

**HOLY TOLL: THE IMPACT OF THE 2008-2009 RECESSION ON US ORTHODOX  
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES**

**Content:**

<b>Some Highlight Discussed in this Study</b>	<b>p.2</b>
<b>I. Introduction: What is this Report About?</b>	<b>p.3</b>
<b>II. The Budgets of the Parishes of American Orthodox Churches</b>	<b>p.4</b>
<b>III. Overall Financial Health of US Orthodox Christian Churches before and after 2008-2009 Recession</b>	<b>p.6</b>
<b>IV. The Impact of 2008-2009 Recession on the American Orthodox Parishes</b>	<b>p.8</b>
<b>V. The Impact of 2008-2009 Recession on the Local Church Life: Orthodox Versus Roman Catholic, Mainline Protestant and Evangelical Protestant Churches</b>	<b>p.14</b>
<b>Appendix. Congregation's Overall Financial Health in 2010 and Impact of 2008-2009 Recession on Congregation's Income in various US Christian Churches and Faith Communities</b>	<b>p.22</b>

### **SOME HIGHLIGHTS DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT:**

- In the past ten years, the proportion of GOA, OCA and AOCA parishes saying that their financial health is “Good” or “Excellent” dropped by almost half: from 60% to 31%. To the contrary, the number of parishes indicating that they are in “some” or “serious” financial difficulties has more than tripled increasing from 7% to 24%;
- In the aftermath of the 2008-2009 recession, more GOA than OCA or AOCA churches feel that their finances are in “some” or “serious” difficulties. To the contrary, compared to GOA and OCA, more AOCA parishes report “Good” or “Excellent” financial health;
- During the recession of 2008-2009, the greatest losses in local parish life were associated with postponing capital/building projects, decrease in investments and digging into savings. Luckily, the human “toll” paid by the parishes was relatively small: only 9% parishes reported serious impact on staff’s layoffs and furloughs;
- Overall, the negative effect of the 2008-2009 recession on parish programming and operations was *felt* much stronger by the GOA than by the AOCA or OCA churches;
- Vast majority (58%) of OCA parishes have annual budgets of no more than \$100,000 while only 11% of GOA and 44% of AOCA parishes belong to this budget category. Almost two-thirds of GOA parishes (63%) have budgets greater than \$200,000 in comparison with only 13% among OCA and 34% among AOCA parishes;
- The total annual budgets are quite different for GOA, OCA and AOCA parishes, but their structures are surprisingly similar. That is, the GOA, AOCA and OCA churches spend nearly the same percentage of their budgets on the same items;
- About one-third of GOA, OCA and AOCA parishes experienced sharp increase in unemployment among their members;
- The recession had a nearly equal effect on the *change in incomes* of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic parishes and the Mainline (Oldline) and Evangelical Protestant congregations;
- However, the current *actual financial health* as reported by the American Orthodox parishes is *worse* than the economic well-being of the Roman Catholic parishes and Protestant congregations;
- The parishioners of US Orthodox Christian Churches and the members of Mainline Protestant Churches were significantly *less* affected by unemployment than the members of the Roman Catholic parishes and Evangelical Protestant congregations.

## I. INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT?

There is little doubt that the 2008-2009 recession took a toll on the entire US not-for-profit sector. America's religious congregations were no exception from this rule and US Orthodox Churches were hit as hard as their Roman Catholic and Protestant counterparts. In this short report we describe the impact of the recent economic downturn on the overall financial health of American Orthodox Churches and on the various areas of parish life. Special attention is paid to

- Comparisons between the parishes which belong to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA), Orthodox Church in America (OCA) and Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese (AOCA). That is, our goal was to look at what is rather similar and what is distinct in how three major Orthodox Church bodies<sup>1</sup> deal with their finances and the outcomes of recession;
- Comparisons between Orthodox Christian Churches, on the one hand, and the Roman Catholic and Mainline and Evangelical Protestant Churches, on the other hand. That is, we made an attempt to place the issue of finances and impact of recession on US Orthodox Churches in the wider context of the American "religious economy."

The data and the following analysis in this report are based on the national 2010 "Faith Communities Today" (FACT) survey of 11,077 randomly sampled religious congregations.<sup>2</sup> The 2010 FACT national survey was a project undertaken by the "Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership" (CCSP) – an interfaith coalition of religious researchers representing broad spectrum of American faith communities. Originally, the "Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas" (SCOBA) and currently the "Assembly of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in North and Central America" has been and remains one of the partners in CCSP cooperative project. The questionnaires of the 2010 FACT survey were mailed to all GOA, OCA<sup>3</sup> and AOCA parishes, of which 368 responded – a return rate of 30%. These 368 participating Orthodox parishes include:

- 160 parishes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA) - 30% return rate
- 123 parishes of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) – 26% return rate
- 85 parishes of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese (AOCA) - 34% return rate

---

<sup>1</sup> The GOA, OCA and AOCA combined account for nearly 80% of all US Orthodox Church members and for more than 70% of all US Orthodox Christian parishes.

<sup>2</sup> For more of 2010 FACT survey, look at [www.faithcommunitiestoday.org](http://www.faithcommunitiestoday.org)

<sup>3</sup> With the exception of the parishes in the Diocese of Alaska.

## II. THE BUDGETS OF THE PARISHES OF AMERICAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

The parishes participating in 2010 FACT survey were asked “What was the approximate dollar amount of your parish’s total budget for 2009? (Do not count funds for capital improvements or primary/secondary schools).”

Tab. 1 shows mean and median annual budget of a single “typical” parish for all three jurisdictions combined and for GOA, OCA, AOCA individually. The “*mean*” (also known as simply “average”) figure is obtained by adding all parish budgets and dividing this sum by the number of parishes. The “*median*” figure shows the budget of a parish which is right in the middle of entire sample of parishes. For instance, the median budget of \$300,000 in case of GOA parishes (see Tab. 1) means that half of GOA parishes participating in the 2010 FACT survey have budgets that are smaller and half of them have budgets that are greater than \$ 300,000.

**Tab. 1 Annual budget of an “average” single parish (dollars) in 2009** (does not include funds for capital improvements or primary / secondary school).

	All Orthodox jurisdictions combined	GOA	OCA	AOCA
Mean	\$ 241,587	\$ 380,089	\$ 110,635	\$ 165,321
Median	\$150,000	\$ 300,000	\$ 94,440	\$ 125,325

Essentially, Tab. 1 tells us that one way or other the budget of a single “average” GOA parish is about 2 1/2 times larger than the budget of an “average” AOCA parish and it is more than 3 times larger than the budget of an “average” OCA parish.

More specifically, Tab. 2 shows that the vast majority (58%) of OCA parishes have annual budgets of no more than \$100,000 while only 11% of GOA and 44% of AOCA parishes belong to this budget category. To the contrary, almost two-thirds of GOA parishes (63%) have budgets greater than \$200,000 in comparison with only 13% among OCA and 34% among AOCA parishes.

**Tab. 2 % of parishes with different size of annual budget in the total of all parishes**  
(the sum of % in each column add to 100%)

Parish annual budget in 2009	All Orthodox jurisdictions combined	GOA	OCA	AOCA
Up to \$ 100,000	34	11	58	44
\$ 101-200,000	28	26	29	30
\$ 201-500,000	26	39	13	31
More than \$ 500,000	12	24	0	5

While the budgets of GOA parishes are typically much larger in comparison with OCA and AOCA parishes, the number of people involved in the life of a single “average” parish is also much greater in the GOA (732 persons per parish) than it is in the OCA (162) or for AOCA (287). See Tab. 3.

**Tab. 3 Average size of a parish (persons):** “Approximately how many people are associated in any way with the religious life of your parish?”

	Average number of persons associated with the religious life of a single parish
All Orthodox jurisdictions combined	430
GOA	732
OCA	162
AOCA	287

As a result, if we would measure the “wealth” of a parish as annual budget per capita involved in parish life, the OCA churches excel GOA and AOCA parishes. See Tab. 4.

**Tab. 4 Annual budget of a single “average” parish per 1 person involved in parish life (\$)**

All Orthodox jurisdictions combined	\$ 562
GOA	\$ 519
OCA	\$ 683
AOCA	\$ 576

While the total annual budgets and amount of money “available” per one participant are quite different for GOA, OCA and AOCA parishes, the structures of their budgets are surprisingly similar. That is, the GOA, AOCA and OCA churches spend nearly the same % of their budgets on various items. See Tab. 5.

