Our Faith Our Future - Individual Feedback Report

Executive Summary

Of the n=736 survey respondents, 31% were *Inspired* and 24% were *Very Inspired* by Bishop Paul's vision for vibrant parishes in the diocese. However, 20% were *Uninspired*. This can be interpreted as an indication that they do not support the proposal. The survey results provide the following insights:

- Respondents who do not support the proposal were more likely to think that their current parish is meeting their needs, such as providing a sense of community.

- Respondents who do not support the Bishop's proposal were less likely to think that it will help parishes become more vibrant, help develop better leadership structures, and it will mean less duplication of resources and buildings.

- Respondents who do not support the proposal were more likely to think that they would not be able to attend services as they want or need.
  - The most frequently mentioned reasons why respondents would not be able to attend services were related to distance and transport issues.

- Respondents who do not support the proposal were less likely to think that their current parish has been grouped with the right parishes.
  - Almost half of those who did not think that the groupings were correct indicated that they did not want their parish to be merged with any other parishes, whereas only one-third actually suggested a new combination of parishes.
  - On the other hand, the majority of respondents who agreed with the parish groupings also agreed that the proposed main site was the best location for the new parish.

- When asked if they had any concerns about amalgamating parishes, respondents frequently indicated that they were scared of change, unsure if the facilities would cope, and worried the new parishes would be too big. On the other hand, other respondents stated that they had no concerns, or that they thought the change is needed/necessary.

- When presented with a list and asked which elements are important for creating vibrant parish life, overall all elements were viewed as important. However, respondents who did not support the proposal were less likely to think that the elements were important.

- The demographic characteristics of the sample are known. However, due to the small size of some of the sub-samples it is not possible to determine if there are statistically significant differences between the opinions of the demographic groups.

1. Introduction

Bishop Paul desires that every parish in the diocese is vibrant. As part of his vision, he is proposing a reduction of parishes in Christchurch city from 12 to 5. To assist Bishop Paul and his advisers in planning for the future of the diocese, the 'Our Faith, Our Future' team conducted several surveys to collect feedback from individuals, community groups, and parishes. This report will focus on the results to the Individual Feedback Survey.

The Individual Feedback Survey was conducted between 22 June and 31 August 2019. All parishioners in the diocese were eligible to take part. The survey was voluntary and those wishing to opt in could complete the anonymous survey on the diocese's website or complete and return a paper copy of the questionnaire. In total, 736 valid responses were recorded.

Questionnaire design and data collection was coordinated and completed by the Our Faith Our Future team (Mike Stopforth, Fr John Adams, Jason McTague, Matt O'Connell and Vicki Surrey). Data analysis and reporting was completed by an independent researcher (James Maguire). The list below provides an overview of the sections in this report:

2. Opinions about the proposed plan

It is assumed that all respondents had read Bishop Paul's proposal or had seen his presentation. So respondents were first asked to rate *how they feel about Bishop Paul's vision for vibrant parishes in the diocese*. The options were *Uninspired*, *Neutral*, *Inspired*, or *Very Inspired*. Figure 1 shows that slightly more respondents feel Inspired or Very Inspired, compared with those who feel Neutral or Uninspired. The figure also shows that 4% of respondents did not answer this question, their opinion is unknown/missing.
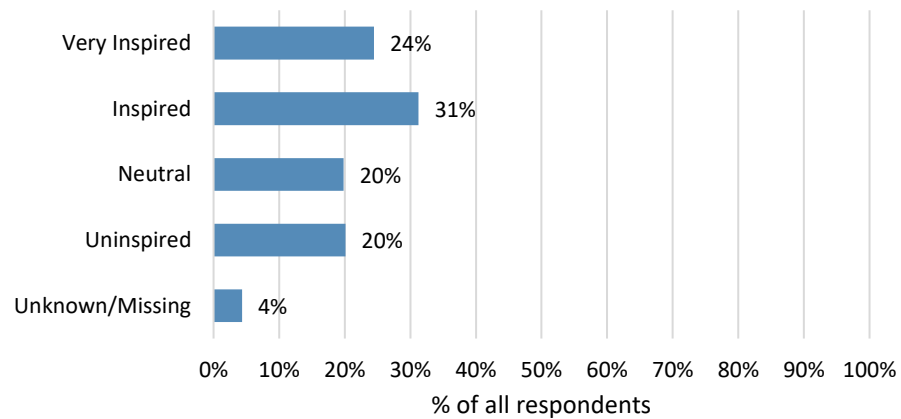

Figure 1. How inspired respondents are with Bishop Paul's vision (n=736)

This question can be interpreted as a proxy measure of support for the proposal. So, the rest of this report will present the overall results to each question, as well as compare the results for those who are Uninspired, Neutral, Inspired, or Very Inspired with the Bishop's proposal.

