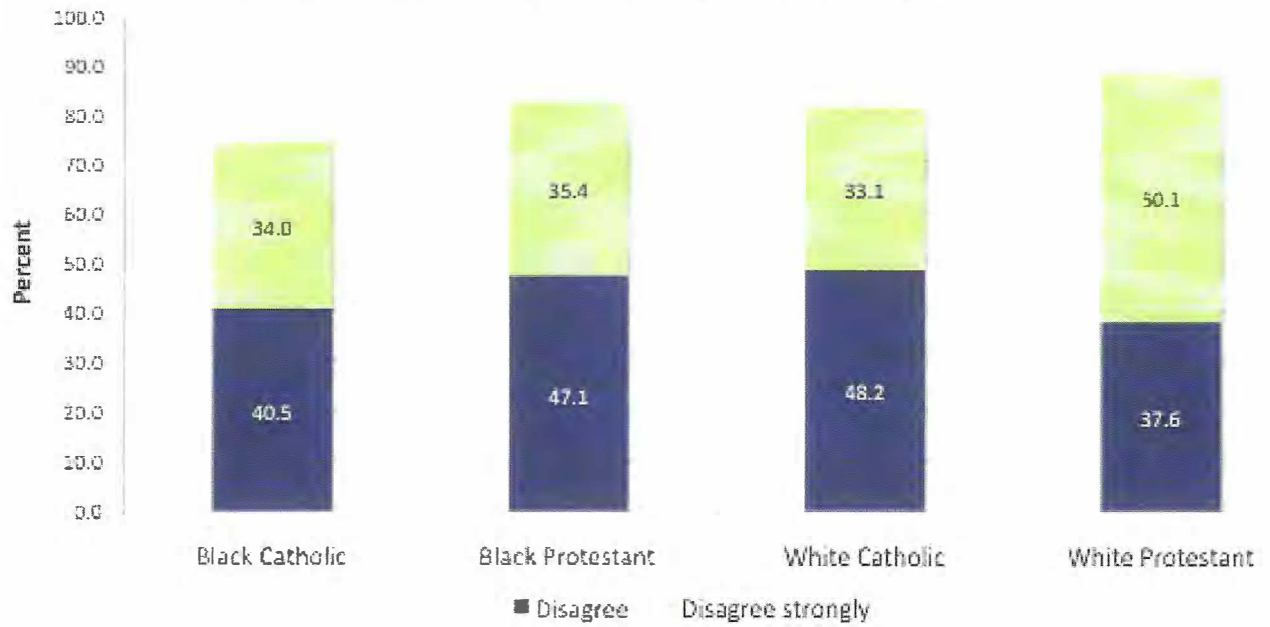


Figure 7.  
 Explanations for Someone Like You Would Leave Your Parish or Church?  
 (Very Good and Good Combined)

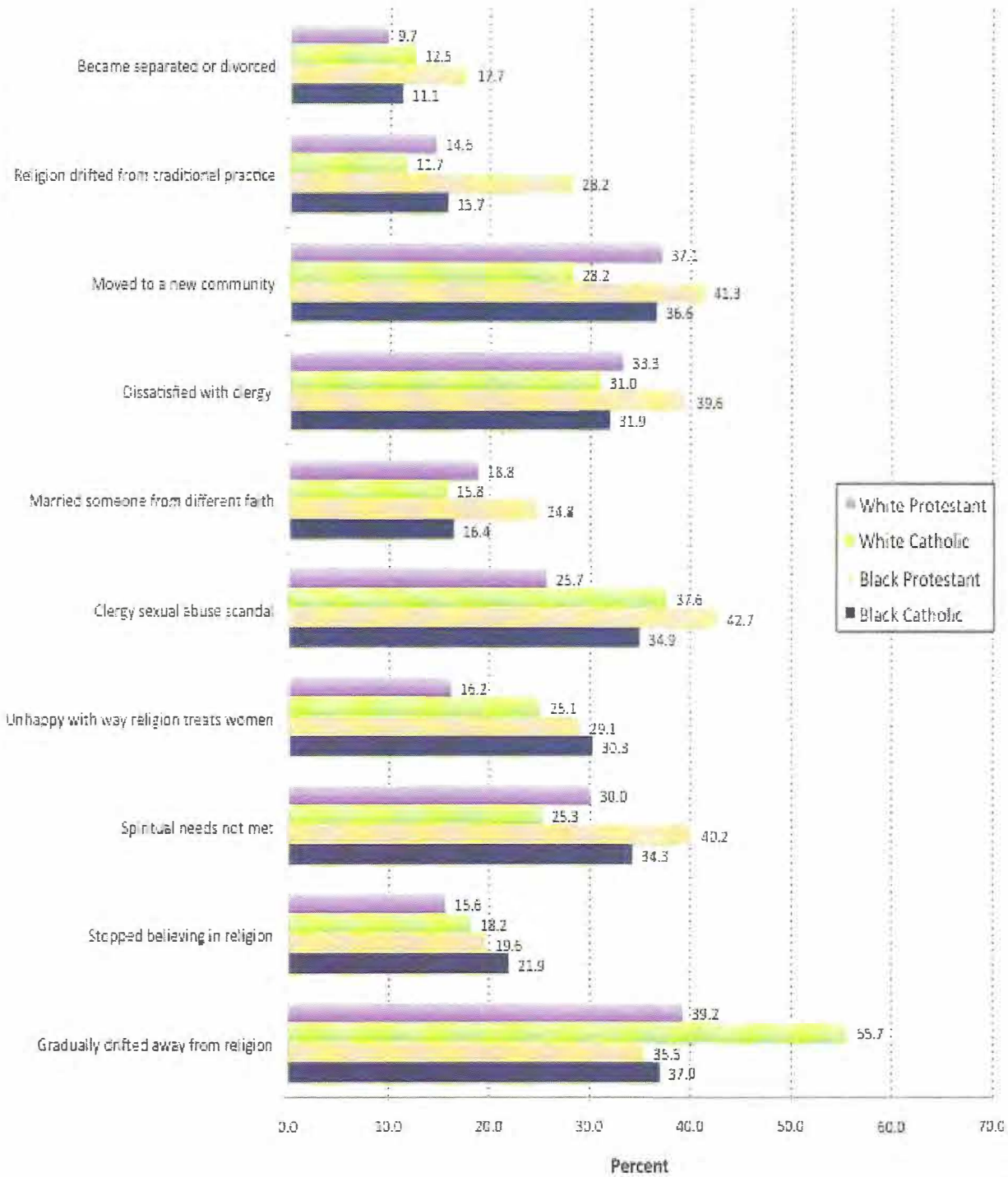


Figure 8. How Important Are Reasons For Attending Mass Or Church?  
(Very Important and Important Combined)

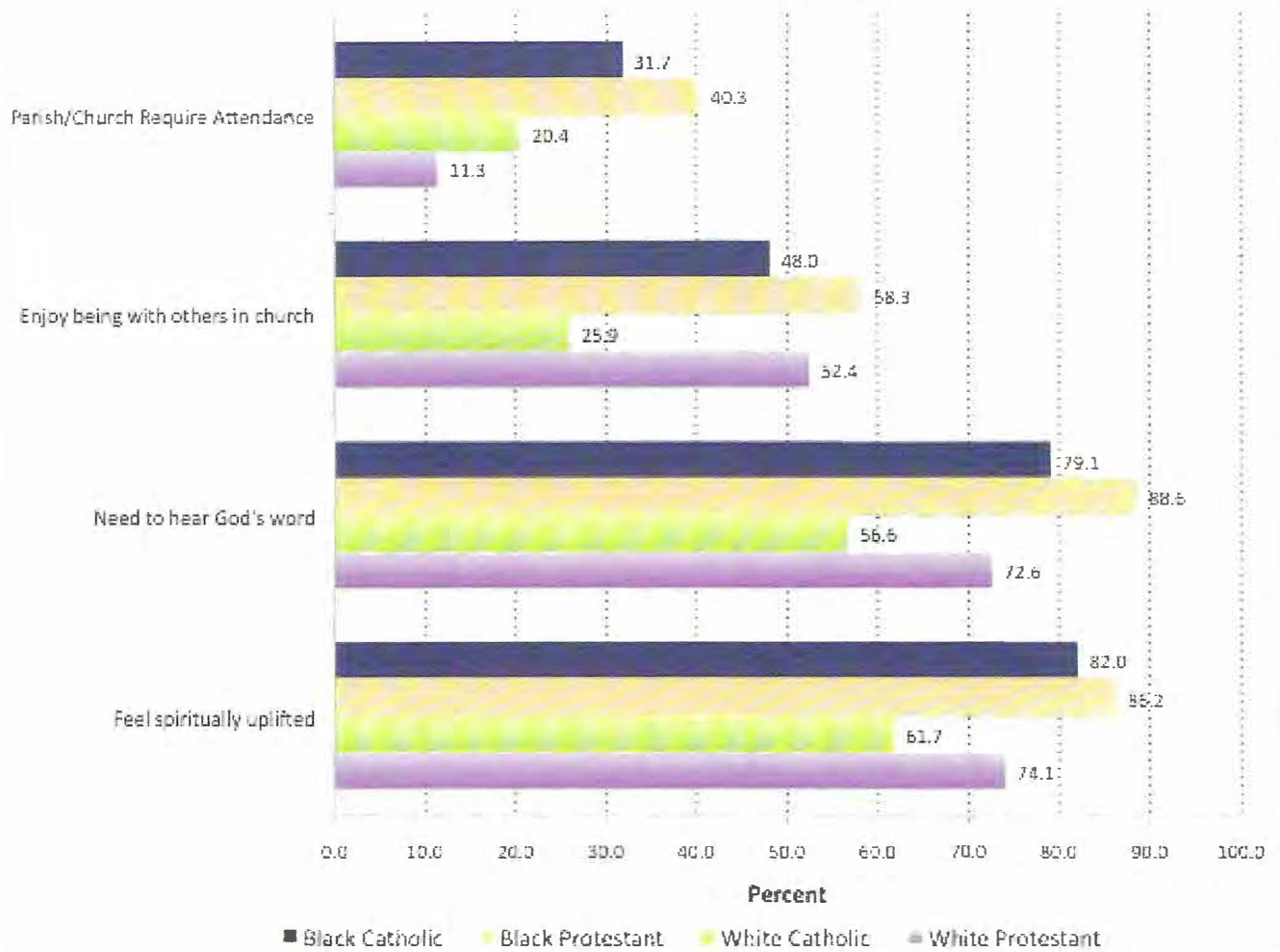




Figure 9. How Would You Rate The Quality Of Your Religious Service?  
(Very Satisfied and Satisfied Combined)