**Tab. 5 Structure of the budget:** out of annual budget of a single parish, average % spent on each of the following items (% in each column add to 100%):

	All Orthodox	GOA	OCA	AOCA
Staff salaries and benefits	45	46	44	43
Building operations (utilities, mortgage, insurance, maintenance, etc.)	31	29	32	32
Program support and materials (for Sunday school, evangelism, education, etc.)	8	8	6	9
Mission and benevolence (including assessments)	9	10	10	8
All other expenditures	7	7	8	8

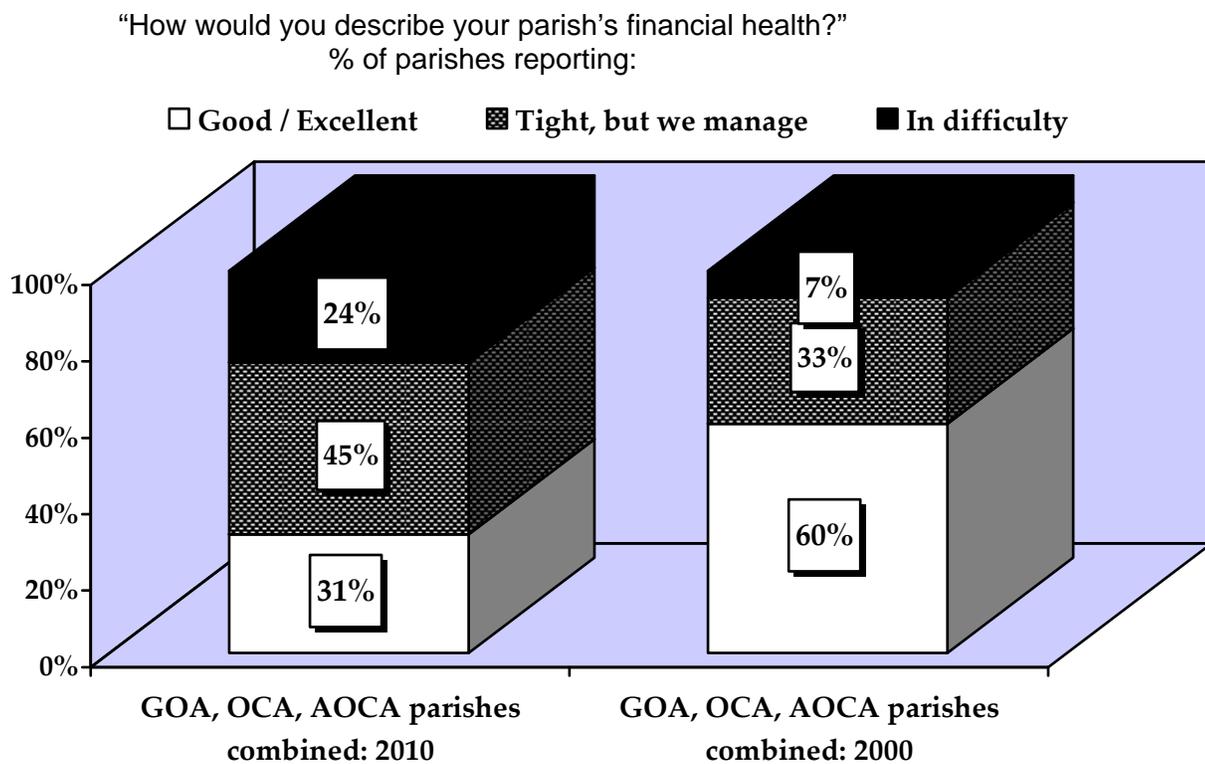
43%-46% are spent annually on staff salaries and benefits; 29% -32% are expenses associated with various building operations (mortgage, insurance, utilities, maintenance); 6% - 9% of budgets go to various program support and materials; 8% - 10% are spent on various mission and benevolence activities.

### III. OVERALL FINANCIAL HEALTH OF US ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCHES BEFORE AND AFTER 2008-2009 RECESSION

To begin with, the decade of 2000-2010 witnessed a dramatic decline in the economic prosperity of three major American Orthodox jurisdictions.

Indeed, in the past ten years, the proportion of GOA, OCA and AOCA parishes saying that their financial health is “Good” or “Excellent” dropped by almost half: from 60% to 31%. To the contrary, the number of parishes indicating that they are in “some” or “serious” financial difficulties has more than tripled increasing from 7% to 24%. See Fig. 1

**Fig. 1 Financial Health of US Orthodox Churches in 2000<sup>4</sup> and 2010**

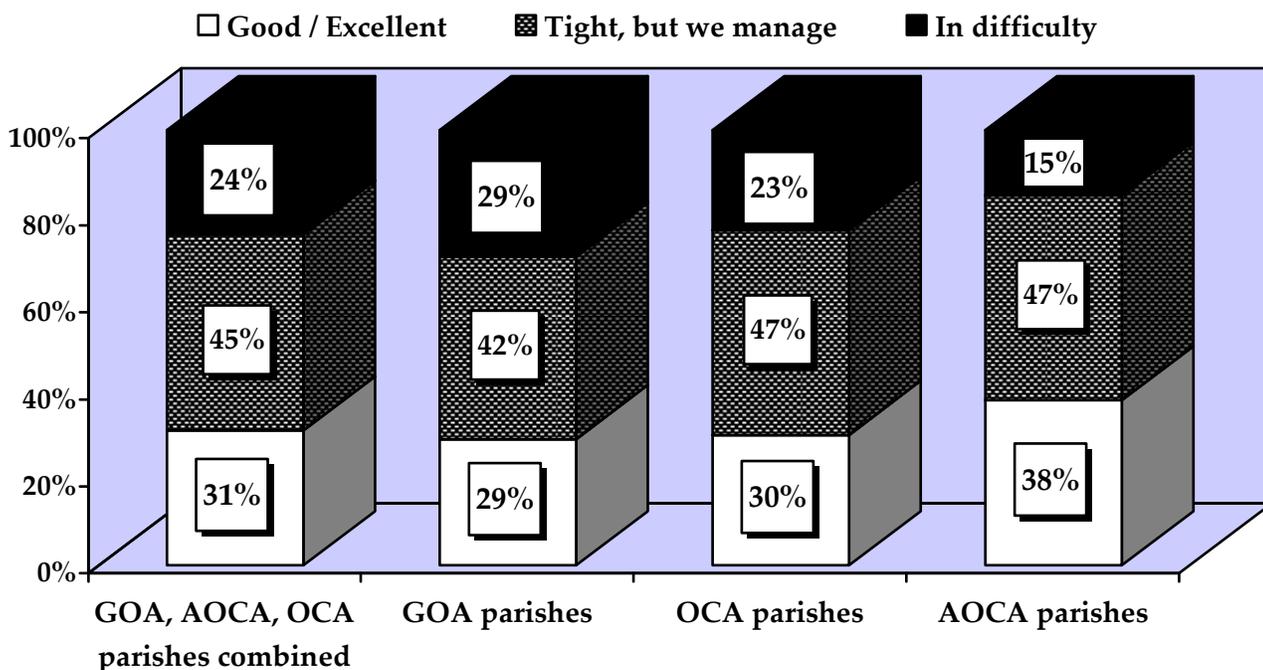


<sup>4</sup> Many questions in 2010 FACT survey (including question on financial health) were replicated from the original first 2000 FACT study. Almost the same (342) number of Orthodox parishes participated in 2000 FACT survey. This gives us opportunity to compare reported financial health of US Orthodox parishes in 2000 and 2010.

Fig. 2 shows that in the aftermath of 2008-2009 recession there is a significant difference between economic well-being of the GOA, OCA and AOCA parishes. Essentially, compared to GOA and OCA, more AOCA parishes report “Good” or “Excellent” financial health. On the opposite end, more GOA than OCA or AOCA churches feel that their finances are in “some” or “serious” difficulties.

**Fig 2. Current (2010) Financial Health of GOA, OCA and AOCA Parishes**

“How would you describe your parish’s current financial health?”