2.1. Opinions of current parish

Respondents were asked *if they consider their existing parish to be a vibrant parish*. Figure 2 shows that 18% of all respondents thought their parish is *Extremely vibrant*, 59% thought it was *Vibrant*, and 21% thought it was *Not vibrant*.
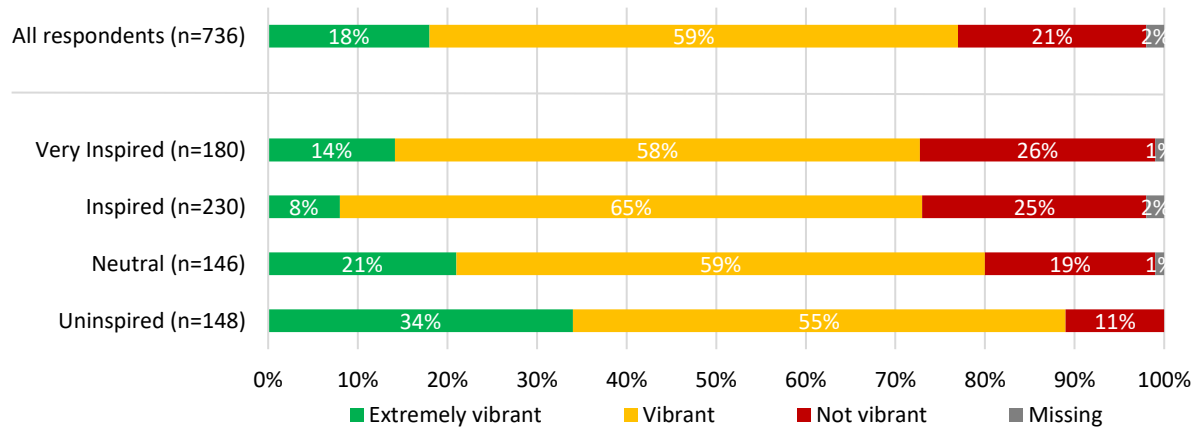

Figure 2. Rating of how vibrant their existing parish is, by inspiration with the Bishop's proposal

Figure 2 also shows that respondents who were Very inspired or Inspired by the Bishop's proposal were significantly more likely to state that their existing parish is Not vibrant (26% and 25%, respectively), compared with respondents who were Uninspired by the proposal (11%).

Conversely, respondents who were Uninspired by the proposal were significantly more likely to state that their existing parish is Extremely vibrant (34%), compared with those who were Very inspired or Inspired by the proposal (14% and 8%, respectively).

Respondents were asked *if they consider their existing parish to be meeting their needs*. Figure 3 shows that 40% of all respondents thought their parish *Meets all of their needs*, 55% thought it *Meets some of their needs*, and 3% thought it *Does not meet any of their needs*.
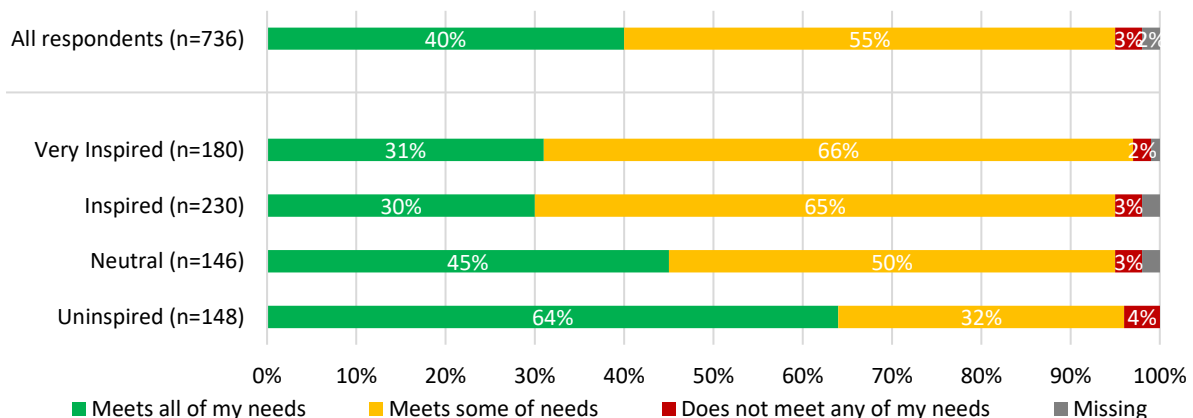