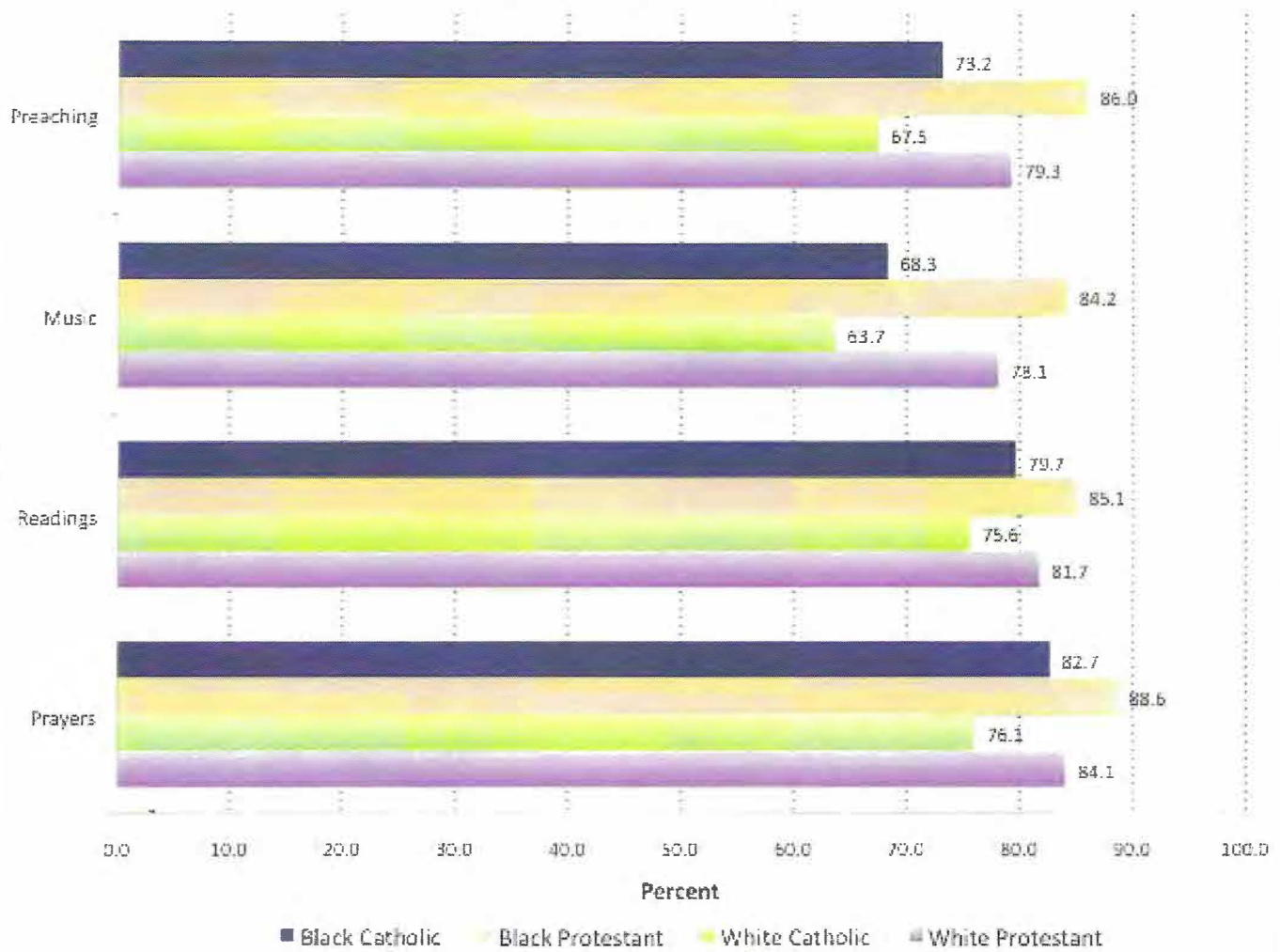


Figure 10.  
How Important Would It Be If More of Friends Attended Your Church?

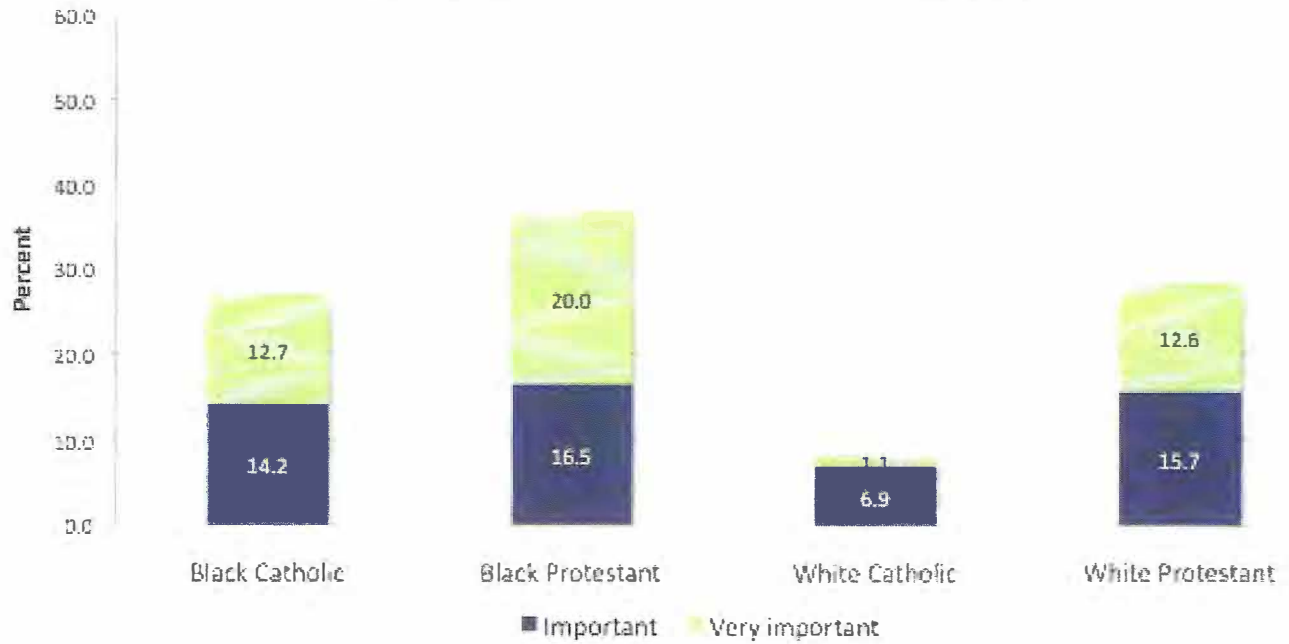


Figure 11.  
Without Seeing Or Being With My Friends At church, It would Not Be Worth Attending?

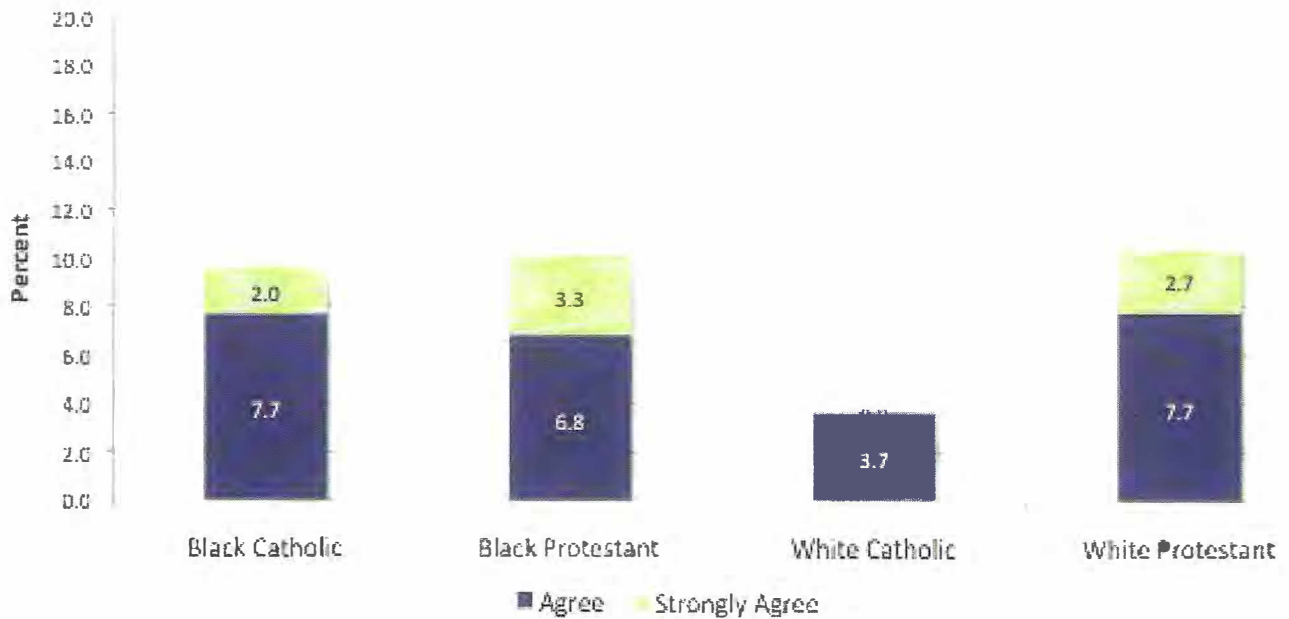


Figure 12. How Likely Would You Turn To Your Pastor, Church Leader, Or Priest For Help? (Highly Likely and Likely Combined)