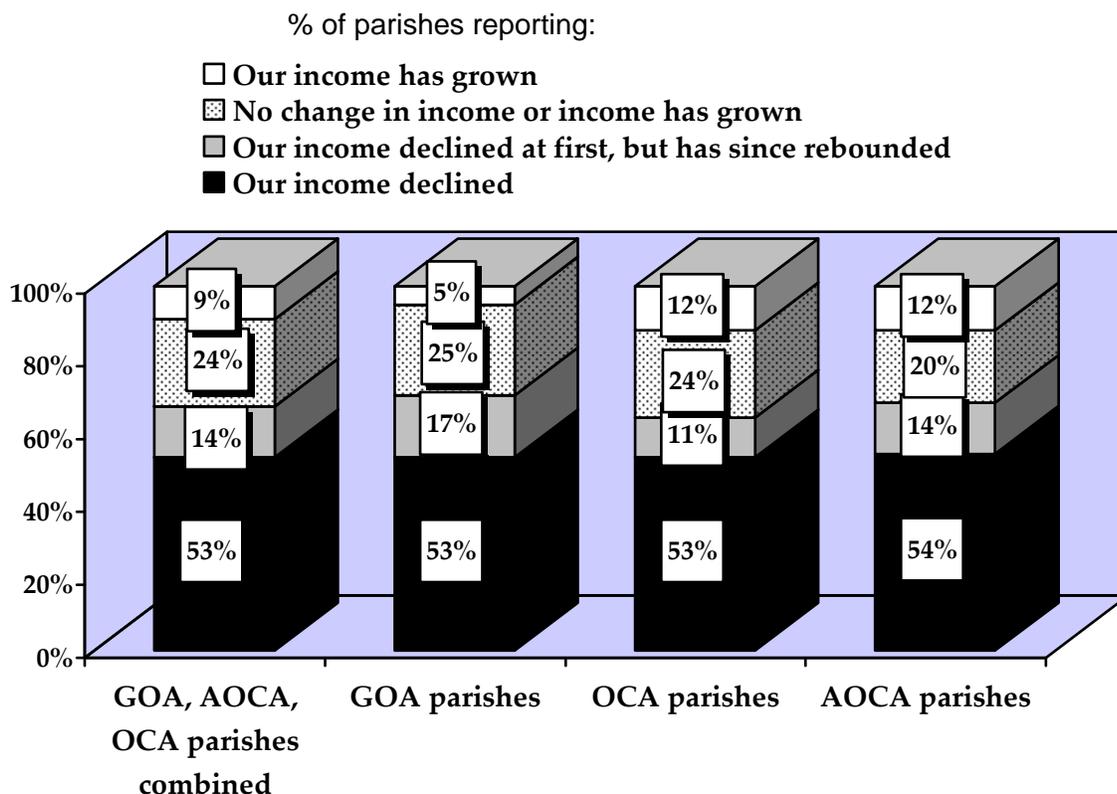


To be sure, there might still be many more GOA than OCA or AOCA parishes running diverse parish-based programs, having bigger paid staff or being involved in ambitious building projects. Yet, the results of 2010 FACT survey tell us that the *feelings* of GOA parishes about their current economies are more negative than this is the case among OCA and AOCA churches. Why GOA parishes feel this way: because their revenues (investments) dropped significantly or because their actual expenses rose or both? Unfortunately, the 2010 FACT survey does not provide answer to this question.

The fact that compared to OCA and AOCA, the GOA churches were hit somewhat harder by the economic recession is consistent with data in Fig. 3. Answering the question about the impact of 2008-2009 crisis on parish's income, fewer GOA than OCA or AOCA parishes reported either "No changes in income" or "Our income has grown:" 30%, 36% and 32% respectively.

Somewhat good news for the GOA is that one-sixth of its parishes (17%) said that they have begun to recover from the recession driven dip in income: "Our income declined at first, but has since rebounded." Further, there are more GOA (17%) than OCA (11%) or AOCA (14%) churches that feel this way.

**Fig 3. How would you assess the impact of the 2008-2009 economic crisis on your parish's income?**



#### IV. THE IMPACT OF 2008-2009 RECESSION ON THE AMERICAN ORTHODOX PARISHES

Conventionally, we can speak of two different "layers" in local church life that were negatively affected by the 2008-2009 recession. First, the "toll" was paid by the parishes as organizations. That is, the economic crisis struck their funds, investments, operations, programs and activities. Second, the recession shook the lives of many church members – the parishioners of GOA, OCA and AOCA parishes – which, in turn, had multiple direct and indirect consequences for the parishes.

To address first issue, the 2010 FACT survey asked: “How would you assess the impact of 2008-2009 economic crisis on your parish’s staff and operations?” The question further specified six areas of parish’s life and with regard to each the parishes can respond: “no impact,” “minor impact,” “moderate impact” and “major impact.”

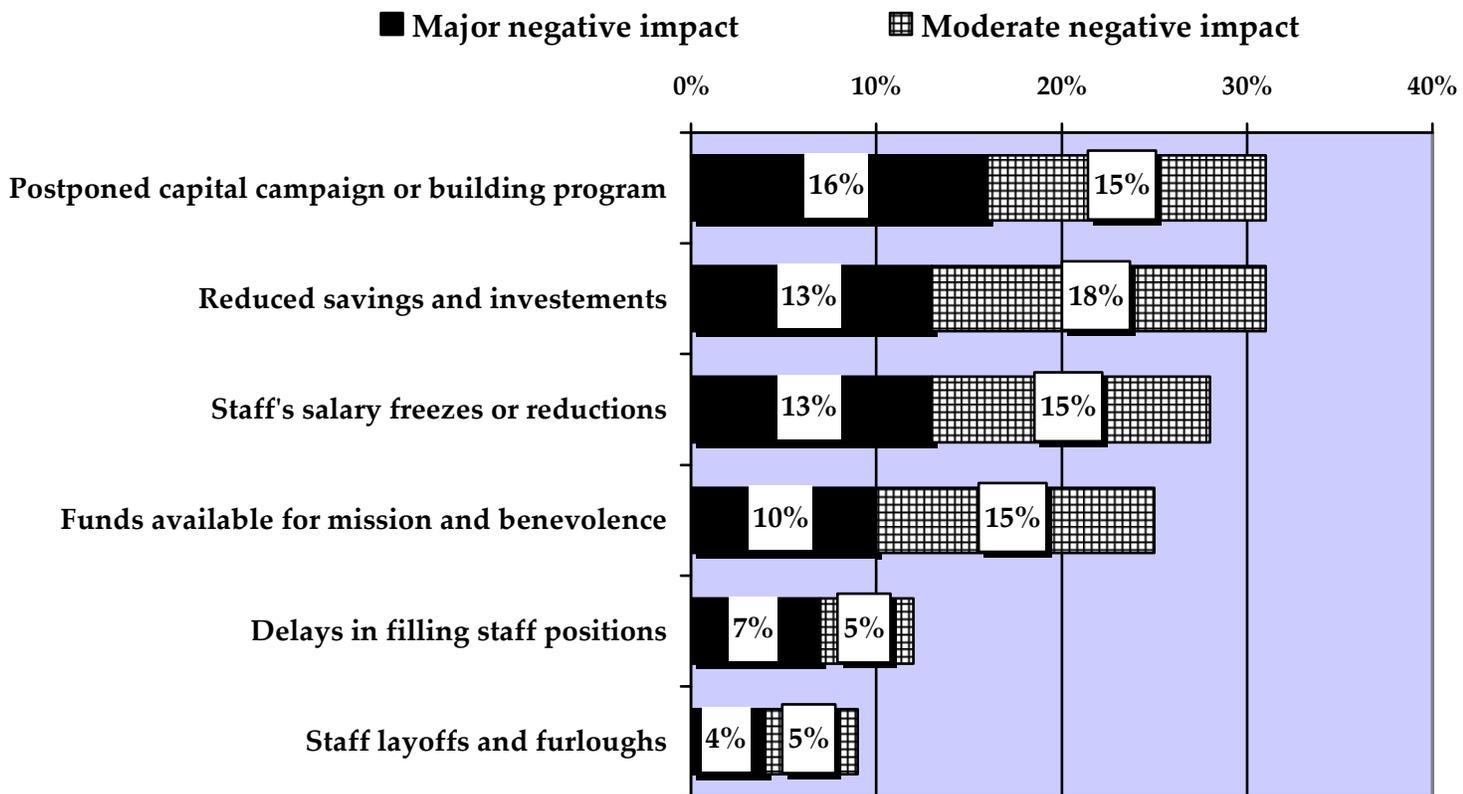
Fig. 4 shows that the greatest losses in local parish life were associated were with postponing capital / building projects, decrease in investments and digging into savings. Indeed, about one in three parishes reported either “moderate” or “major” impact on “postponed capital campaign or building program” and “reduced savings and investments.” About one in four parishes were forced to freeze or reduce staff’s salaries (28%) or to cut on mission and benevolence spending (25%) in order to cope with the crisis.

Luckily, the human “toll” paid by the parishes was relatively small: only one in eleven parishes (9%) reported serious impact on staff’s layoffs and furloughs.

**Fig. 4 Impact of 2008-2009 Recession on Various Areas of Parish Life**

“How would you assess the impact of the 2008-2009 economic crisis on your parish’s staff and operations?”