Figure 3. Whether existing parish meets their needs, by inspiration with the Bishop's proposal

Figure 3 also shows that respondents who were Uninspired by the proposal were significantly more likely to state that their existing parish Meets all of their needs (64%), compared with those who were Very inspired or Inspired by the proposal (31% and 30%, respectively).

In summary, respondents who do not support the proposal were more likely to think that their current parish is meeting their needs. The following sub-sections provide detail around the aspects of parish life that are, and are not, meeting the needs of the respondents.

Aspects of parish life that are meeting needs

All respondents were asked to specify *what aspects of parish life are meeting their needs at this time.* In total, n=578 respondents chose to leave a comment, the remainder did not know or did not answer the question. Figure 4 provides a summary of the frequently mentioned themes.
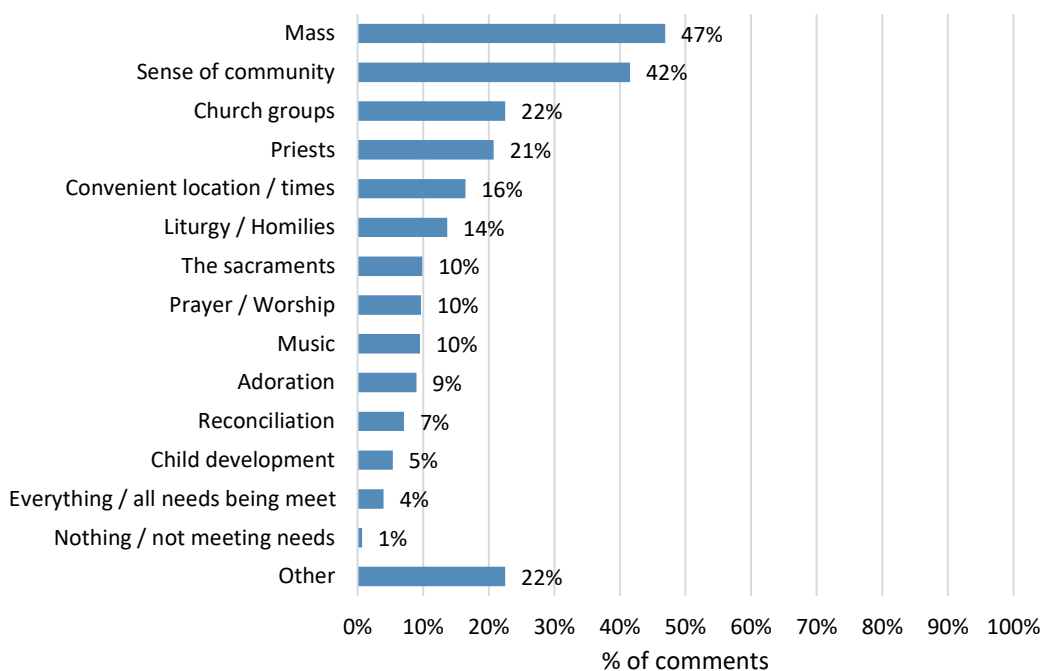

Figure 4. Aspects of parish life that are meeting needs (n=578*)
*Sub-sample based on those respondents who provided a valid comment.
Percentages do not sum to 100% because each comment could relate to multiple themes.

"Church groups" refers to Service groups, Pastoral Care, Passionist family groups, SVDP, prayer groups, Parish Council, Evangelisation, men's groups, faith sharing, ethnic groups etc.
"Child development" refers to Children's liturgy, Sacramental Programmes, Youth group etc.
"Other" refers to comments that did not fit into any of the other categories.