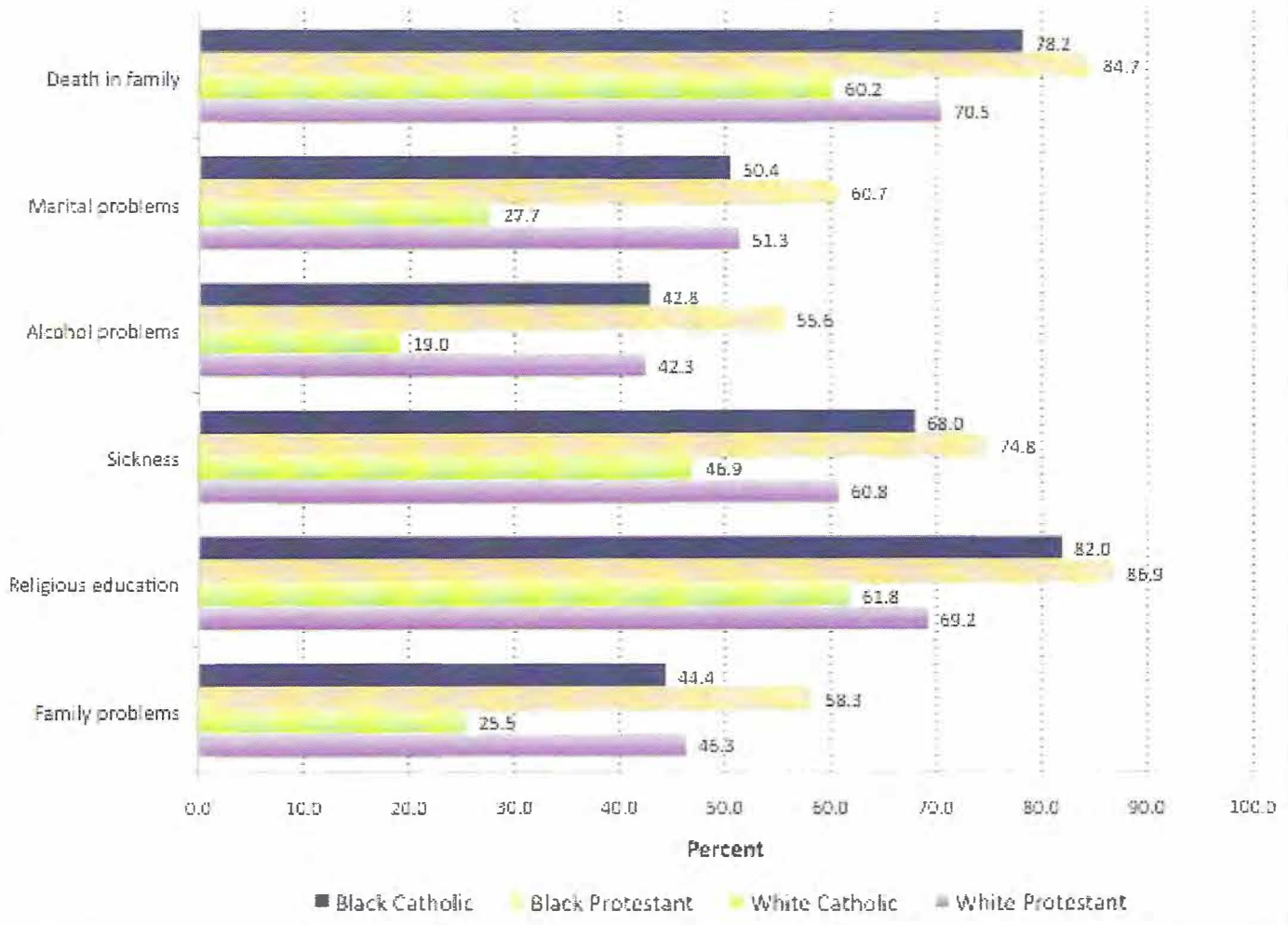


Figure 13. How Strongly Engaged Are You In Your Church, Synagogue, or Parish?/By Age  
(Very Strong or Strong Combined)

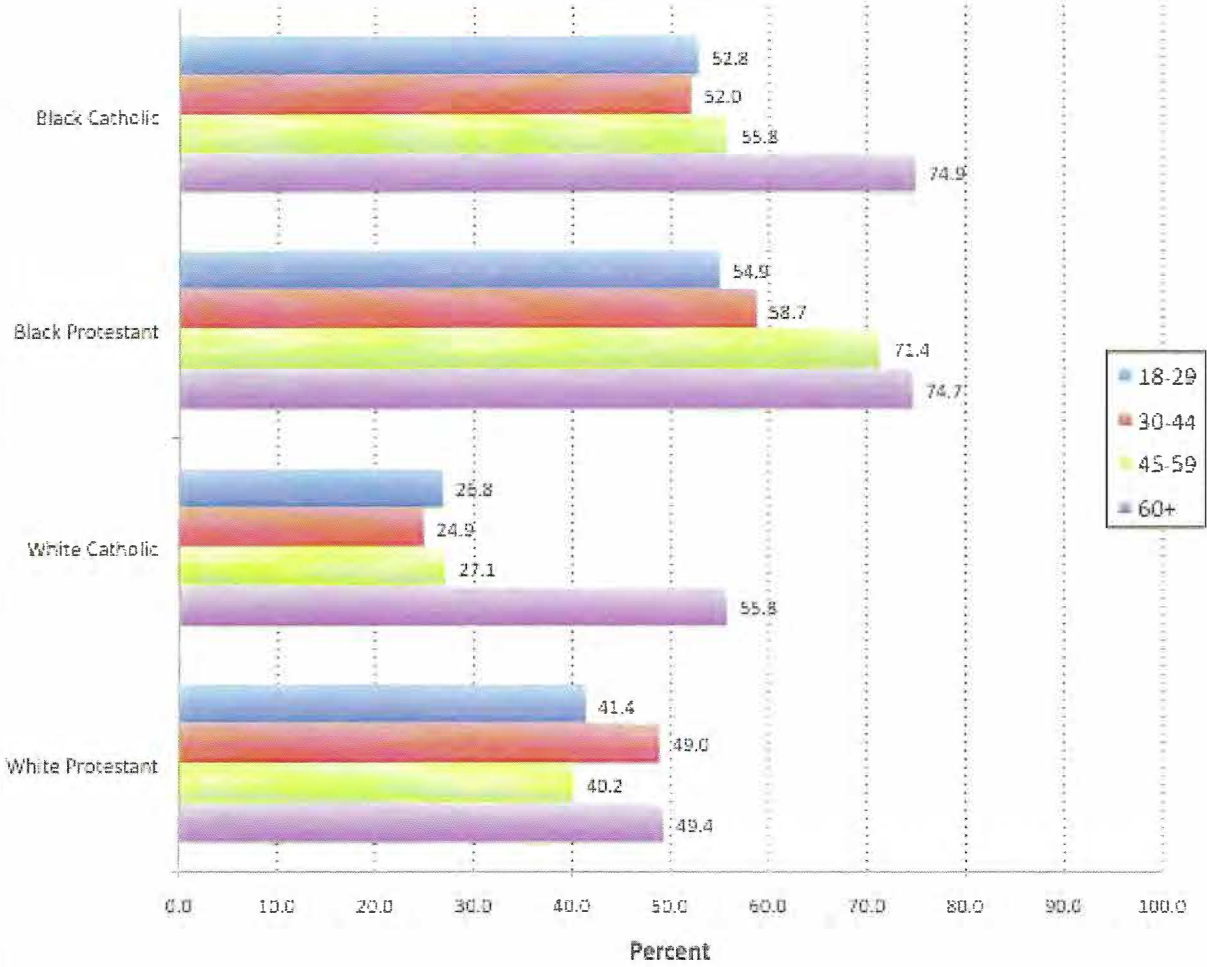


Figure 14. How Important Is Religion In Your Life?/By Age  
(Very Strong and Strong Combined)