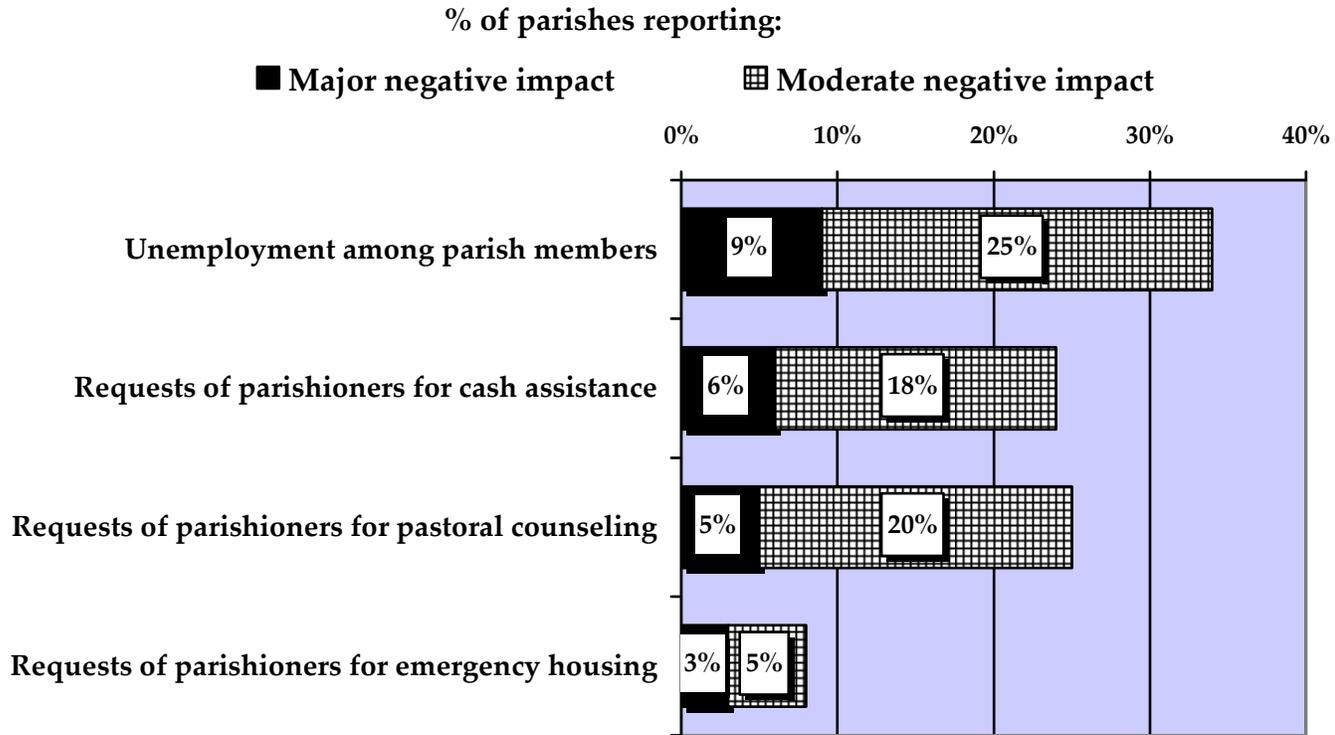
**% of parishes reporting:**



Compared to the relatively light impact of recession on the parish staff members, a much heavier human “toll” was paid by the parishioners. See Fig. 5. More than one third (34%) of the parishes indicated that the recession had a major or moderate impact on unemployment among members. The human distress among parishioners resulted in their turning to parishes as the social safety net. Indeed, one quarter of all parishes experienced significant increase in requests for cash assistance (24%) and for pastoral counseling (25%).

**Fig. 5 Impact of 2008-2009 Recession on Church Members**

“How would you assess the impact of the 2008-2009 economic crisis on the members of your parish?”



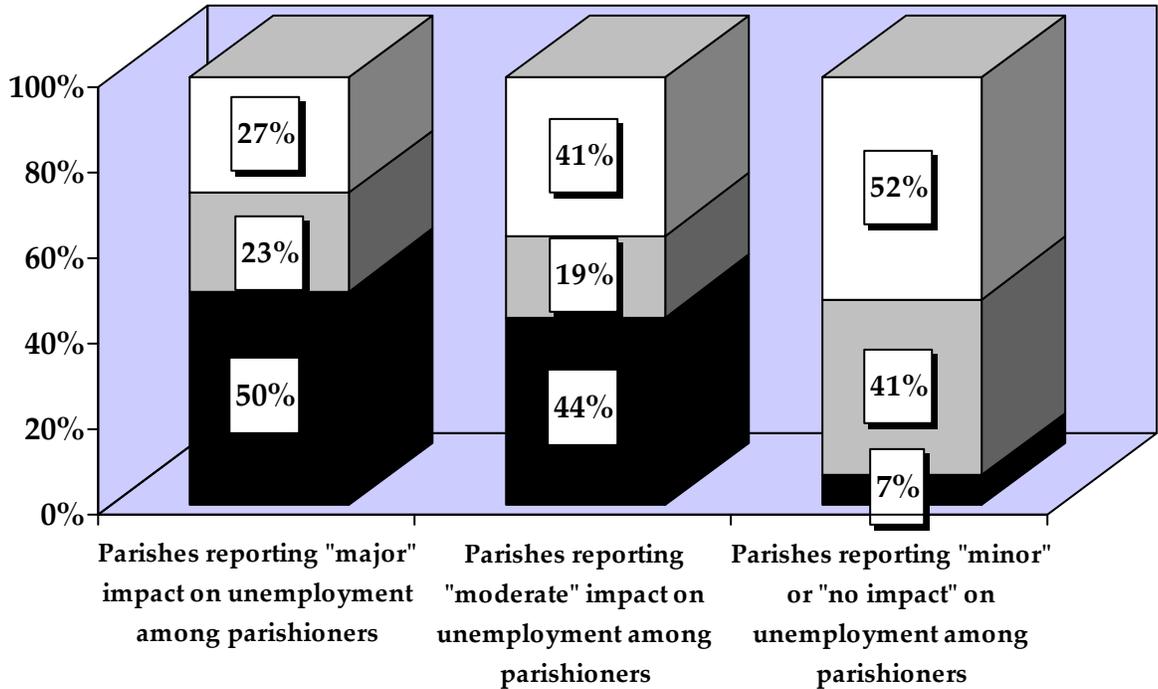
The unemployment among church members had more consequences for their parishes than simply growth in requests for help: it also strongly affected the income of the parishes. One can safely assume that a person who lost his or her job has less disposable income and, therefore, would reduce church giving. The data from 2010 FACT survey tell us that this was exactly the case among US Orthodox Christian Churches.

Fig. 6 shows that half of the parishes reporting “major impact” of recession on unemployment among parishioners also said that their income declined “a lot.” To the contrary, only 7% of the parishes with “minor” or “no impact” on unemployment among parishioners experienced serious decline in their incomes during and after 2008-2009 recession.

**Fig 6. Impact of Unemployment among Members on the Income of their Parishes**

% of parishes reporting that their incomes after 2008-2009 recession:

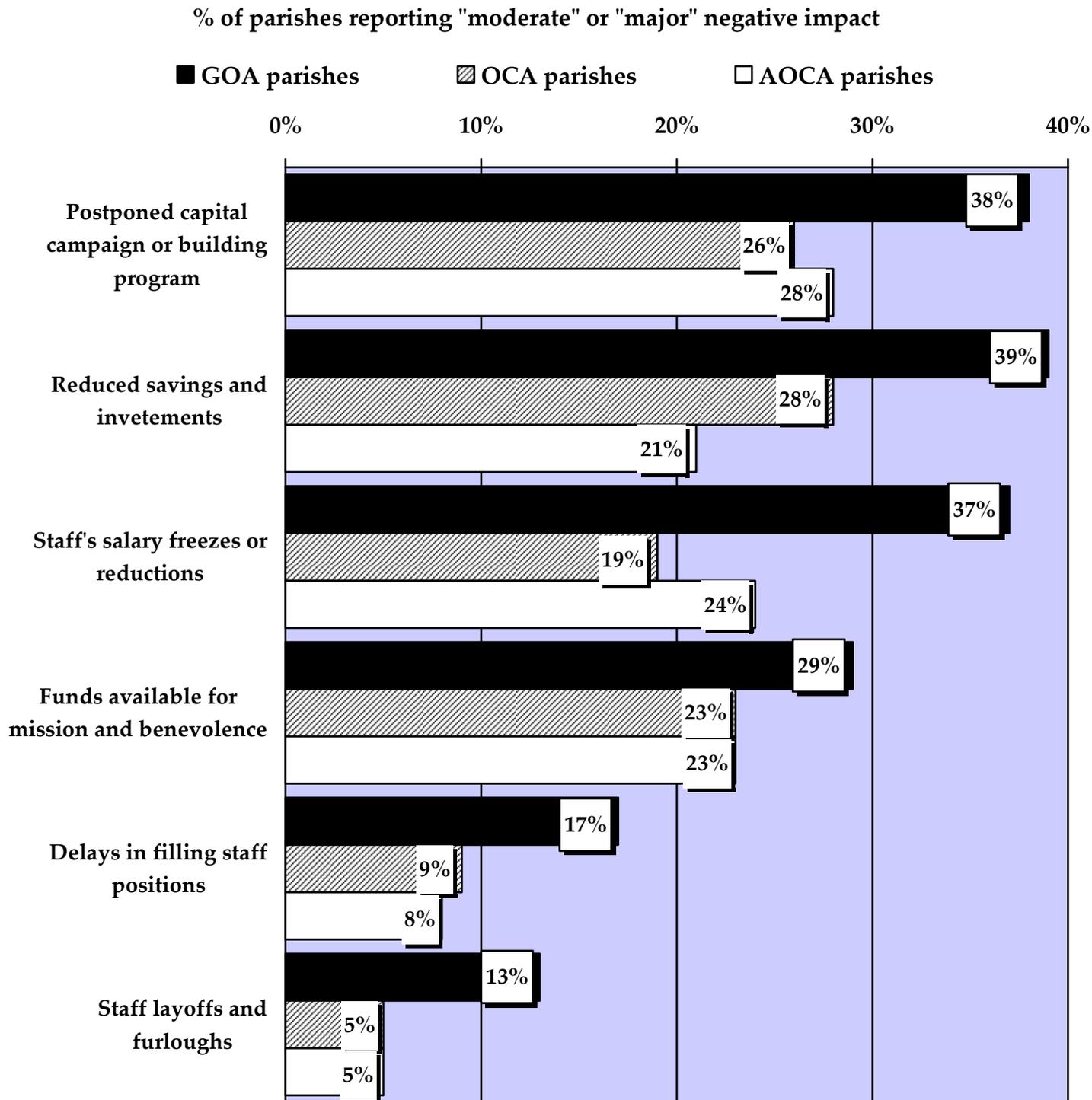
- Income "rebounded" or no change in income or increase in income
- ▒ Our income declined a little
- Our income declined a lot



We noted earlier that after 2008-2009 recession, more GOA than OCA or AOCA churches feel that their finances are in “some” or “serious” difficulties. And this fact is consistent with how GOA, OCA and AOCA parishes described the impact of recession on the various areas of their lives. Fig. 7 on the next page reveals that compared to OCA and AOCA churches, many more GOA parishes were seriously influenced by the crisis in terms of postponing capital campaigns, losing their savings and investments, freezing staff’s salaries, cutting on mission and benevolence programs or laying off employees.

**Fig. 7 Impact of 2008-2009 Recession on GOA, OCA and AOCA Parishes**

“How would you assess the impact of the 2008-2009 economic crisis on your parish’s staff and operations?”



Time and again, the data presented in Fig. 7 do not show actual “wealth” of GOA versus OCA or AOCA parishes before and after the recession in terms of the scale of their building projects or amount of their savings or funds available for various programs or the number of staff members and their salaries. What

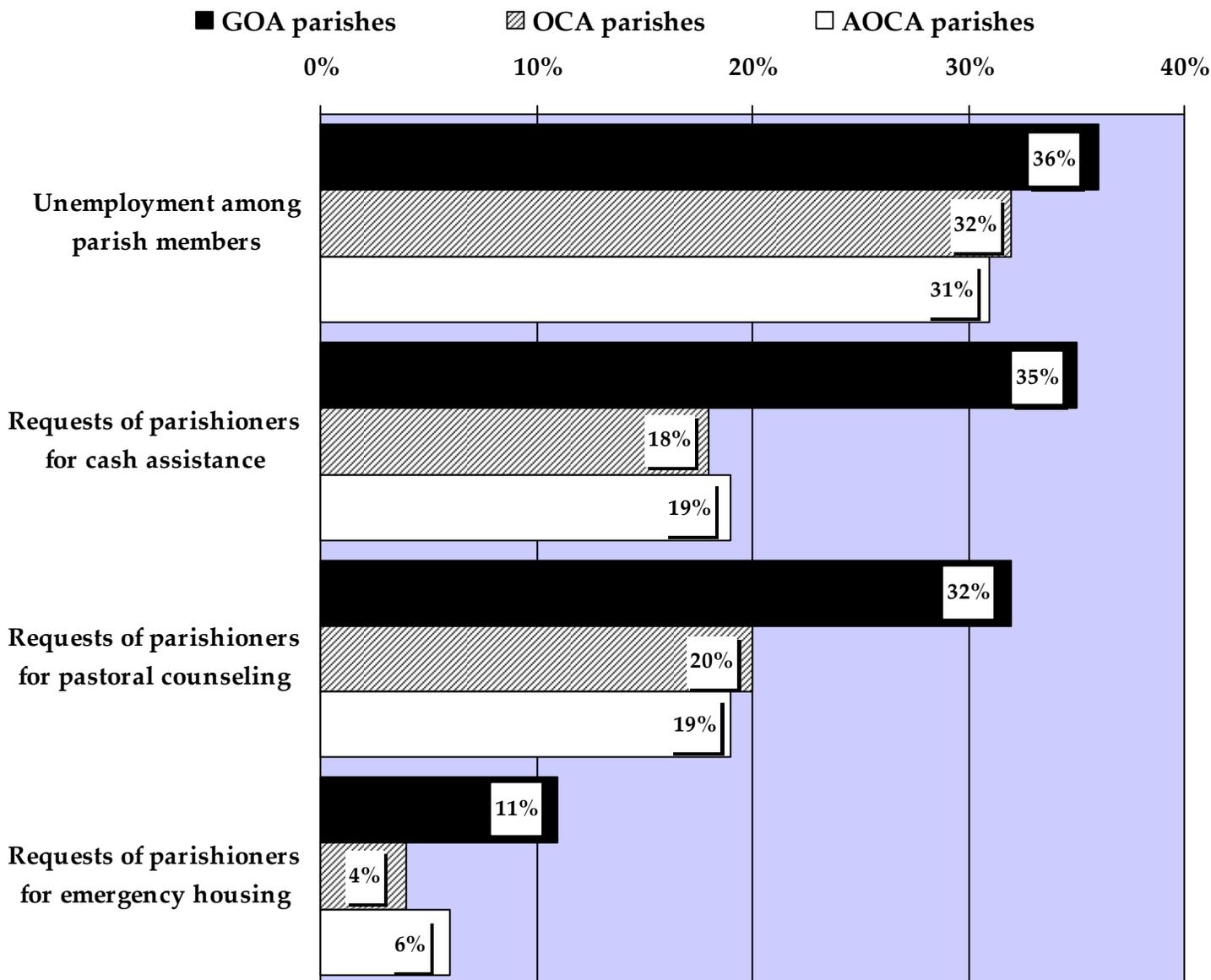
the Fig. 7 indicates, however, is that the negative effect of 2008-2009 recession was *felt* much stronger by the GOA than by the AOCA or OCA churches.

What about GOA, OCA and AOCA parishioners? Was there any significant difference between the members of three major American Orthodox jurisdictions in how and to what extent were they influenced by recession? Fig. 8 shows that the answer to this question is “yes” and “no.”

**Fig. 8 Impact of the 2008-2009 Recession on GOA, OCA and AOCA Church Members**

“How would you assess the impact of the 2008-2009 economic crisis on the members of your parish?”

% of parishes reporting "moderate" or "major" impact



“No,” because nearly the same proportion of GOA (36%), OCA (32%) and AOCA (31%) parishes experienced sharp increase in unemployment among their members.

“Yes,” because many more GOA than OCA or AOCA churches reported significant growth in “requests of parishioners for cash assistance” and in “requests of parishioners for pastoral counseling” and even in “requests of parishioners for emergency housing.” Does that mean that the loss of job had greater economic consequences for GOA than for OCA and AOCA members? Probably, no. Our assumption is that many more GOA than OCA or AOCA members turned to their churches and asked for help, because GOA parishes had more resources (both financial and human) and were able to assist their parishioners in times of troubles. In simple words, the data in Fig. 8 suggests that GOA parishes were better “equipped” to serve as social safety net for their members.

## **V. THE IMPACT OF 2008-2009 RECESSION ON THE LOCAL CHURCH LIFE: ORTHODOX VERSUS ROMAN CATHOLIC, MAINLINE PROTESTANT AND EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT CHURCHES.**

In the national report from the 2010 FACT survey, while discussing the impact of recession on the various American faith groups, Dr. David Roozen, the chair of 2010 FACT study, indicated:<sup>5</sup> “One surprising aspect of the recession’s impact on congregational income is that it affected just about every of congregation *nearly equally* – large and small; north, south, east and west; financially healthy or struggling before the recession”

Does this statement hold true if we compare the impact of recession on four major denominational families: the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Mainline (Oldline) and Evangelical Protestant Churches? The answer to this question is “yes:” indeed, the recession had a nearly equal effect on the change in incomes of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic parishes and the Mainline (Oldline) and Evangelical Protestant congregations. See Fig. 9 on the next page.