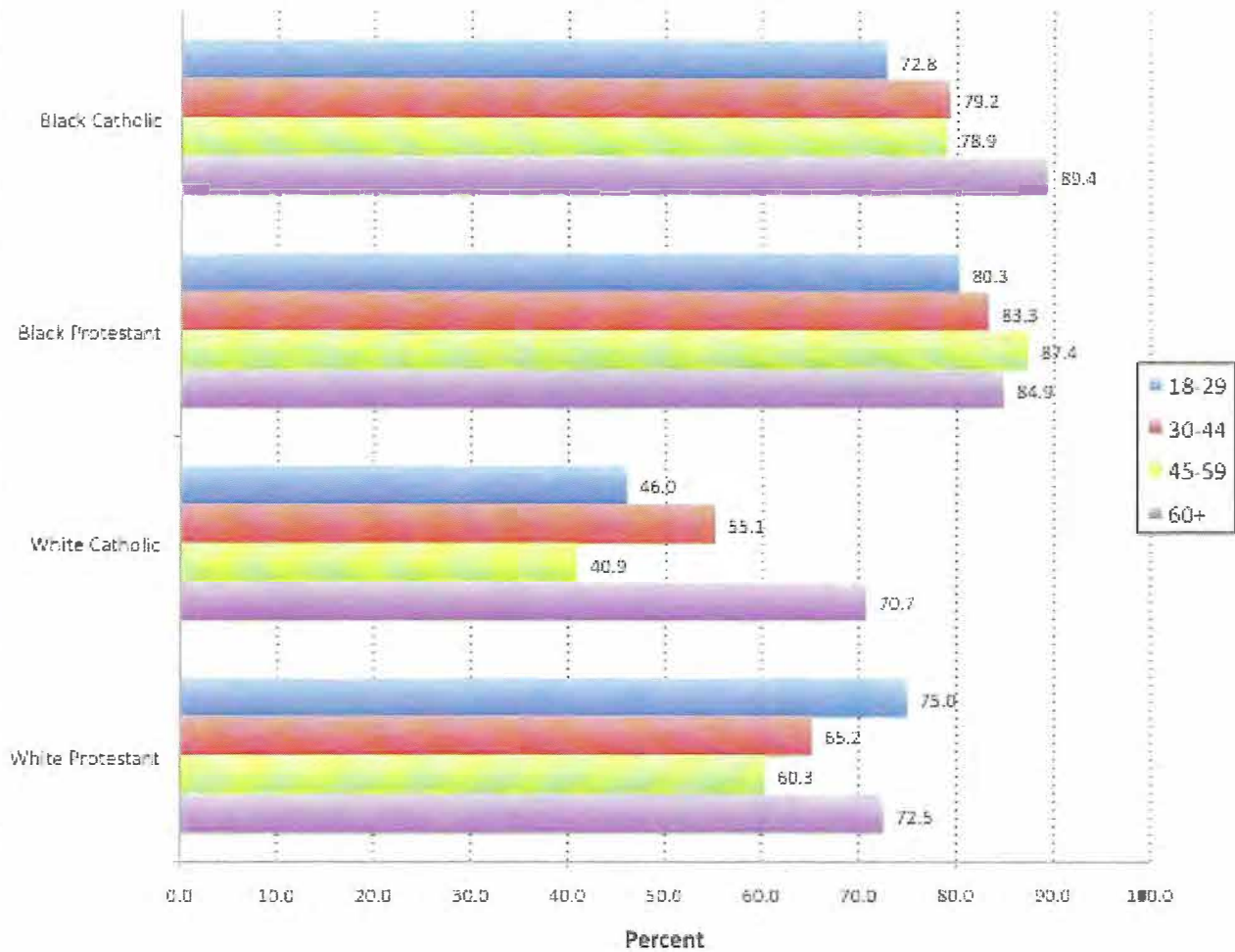


Figure 15. How Satisfied Are You With The Catholic Church in the Following Areas?  
Black Catholics Only  
(Very Satisfied and Satisfied Combined)

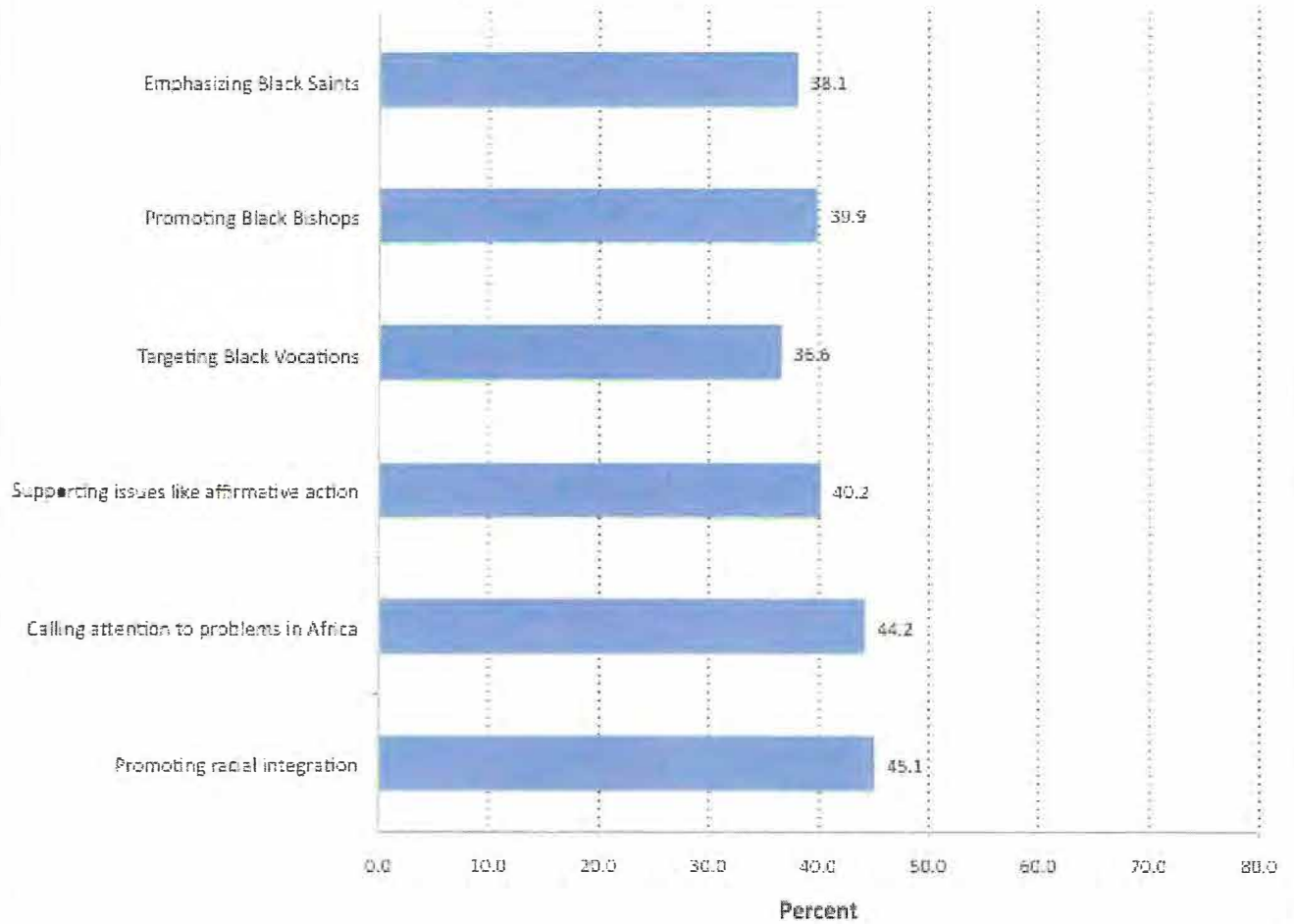


Figure 16.  
How Strongly Do You Believe the Catholic Church Is Racist Against African Americans?

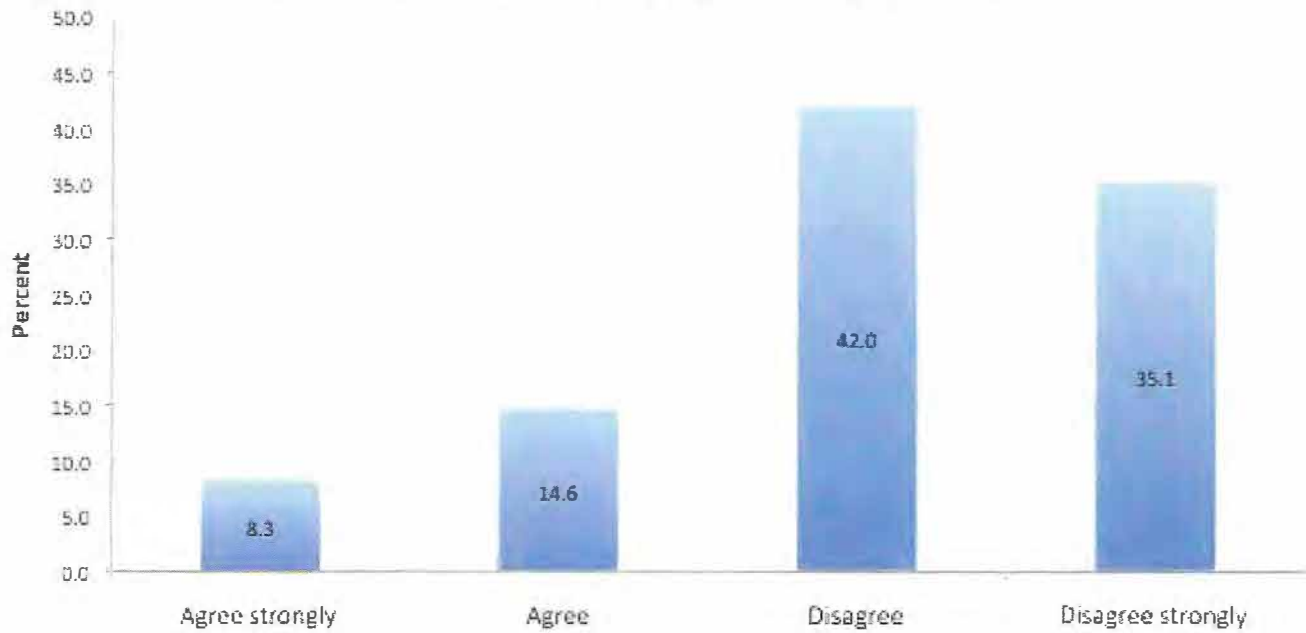


Figure 17.  
How Important Is Integrating African American Religious Expression Into Catholic worship?  
(Black Catholics Only)