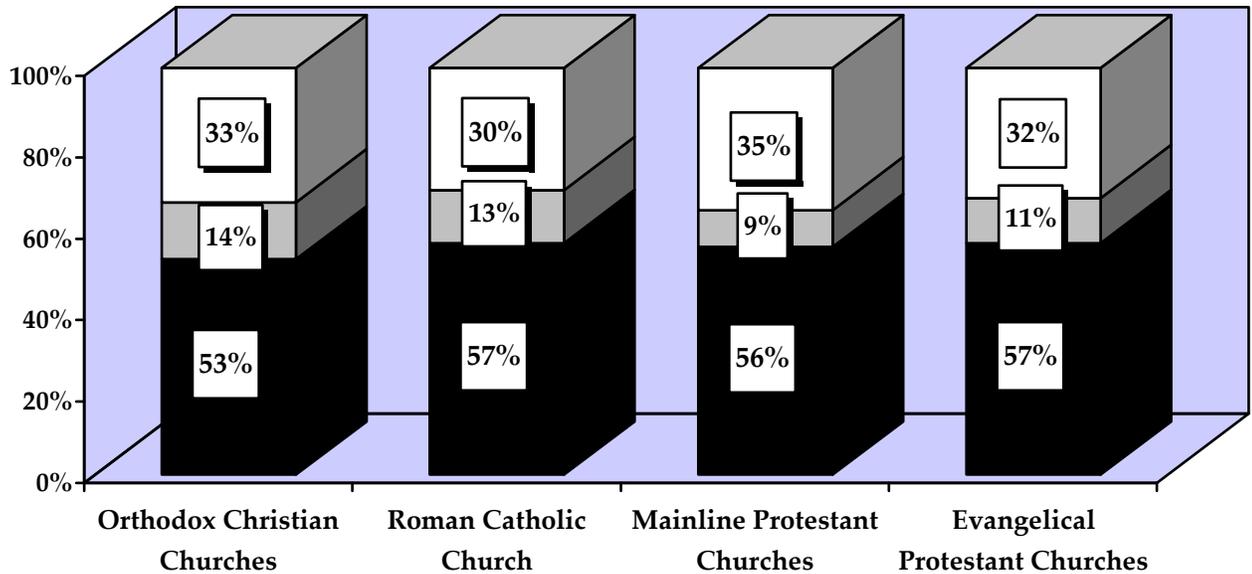
---

<sup>5</sup> This report is available at [www.faithcomunitiestoday.org](http://www.faithcomunitiestoday.org)

**Fig 9. How would you assess the impact of the 2008-2009 economic crisis on your parish's / congregation's income?**

% of parishes / congregations reporting:

- No change in income or income has grown
- ▒ Our income declined at first, but has since rebounded
- Our income declined



A quite similar proportion of American Orthodox and Catholic parishes and Protestant congregations reported that “income has declined” (53% - 57%), “income declined but has since rebounded” (9% - 14%) or “no change in income or income has grown” (30% - 35%).

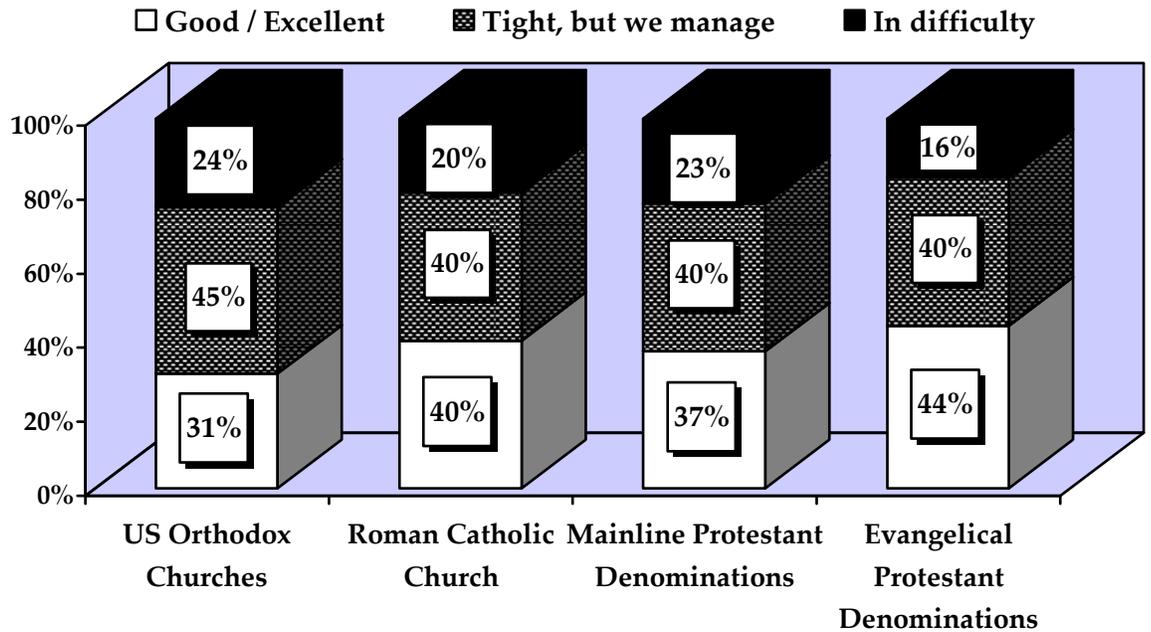
At the same time, the nearly equal recession-driven *changes in income* of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic parishes and Protestant congregations do not mean that their *actual financial health* is the same. Neither is this the case now nor was it a decade ago, in 2000. See Fig. 10A and 10B on the next page.

In essence, Fig. 10A tells us that the current (2010) financial situation of American Orthodox Churches is *worse* than the economic well-being of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches.<sup>6</sup> Only 31% of Orthodox parishes feel that their financial health is “good or excellent” compared to 40% among the Roman Catholic parishes, 37% among Mainline (Oldline) and 44% among Evangelical Protestant congregations.

<sup>6</sup> See also Appendix 1 for data on individual Protestant denominations.

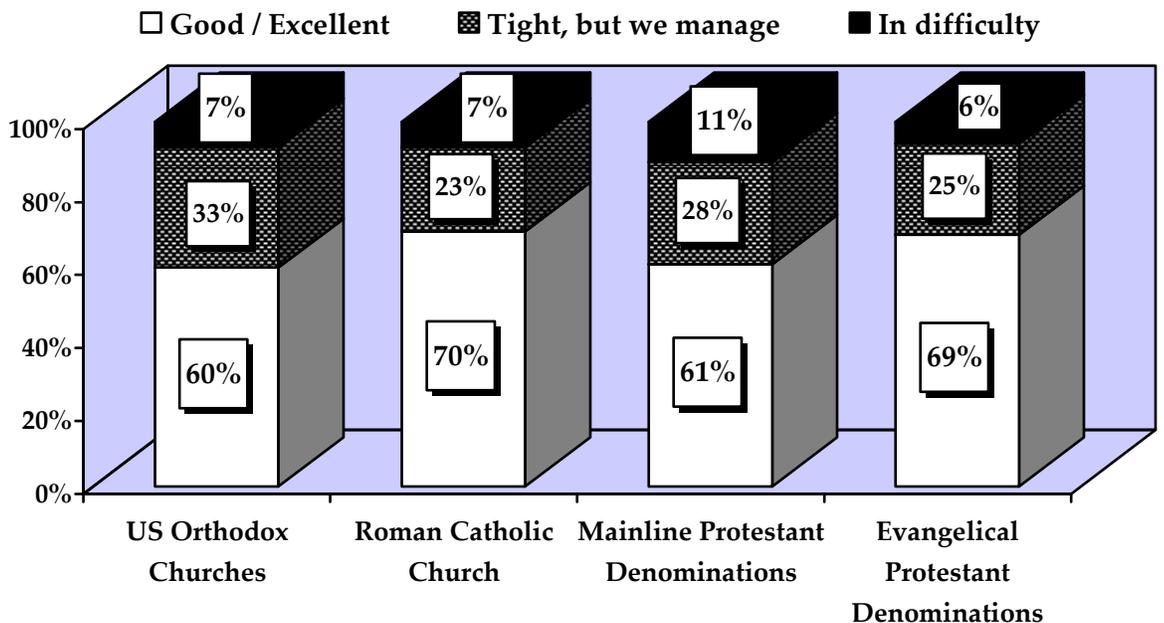
**Fig. 10A Financial Health of US Orthodox Churches in Comparison with Roman Catholic Parishes and Protestant Congregations in 2010**

“How would you describe your parish’s (congregation’s) current financial health?”  
 % of parishes/congregations reporting:



**Fig. 10B Financial Health of US Orthodox Churches in Comparison with Roman Catholic Parishes and Protestant Congregations in 2000<sup>7</sup>**