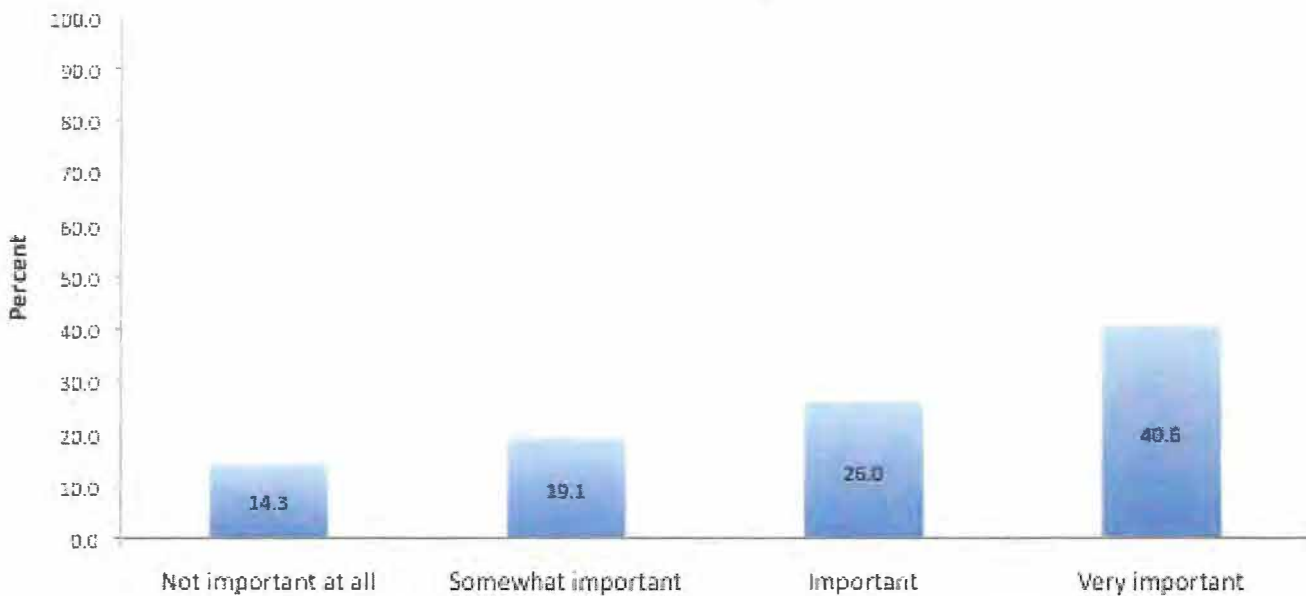
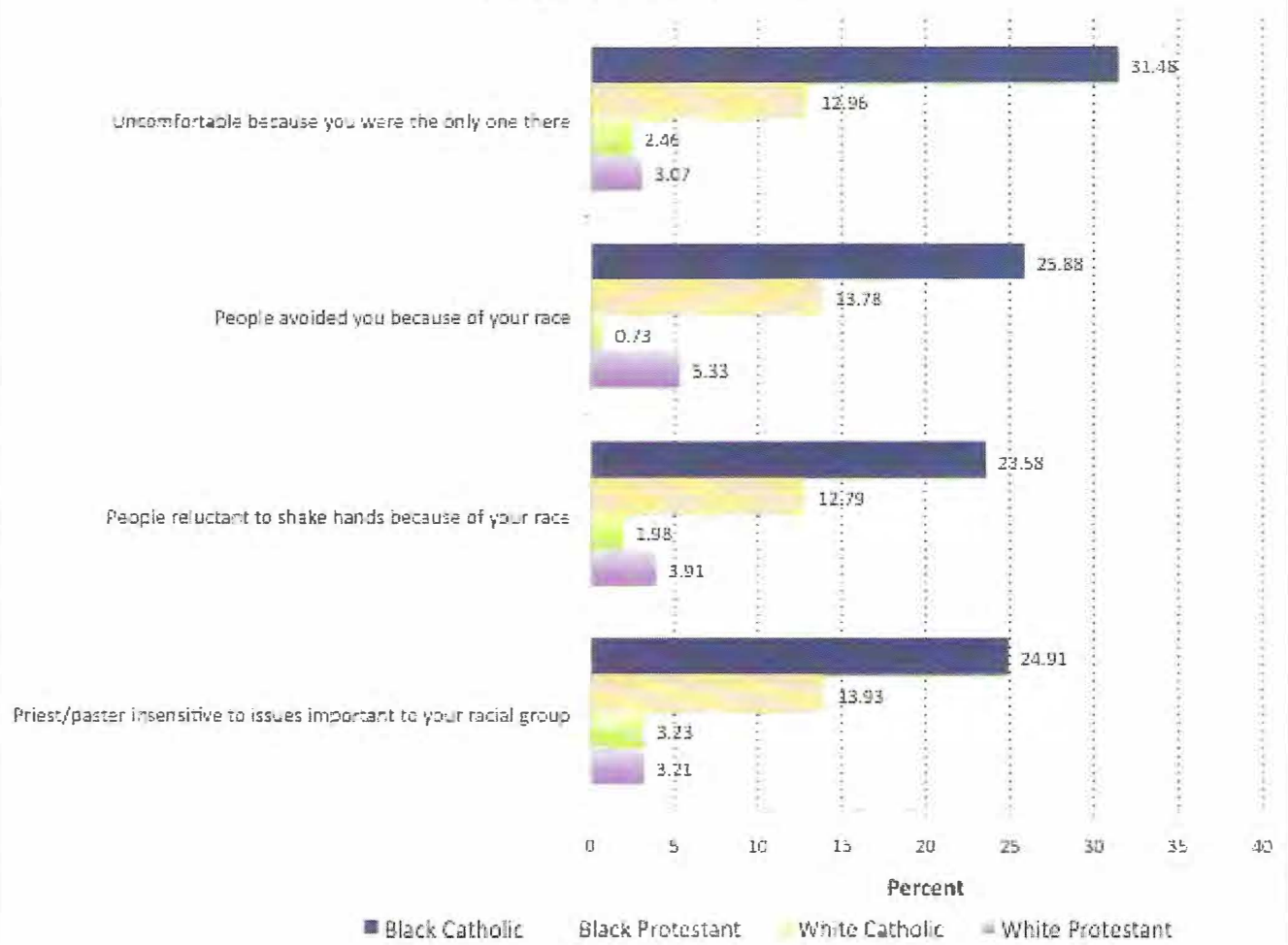


Figure 18. Perceived Racism In The Parish  
(Always and Sometimes Combined)





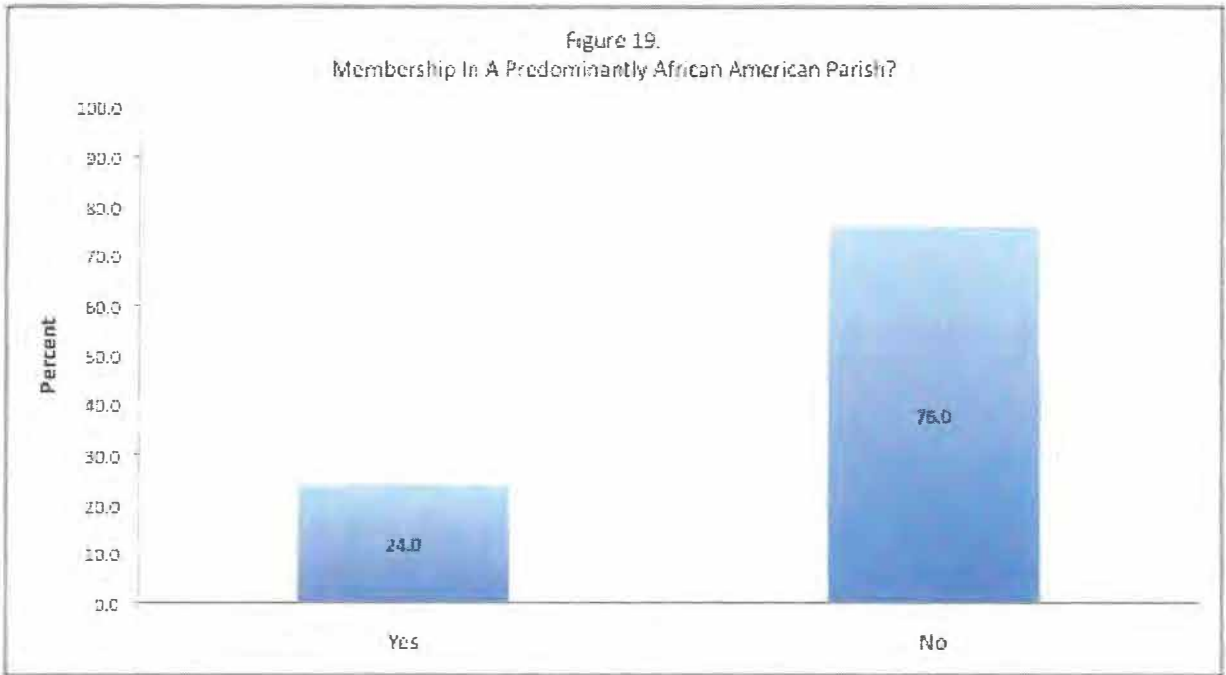


Figure 20.  
How Frequently Do You Attend Mass or Church?  
(By Black Parish Attendance)