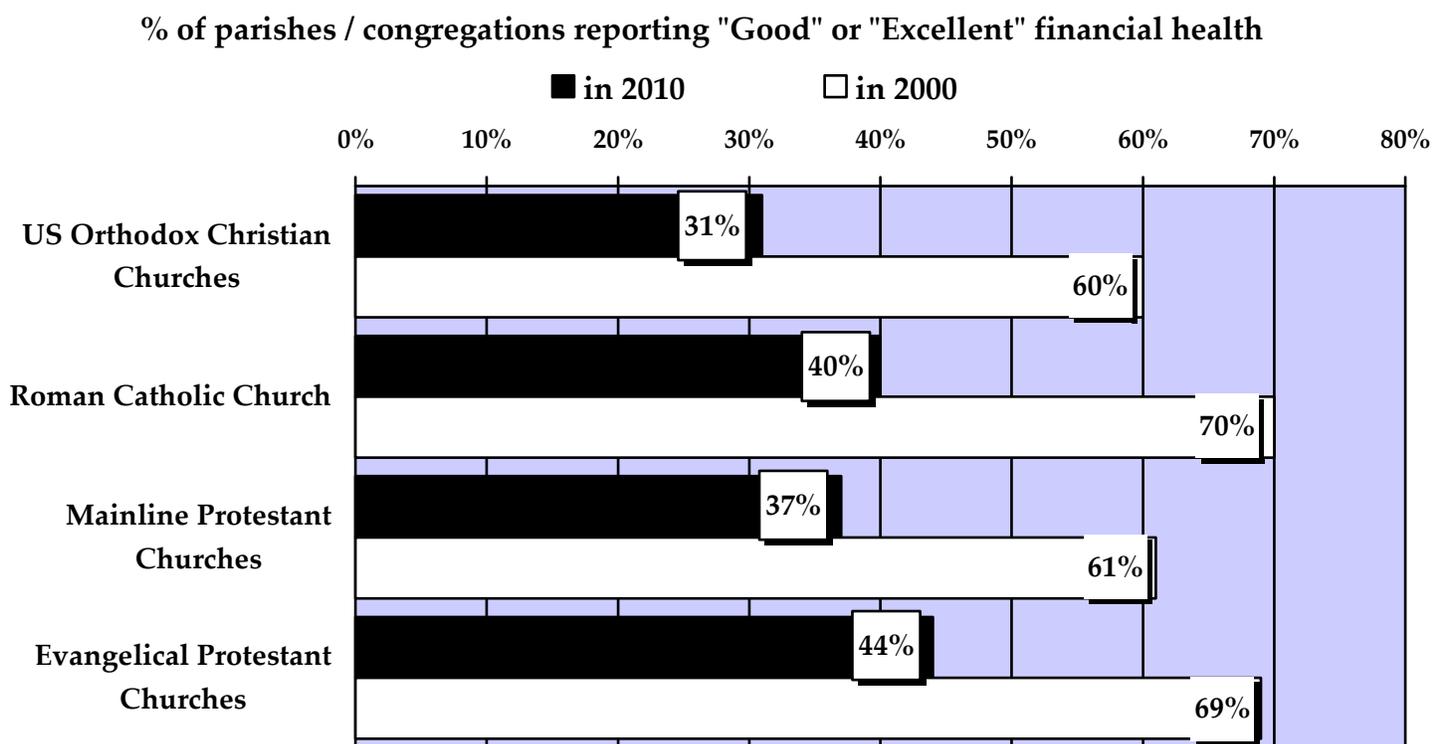
“How would you describe your parish’s (congregation’s) current financial health?”  
 % of parishes/congregations reporting:



<sup>7</sup> Many questions in 2010 FACT survey (including question on financial health) were replicated from the original first 2000 FACT study. This gives us opportunity to compare reported financial health in 2000 and 2010.

Further, the comparison of Fig. 10A and Fig. 10B as well as Fig. 11 reveal that during decade of 2000-2010, the US Orthodox Churches experienced a *steeper decline* in their financial health in comparison with their Roman Catholic and Protestant counterparts. That is, comparing proportion (%) of the parishes and congregations reporting “good or excellent” financial health in 2010 versus 2000, the ratio is 52% for the Orthodox Churches (31% in 2010 versus 60% in 2000), 57% for the Roman Catholic Church, 61% for the Mainline (Oldline) Protestant Churches (37% in 2010 versus 61% in 2000) and 64% for the Evangelical Protestant Churches (44% in 2010 versus 69% in 2000). In simple words, out of parishes and congregations with “good and excellent” financial health in 2000, fewer Orthodox parishes are left in this category in 2010 as compared to the Roman Catholic parishes and Protestant congregations.

**Fig. 11 Change in % of Parishes and Congregations Reporting “Good” or “Excellent” Financial Health in 2000 and 2010**

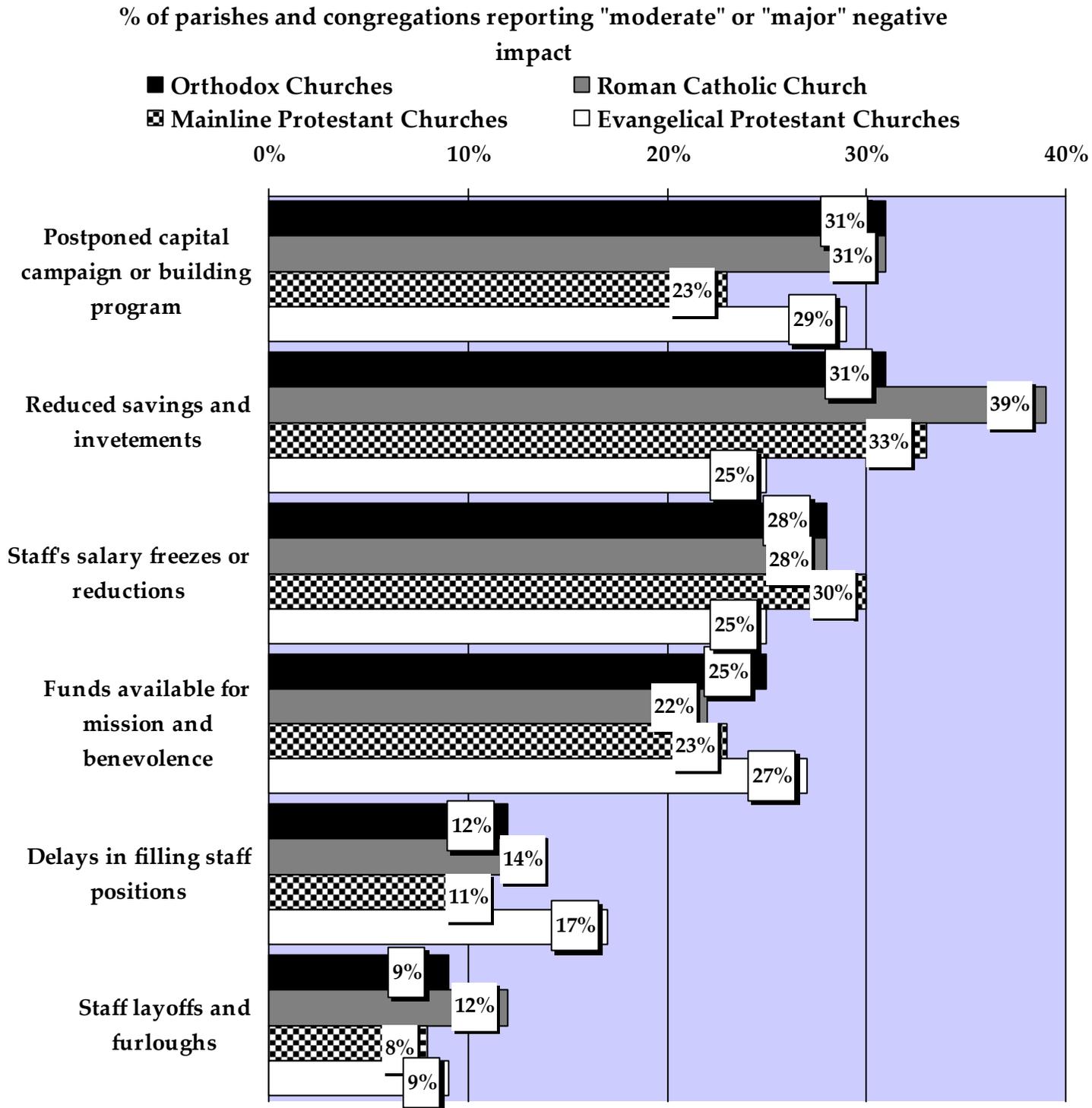


We noted the nearly equal impact of the recession on the income of congregations and parishes across the wide spectrum of American Christianity: for the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Mainline and Evangelical Protestant Churches. This finding is somewhat surprising, because under “normal circumstances” these four groups demonstrate different types of programming, organizational dynamics, approaches to church administration and levels of vitality.

Nevertheless, Fig. 12 shows that also similar proportions of Orthodox and Roman Catholic parishes and Mainline and Evangelical Protestant congregations reported moderate or major negative impact of recession on “staff’s salary freezes and reductions,” “funds available for mission and benevolence,” “delays in filling staff positions” and “staff’s layoffs and furloughs.”

**Fig. 12 Impact of 2008-2009 Recession on Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches**

“How would you assess the impact of the 2008-2009 economic crisis on your parish’s / congregation’s staff and operations?”



The Mainline Protestant Churches were somewhat *less likely* – than all other groups - to postpone capital campaigns or building programs. But this can possibly be explained by the hypothesis that they were originally *less engaged* in such campaigns and programs. It is common knowledge that most Mainline Protestant denominations have experienced a long-term and steady decline in members, thus, there has been no need for ambitious new construction projects.

The only area of church life where the four major Christian groups exhibited significantly different reactions to the 2008-2009 recession was reduction in their savings and investments. The Roman Catholic parishes saw the greatest declines while Evangelical Protestant congregations were affected the least.

While operations, staff and programming of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox parishes, Mainline and Evangelical Protestant congregations were influenced by 2008-2009 recession in a quite similar manner, the “toll” paid by their members was different.

Fig. 13 on the next page tells us that the members of the Roman Catholic parishes and Evangelical Protestant congregations were significantly more affected by unemployment than the Orthodox parishioners and the members of Mainline Protestant Churches.