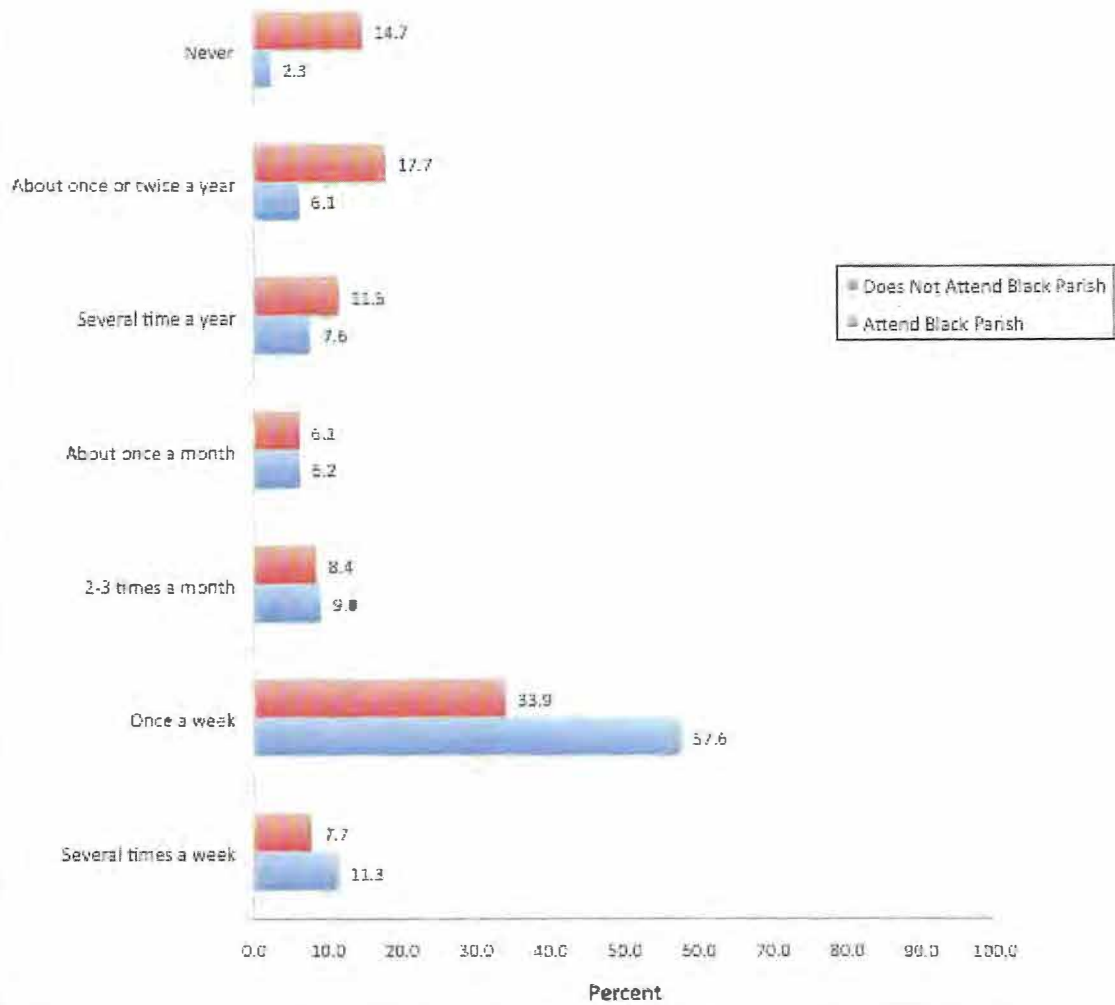
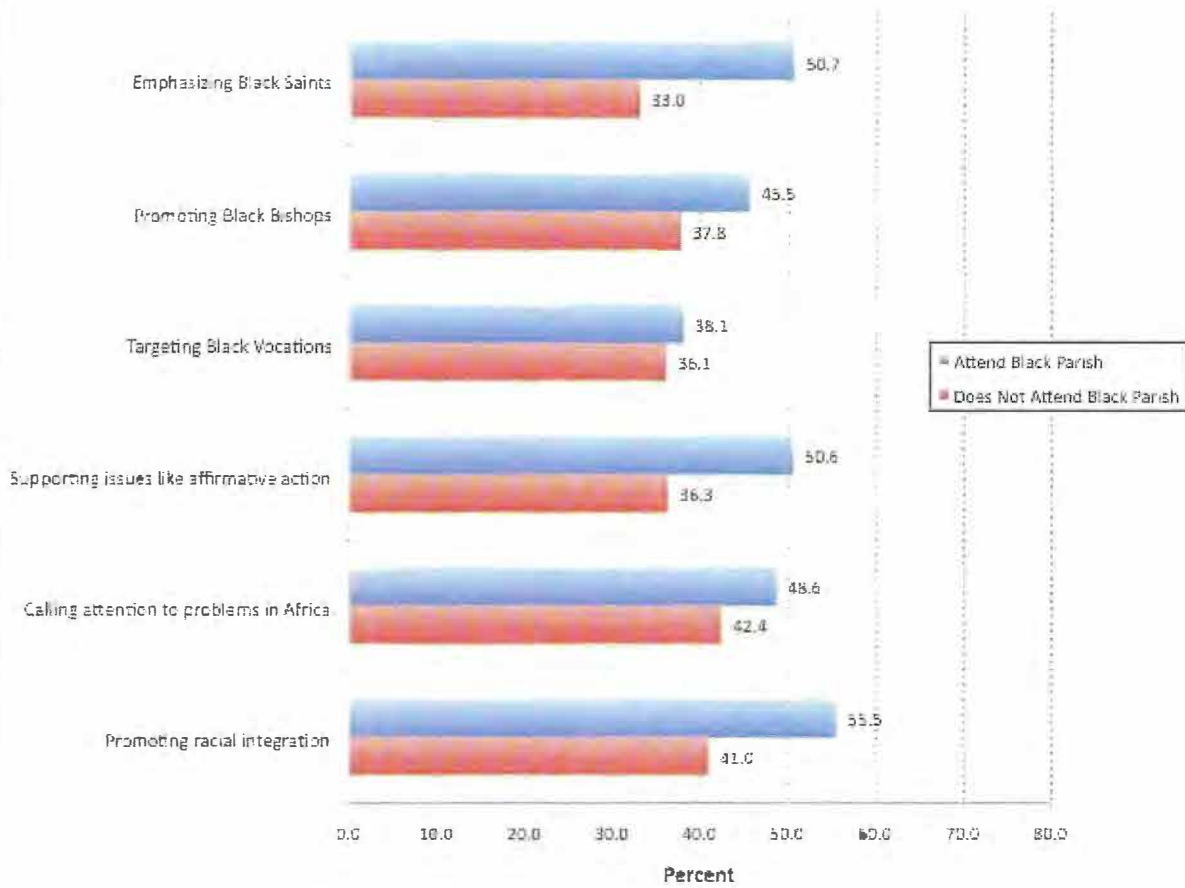


Figure 21. How Satisfied Are You With The Catholic Church in the Following Areas?  
 By Membership in Black Catholic Parish  
 (Very Satisfied and Moderately Satisfied Combined)



## Appendix

**Table for Figure 1. Analysis of Variance With Comparison  
General Engagement and Religious Identity**

F=32.23, Prob>F=.000

	Group Comparisons	
	Mean	
	Differences	Sig.
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.196	.003
White Catholic	-1.442	.000
White Protestant	-.298	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.725	.000
White Protestant	-.495	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.230	.048
<b>Emotional Engagement and Religious Identity</b>		
F=24.25, Prob>F=.000		
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.191	.003
White Catholic	-.422	.000
White Protestant	-.203	.003
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.613	.000
White Protestant	-.394	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.218	.057
<b>Spiritual Engagement and Religious Identity</b>		
F=17.46, Prob>F=.000		
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.114	.269
White Catholic	-.438	.000
White Protestant	-.279	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.552	.000
White Protestant	-.393	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.158	.390
<b>Social Engagement and Religious Identity</b>		
F=37.82, Prob>F=.000		
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.286	.000
White Catholic	-.435	.000
White Protestant	-.111	.245
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.722	.000
White Protestant	-.398	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.324	.000