A possible explanation for the Evangelical congregations paying a heavier toll in member unemployment is that they tend to be located in more rural and less-affluent areas with higher proportion of their members from the lower end of social strata. Similar assumption can be made for the Roman Catholic parishes given changing demography of US Roman Catholicism towards fast growing proportion of new immigrants and ethnic (Hispanic, first of all) minorities – the groups which are more likely to be hit by unemployment in the times of economic hardships.

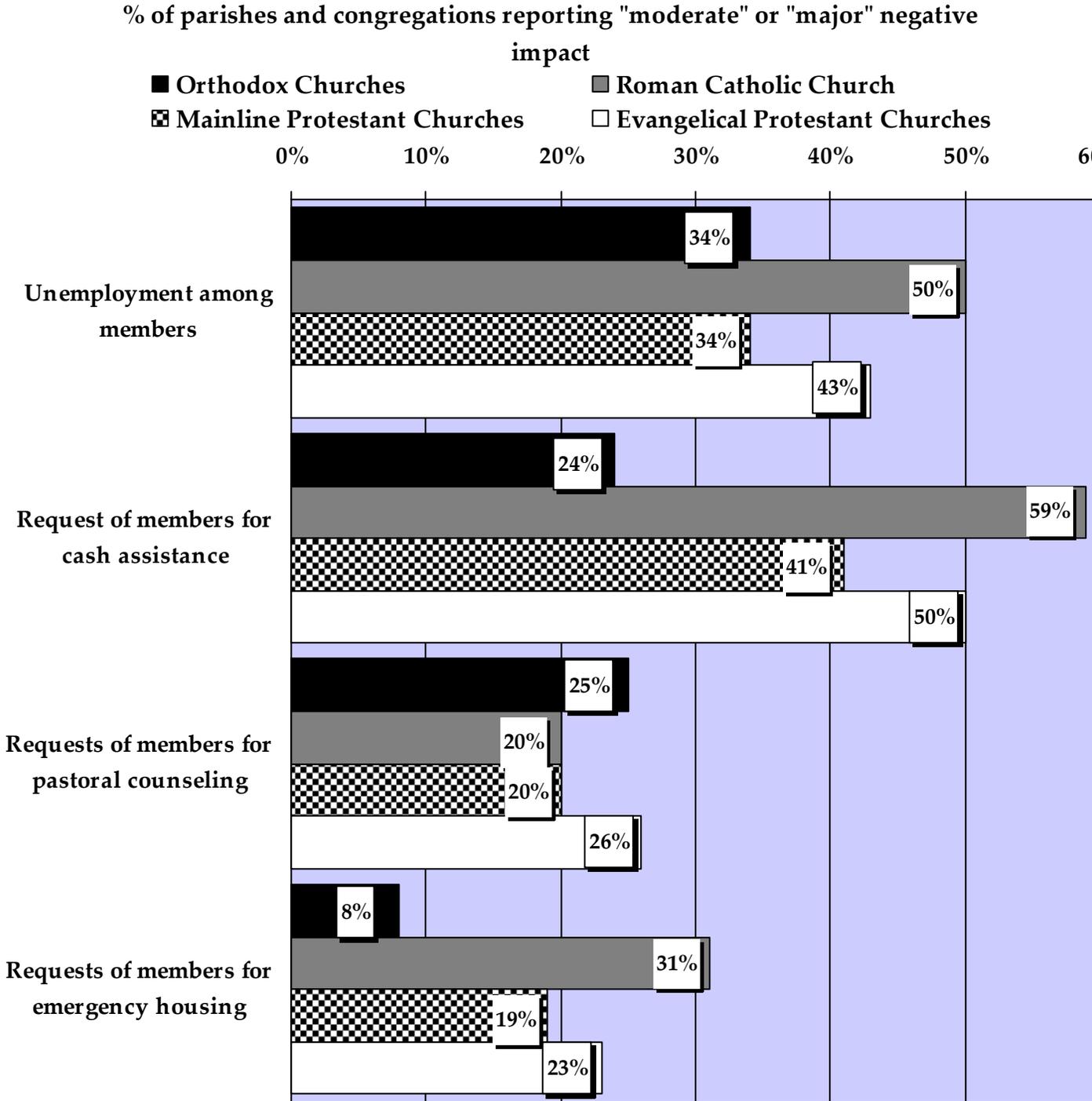
Simultaneously, the higher education and income levels among Orthodox Christians would insulate them from many of the harsher effects of the recession, although not completely.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> The 2009 nationally representative US Religious Landscape Survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found that American Orthodox Christians have significantly higher education and income levels as compared to the Roman Catholics and both Mainline and Evangelical Protestants

**Fig. 13 Impact of 2008-2009 Recession on the Members of Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches**

“How would you assess the impact of the 2008-2009 economic crisis on the members of your parish / congregation?”



Consequently, as would be expected, Fig. 13 further shows that the Evangelical congregations and Roman

Catholic parishes experienced greater increase in requests for social assistance (cash assistance and emergency housing) than did Mainline Protestant congregations and Orthodox parishes.

Still, there is a peculiar gap between Mainline Protestant congregations and Orthodox parishes: many more Mainline congregations than Orthodox parishes reported significant growth in requests for cash assistance (41% versus 24%) and for emergency housing (19% versus 8%). This is somewhat puzzling because there was absolutely no difference between Mainline Protestant congregations and Orthodox parishes in the growth in unemployment among their members. Our hypothesis to explain this gap is two-fold. First, compared to Orthodox Churches, Protestant denominations have more established traditions of social assistance and ministries. Therefore, even if the members of Protestant congregations and Orthodox parishioners found themselves in equally difficult economic situation, the first would be more likely to turn to their churches with requests for the help. Second possible explanation is that many Mainline (Oldline) Protestant congregations have significant savings and investments to draw upon and to use for social assistance for their members.

One more observation from Fig. 13 deserves particular attention. As noted, the Roman Catholic parishes and Evangelical congregations experienced significantly sharper growth in unemployment among members and, therefore, greater increase in requests for social assistance. At the same time, there was not much difference between the four denominational families in requests for pastoral counseling on the part of their members. Between 20% and 26% of parishes and congregations reported “moderate” or “major” impact of recession on requests for pastoral counseling. Our best – and rather optimistic – explanation of this fact is that in the turbulent and stressful period of the recession the members of all four denominational families were equally inclined to look at their pastors as good advisors on their personal problems and issues and that all clergy – the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant – were equally good prepared to meet the aspirations and needs of their flocks.

**Appendix Congregation's Overall Financial Health in 2010 and Impact of 2008-2009 Recession on  
Congregation's Income in various US Christian Churches and Faith Communities  
(based on 2010 national FACT survey, % of congregations in each category)**

Reported Financial Health in 2010			Faith Group	Reported Impact of Recession on Congregation's Income		
In difficulty	Tight but manage	Good or Excellent		Income Declined	Declined then Rebounded	No Change or Grown
<b>24%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>Orthodox Christian Churches</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>33%</b>
29%	42%	29%	Greek Orthodox Archdiocese	53%	17%	30%
23%	47%	30%	Orthodox Church in America	53%	11%	36%
15%	47%	38%	Antiochian Orth. Chr. Archdiocese	54%	14%	32%
<b>20%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>Roman Catholic Church</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>23%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>Mainline (Oldline) Protestant:</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>35%</b>
23%	36%	40%	American Baptist Churches USA	51%	8%	41%
22%	42%	37%	Disciples of Christ	46%	7%	47%
27%	43%	30%	Episcopal Church	62%	11%	27%
28%	39%	33%	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	57%	9%	34%
10%	39%	52%	Mennonite Church USA	50%	10%	40%
24%	47%	30%	Presbyterian Church (USA)	59%	10%	31%
18%	39%	43%	Reformed Church in America	46%	11%	43%
22%	47%	31%	Unitarian Universalist Association	56%	9%	34%
29%	46%	25%	United Church of Christ	60%	10%	30%
21%	38%	41%	United Methodist Church	54%	9%	37%
<b>16%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>Evangelical Protestant Churches:</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>32%</b>
16%	43%	40%	Assemblies of God	58%	11%	31%
25%	42%	33%	Christian Reformed Church	62%	8%	29%
16%	35%	49%	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	46%	7%	47%
23%	41%	36%	Church of the Nazarene	63%	8%	29%
2%	47%	52%	Churches of Christ	54%	5%	40%
21%	47%	32%	Historically Black Denominations	60%	14%	27%
25%	41%	34%	Lutheran Church Missouri Synod	51%	10%	39%
10%	40%	50%	Nondenominational Churches	54%	10%	37%
17%	32%	51%	Seventh Day Adventist Church	57%	8%	35%

<b>Reported Financial Health in 2010</b>			<b>Faith Group</b>	<b>Reported Impact of Recession on Congregation's Income</b>		
In difficulty	Tight but manage	Good or Excellent		Income Declined	Declined then Rebounded	No Change or Grown
			<b>Non-Christian Groups:</b>			
12%	32%	56%	Baha'is of the United States	53%	9%	38%
48%	35%	17%	Conservative Judaism	83%	7%	10%
40%	43%	17%	Reformed Judaism	78%	9%	13%
21%	27%	52%	Muslim Communities	65%	11%	24%