**Table for Figure 2. Analysis of Variance With Comparison  
Spiritual Needs and Religious Identity**

F=22.39, Prob>F=.000

	Group Comparisons	
	Mean	
	Differences	Sig.
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.118	.043
White Catholic	-.303	.000
\White Protestant	-.015	1.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.422	.000
White Protestant	-.134	.041
<b>White Catholic</b>		
\White Protestant	.287	.000
<b>Emotional Needs and Religious Identity</b>		
F=25.05, Prob>F=.000		
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.168	.002
White Catholic	-.311	.000
White Protestant	-.007	1.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.479	.000
White Protestant	-.175	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
\White Protestant	.303	.000
<b>Social Needs and Religious Identity</b>		
F=58.60, Prob>F=.000		
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.314	.000
White Catholic	-.473	.000
White Protestant	-.056	.876
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.787	.000
\White Protestant	-.257	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.529	.000

**Table for Figure 3. Analysis of Variance With Comparison  
Church Attendance and Religious Identity**

F=14.10, Prob>F=.000

	Group Comparisons	
	Mean	
	Differences	Sig.
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	-.038	1.000
White Catholic	.973	.000
White Protestant	.711	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	1.011	.000
White Protestant	.750	.000

<b>White Catholic</b>			
	<b>White Protestant</b>	<b>- .261</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Table for Figure 4. Analysis of Variance With Comparison Upsetting if Forced to Leave Church and Religious Identity</b>			
F=28.76, Prob>F=.000			
	<b>Group Comparisons Mean Differences</b>		<b>Sig.</b>
<b>African American Catholic</b>			
African American Protestant	.257	.000	
White Catholic	-.430	.000	
White Protestant	-.190	.008	
<b>African American Protestant</b>			
White Catholic	-.688	.000	
White Protestant	-.448	.000	
<b>White Catholic</b>			
White Protestant	.240	.033	

<b>Table for Figure 5. Analysis of Variance With Comparison Church Attendance and Religious Identity</b>			
F=6.39, Prob>F=.000			
	<b>Group Comparisons Mean Differences</b>		<b>Sig.</b>
<b>African American Catholic</b>			
African American Protestant	.134	.083	
White Catholic	-.140	.438	
White Protestant	.047	.967	
<b>African American Protestant</b>			
White Catholic	-.275	.008	
White Protestant	-.086	.690	
<b>White Catholic</b>			
White Protestant	.188	.198	

<b>Table for Figure 6. Analysis of Variance With Comparison All Churches are Alike and Religious Identity</b>			
F=22.07, Prob>F=.000			
	<b>Group Comparisons Mean Differences</b>		<b>Sig.</b>
<b>African American Catholic</b>			
African American Protestant	.101	.062	
White Catholic	.078	.708	
White Protestant	.347	.000	
<b>African American Protestant</b>			
White Catholic	-.023	.999	
White Protestant	.245	.000	
<b>White Catholic</b>			
White Protestant	.268	.000	

**Table for Figure 7. Analysis of Variance With Comparison  
Drifted away from Religion**

F=17.41, Prob>F=.000

	<b>Group Comparisons</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	
	<b>Differences</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	-.139	1.00
White Catholic	.365	.000
White Protestant	.023	.999
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	.379	.000
White Protestant	.037	.989
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	-.341	.048

**Stopped Believing in Religion**

F=6.88, Prob>F=.000

<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	-.085	.289
White Catholic	-.069	.871
White Protestant	-.237	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	.016	1.000
White Protestant	-.151	.014
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	-.167	.088

**Spiritual Needs Not Being Met**

F=6.49, Prob>F=.000

<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.046	.924
White Catholic	-.137	.322
White Protestant	-.214	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.184	.089
White Protestant	-.261	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	-.077	.904

**Unhappy With Way Religion Treats Women**

F=17.41, Prob>F=.000

<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	-.046	.924
White Catholic	-.166	.136
White Protestant	-.409	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.119	.522
White Protestant	-.362	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	-.243	.011

**Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandal**

F=25.11, Prob>F=.000

<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.140	.092

	White Catholic	.004	1.000
	White Protestant	-.358	.000
<b>African .African Protestant</b>			
	White Catholic	-.136	.545
	White Protestant	-.499	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>			
	White Protestant	-.362	.000
<hr/>			
<b>Married Someone from Different Faith</b>			
F=7.67, Prob>=.000			
<b>African .African Catholic</b>			
	African American Protestant	.192	.000
	White Catholic	-.090	.710
	White Protestant	-.066	.702
<b>African .African Protestant</b>			
	White Catholic	-.283	.000
	White Protestant	-.258	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>			
	White Protestant	.024	1.000
<hr/>			
<b>Dissatisfied With Clergy</b>			
F=4.61, Prob>=.003			
<b>African .African Catholic</b>			
	African American Protestant	.212	.001
	African American Catholic	-.026	1.000
	White Protestant	-.029	.996
<b>African .African Protestant</b>			
	White Catholic	-.239	.023
	White Protestant	-.241	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>			
	White Protestant	-.002	1.000
<hr/>			
<b>Moved To A New Community</b>			
F=6.76, Prob>=.000			
<b>African .African Catholic</b>			
	African American Protestant	.176	.015
	White Catholic	-.165	.276
	White Protestant	-.010	1.000
<b>African .African Protestant</b>			
	White Catholic	-.341	.001
	White Protestant	-.187	.024
<b>White Catholic</b>			
	White Protestant	.154	.417
<hr/>			
<b>Religion Drifted From Traditional Practice</b>			
F=17.15, Prob>.000			
<b>African .African Catholic</b>			
	African American Protestant	.298	.000
	White Catholic	-.072	.826
	White Protestant	-.092	.252
<b>African .African Protestant</b>			
	White Catholic	-.370	.000
	White Protestant	-.390	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>			
	White Protestant	-.019	1.000
<hr/>			
<b>Became Separated or Divorced</b>			
F=6.96, Prob>.000			



<b>African American Catholic</b>	.182	.000
White Catholic	.030	.996
\white Protestant	-.041	.911
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
\Thte Catholic	-.152	.074
White Protestant	-.224	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	-.072	.821

**Table for Figure 8. Analysis of Variance With Comparison  
Parish/Church Require Attendance**

F=64.50, Prob>F=.000

	<b>Group Comparisons</b>	
	<b>Mean Differences</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.218	.000
White Catholic	-.251	.002
White Protestant	-.552	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.469	.000
White Protestant	-.770	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	-.300	.000

**Enjoy Being With Others in Church**

F=57.95, Prob>F=.000

<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.278	.000
White Catholic	-.488	.000
White Protestant	.088	.551
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.766	.000
White Protestant	-.190	.011
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.576	.000

**Need to Hear God's Word**

F=47.77, Prob>F=.000

<b>African American Catholic</b>		
Africa American Protestant	.252	.000
White Catholic	-.584	.000
White Protestant	-.211	.002
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.836	.000
\White Protestant	-.463	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
\White Protestant	.372	.000

**Feel Spiritually Uplifted**

F=33.54, Prob>F=.000

<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.120	.116
White Catholic	-.545	.000
White Protestant	-.240	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		



**Table for Figure 10 Analysis of Variance With Comparison Importance of Friends Attended Your Church**

F=53.90, Prob>F=.000

	Group Comparisons	
	Mean Differences	Sig.
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.223	.000
White Catholic	-.525	.000
White Protestant	-.008	1.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.748	.000
White Protestant	-.231	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.517	.000

**Table for Figure 11 Analysis of Variance With Comparison Being Without Friends, Not Worth Attending Mass/Church**

F=9.26, Prob>F=.000

	Group Comparisons	
	Mean Differences	Sig.
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.040	.843
White Catholic	-.093	.426
White Protestant	.086	.156
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.134	.101
White Protestant	.045	.851
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.180	.012

**Table for Figure 12 Analysis of Variance With Comparison Death in family**

F=23.27, Prob>F=.000

	Group Comparisons	
	Mean Differences	Sig.
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.194	.004
White Catholic	-.422	.000
White Protestant	-.155	.055
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.616	.000
White Protestant	-.350	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.266	.014

**Marital Problems**

F=36.77, Prob>F=.000

**African American Catholic**

African American Protestant	.244	.000
White Catholic	-.491	.000
White Protestant	-.056	.928

**African American Protestant**

White Catholic	-.736	.000
White Protestant	-.300	.000

**White Catholic**

White Protestant	.435	.000
------------------	------	------

**Alcohol Problems**

F=41.61, Prob>F=.000

**African American Catholic**

African American Protestant	.354	.000
White Catholic	-.405	.000
White Protestant	.000	1.000

**African American Protestant**

White Catholic	-.760	.000
White Protestant	-.354	.000

**White Catholic**

White Protestant	.406	.000
------------------	------	------

**Sickness**

F=25.42, Prob>F=.000

**African American Catholic**

African American Protestant	.190	.005
White Catholic	-.452	.000
White Protestant	-.157	.053

**African American Protestant**

White Catholic	-.642	.000
White Protestant	-.347	.000

**White Catholic**

White Protestant	.295	.005
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**Religious Education**

F=24.77, Prob>F=.000

**African American Catholic**

African American Protestant	.150	.030
White Catholic	-.460	.000
White Protestant	-.277	.000

**African American Protestant**

White Catholic	-.611	.000
White Protestant	-.428	.000

**White Catholic**

White Protestant	.183	.163
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**Family Problems**

F=42.61, Prob>F=.000

**African American Catholic**

African American Protestant	.353	.000
White Catholic	-.402	.000
White Protestant	.011	1.000

**African American Protestant**

White Catholic	-.756	.000
White Protestant	-.341	.000

**White Catholic**

White Protestant	.414	.000
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**Table for Figure 13. Analysis of Variance With Comparison**

		Group Comparisons	
		Mean	
		Differences	Sig.
Emphasizing importance of black saints	F=36.77, Prob>F=.000	.565	.000
Promotion of black bishops	F=41.31, Prob>F=.000	.498	.000
Targeting black vocations	F=49.08, Prob>F=.000	.533	.000
Supporting issues like affirmative action	F=64.05, Prob>F=.000	.631	.000
Calling attention to problems in Africa	F=48.67, Prob>F=.000	.539	.000
Promoting racial integration in church	F=61.71, Prob>F=.000	.605	.000

**Table for Figure 14. Analysis of Variance With Comparison**

Catholic Church is Racist	F=2.81, Prob>F=.094	.109	.096
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**Table for Figure 16. Analysis of Variance With Comparison**

African American Religious Expression	F=13.00, Prob>F=.000	.270	.000
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**Table for Figure 15. Analysis of Variance With Comparison  
Uncomfortable because you were the only on there**

F=34.17, Prob>F=.000

		Group Comparisons	
		Mean	
		Differences	Sig.
<b>African American Catholic</b>			
	African American Protestant	-.193	.000
	White Catholic	-.328	.000
	White Protestant	-.315	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>			
	White Catholic	-.134	.000
	White Protestant	-.121	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>			
	White Protestant	.012	.992

**People avoided you because of your race**

F=30.22, Prob>F=.000

**African American Catholic**

	African American Protestant	-.113	.000
	White Catholic	-.275	.000
	White Protestant	-.222	.000

**African American Protestant**

	White Catholic	-.162	.000
	White Protestant	-.109	.000

**White Catholic**

	White Protestant	.052	.125
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**People were reluctant to shake hands because of your race**

F=27.62, Prob>F=.000

<b>African American Catholic</b>		
Africa American Protestant	-.096	.000
White Catholic	-.237	.000
White Protestant	-.220	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.140	.000
White Protestant	-.124	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.016	.974
<b>Priest insensitive to issues important to your racial group</b>		
F=27.53, Prob>F=.000		
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	-.108	.000
White Catholic	-.238	.000
White Protestant	-.254	.245
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.130	.000
White Protestant	-.145	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	-.15	.987

**Table for Figure 13. Analysis of Variance With Comparison  
Age Category 1**  
F=3.20, Prob>F=.023

	Group Comparisons	
	Mean Differences	Sig.
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.221	.620
White Catholic	-.371	.325
White Protestant	-.135	.958
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.592	.026
White Protestant	-.357	.214
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.235	.852

**Age Category 2**  
F=9.80, Prob>F=.000

<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.316	.054
White Catholic	-.477	.035
White Protestant	-.105	.962
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.793	.000
White Protestant	-.421	.028
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.372	.284

**Age Category 3**  
F=25.56, Prob>F=.000

<b>African American Catholic</b>		
Africa American Protestant	.250	.035
White Catholic	-.781	.000
White Protestant	-.363	.003

<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-1.032	.000
White Protestant	-.613	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.418	.037
<b>Age Category 4</b>		
F=7.36, Prob>F=.000		
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	-.015	1.000
White Catholic	-.548	.002
White Protestant	-.639	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.532	.003
White Protestant	-.623	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	-.091	.992

Table for Figure 14. Analysis of Variance With Comparison  
How important is religion in your life?

**Age Category 1**

F=7.61, Prob>F=.023

	Group Comparisons	
	Mean Differences	Sig.
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.192	.650
White Catholic	-.552	.017
White Protestant	-.031	1.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.744	.001
White Protestant	-.223	.620
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.521	.051
<b>Age Category 2</b>		
F=9.37, Prob>F=.000		
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	-.016	1.000
White Catholic	-.691	.000
White Protestant	-.340	.020
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-.674	.000
White Protestant	-.323	.072
<b>White Catholic</b>		
White Protestant	.350	.242
<b>Age Category 3</b>		
F=26.19, Prob>F=.000		
<b>African American Catholic</b>		
African American Protestant	.195	.159
White Catholic	-.844	.000
White Protestant	-.446	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>		
White Catholic	-1.040	.000
White Protestant	-.641	.000

<b>White Catholic</b>	White Protestant	.398	.042
<b>Age Category 4</b>			
F=4.23, Prob>F=.005			
<b>African American Catholic</b>			
	African American Protestant	-.086	.935
	White Catholic	-.515	.001
	White Protestant	-.485	.000
<b>African American Protestant</b>			
	White Catholic	-.428	.014
	White Protestant	-.398	.000
<b>White Catholic</b>			
	White Protestant	-.030	1.000

### Multivariate Analyses

The full set of engagement measures was factor analyzed (EFA) to determine the extent of dimensionality of the measures, common factors, and which of the individual measures are more influential in determining the factors. As reported in Table 1A, the EFA produced a single factor structure, eigenvalue= 6.31 with 70 percent of explained variance. The factor loadings ranged from .78 to .88. Substantively, these results mean that all of the religious engagement measures are determined by a single underlying construct. This factor or construct is likely to be classified as Engagement given the high individuals items that load more highly on the factor. Given these properties, a scale was obtained based on the first factor from the previous EFA model, which will be used as the dependent variable in multivariate analyses. The scale reliability coefficient or Cronbach's Alpha is .928.

**Table 1A. Factor Analysis of Religious Engagement Measures**

Measures	Factor 1
General engagement	.873
Spiritual engagement	.882
Social engagement	.825
Emotional engagement	.882
Spiritual need	.830
Emotional need	.815
Social need	.781
Satisfied with parish/church	.826
Church attendance	-.812
Eigenvalue	6.31
% of Total Variance	.701

A multivariate model was constructed to examine the determinants of religious engagement. While the goal is to examine the substantive relationships identified in the narrative, several control variables are included. The independent variables are as follows:



<b>Independent Variables Used in Multivariate Analyses</b>	
Education	4 categorical Measure: 1=Less than high school; 2=High school graduate; 3=Some college; 4=Bachelor's degree or higher
Gender	1=Male; 0=Female
Age	4 Categorical measure: 1=18-29 years old; 2=30-44 years old; 3=45-59 years old; 4=60 years of age and older
North East	CT, ME, MA, NH, NI, NY, PA, RI, VT
Midwest	IN, IL, I\, KS, MI, MN, I\,10, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI
South	AL, AR, DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, \YV
West	AI<, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, WA, WY
Married	Married=1; Not Married=0
Widow	Widowed=1; Not Widowed=0
Divorced	Divorced=1; Not Divorced=0
Income	6 Categorical Measure: 1=0-\$19,999; 2=\$20,000-\$39,999; 3=\$40,000-\$59,999; 4=\$60,000-\$79,999; 5=\$80,000-\$99,999; 6=\$100,00+
Race	1=White; 0=African American
Catholic	1=Catholic; 0=Protestant
Registered	1=Registered in Parish or Church; 0=Not Registered
Friends	"How important would it be to you if more of your friends attended your church?"
Sex Abuse Scandal	"How good an explanation is the sexual abuse scandal for why you may no longer feel engaged in your religion?"
Dissatisfied-clergy	"How good an explanation is dissatisfaction with clergy for why you may no longer feel engaged in your religion?"
Distance	Perceived distance from parish

**Table 1A. OLS Regression Estimates of Determinants of Religious Enrollment**

	All	Whites		African Americans	
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Education	.07* (.03)	.14** (.04)	.09 (.05)	-.01 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Gender (1=Male; 0=Female)	-.11** (.04)	-.14* (.07)	-.12 (.07)	-.17** (.05)	-.04 (.04)
Age	.14** (.02)	.08* (.03)	.14** (.04)	.14** (.02)	.09** (.02)
Income	-.06** (.01)	-.08** (.02)	-.06** (.02)	-.01 (.01)	-.03 (.01)
North East	-.44** (.07)	-.00 (.12)	-.46** (.13)	-.01 (.10)	-.06 (.09)
Midwest	-.28** (.07)	.12 (.11)	-.31* (.12)	.21* (.10)	.10 (.09)
South	-.16* (.06)	.31** (.11)	-.19 (.12)	.41 (.09)	.08 (.08)
Married	.15** (.05)	.23** (.08)	.12 (.09)	.30** (.05)	.19** (.04)
Divorced	-.16* (.07)	-.16 (.13)	-.25 (.14)	.26** (.07)	.07 (.06)
Catholic (1=Catholic; 0=Protestant)	-.07 (.04)		-.04 (.08)		-.10 (.07)
Registered	.67** (.05)		.48** (.09)		1.01** (.04)
Friends	.31** (.02)		.34** (.04)		.21** (.02)
Sex Scandal	.05 (.02)		.05 (.03)		.07** (.01)
Dissatisfied Clergy	-.04* (.02)		-.04 (.04)		-.03 (.02)
Race (1=White; 0=Black)	-.25** (.05)				
Constant	1.65** (.14)	1.59** (.21)	1.33** (.25)	2.01 (.13)	1.16** (.14)
N	1473	722	616	1438	1247
R2	.32	.06	.47	.09	.41
Adjusted R2	.31	.05	.46	.08	.41
RootMSE	.74	.97	.73	.92	.71
F	43.28	5.88	39.08	16.66	63.01
Prob > F	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Note: Individuals who do not identify with any religion or non-Christian are excluded

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