Aspects of parish life that are <u>not</u> meeting needs

All respondents were also asked to specify *whether any of their needs are not being meet.* In total, n=419 respondents chose to leave a comment, the remainder did not know or did not answer the question. Figure 5 provides a summary of the frequently mentioned themes.
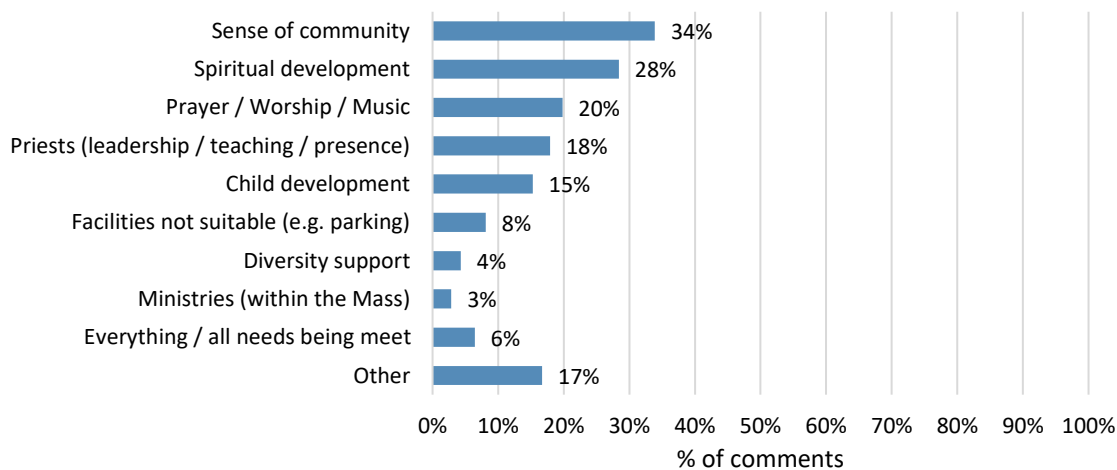

Figure 5. Aspects of parish life that are <u>not</u> meeting needs (n=419*)
*Sub-sample based on those respondents who provided a valid comment.
Percentages do not sum to 100% because each comment could relate to multiple themes.

2.2. Opinions of proposed parish

Respondents were reminded that Bishop Paul is proposing a reduction of parishes in Christchurch city from 12 to 5. They were then asked to indicate how much they agree or disagree with three statements:

- This will help parishes to become more vibrant
- This will help develop better leadership structures
- This will mean less duplication of resources and buildings

Figure 6 shows that 42% of all respondents *Agreed* or *Strongly agreed* with the statement *"This will help parishes to become more vibrant"*. On the other hand, 36% stated that they *Disagreed* or *Strongly disagreed* with this statement.
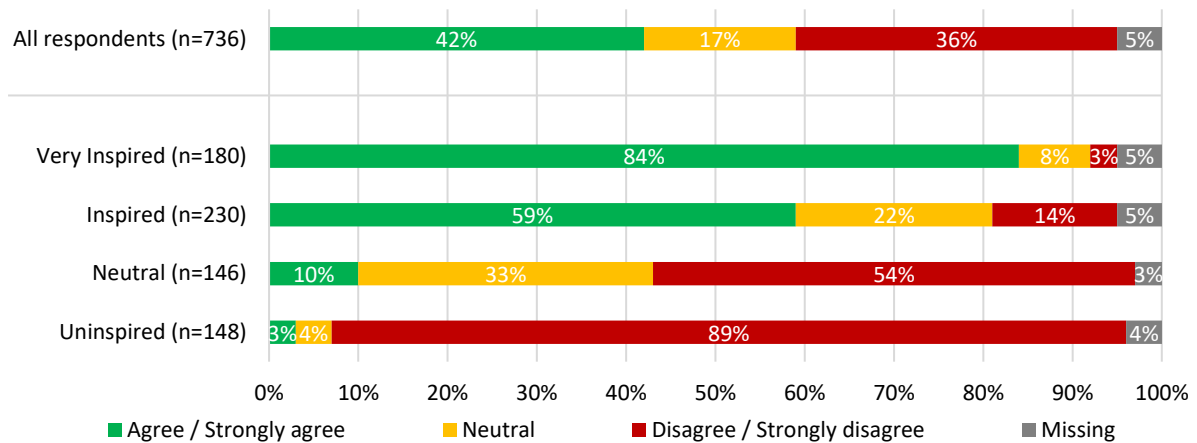

Figure 6. Agreement with the statement "This will help parishes to become more vibrant", by inspiration with the Bishop's proposal

Figure 7 shows that 45% of all respondents *Agreed* or *Strongly agreed* with the statement *"This will help develop better leadership structures"*. On the other hand, 28% *Disagreed* or *Strongly disagreed* with this statement.
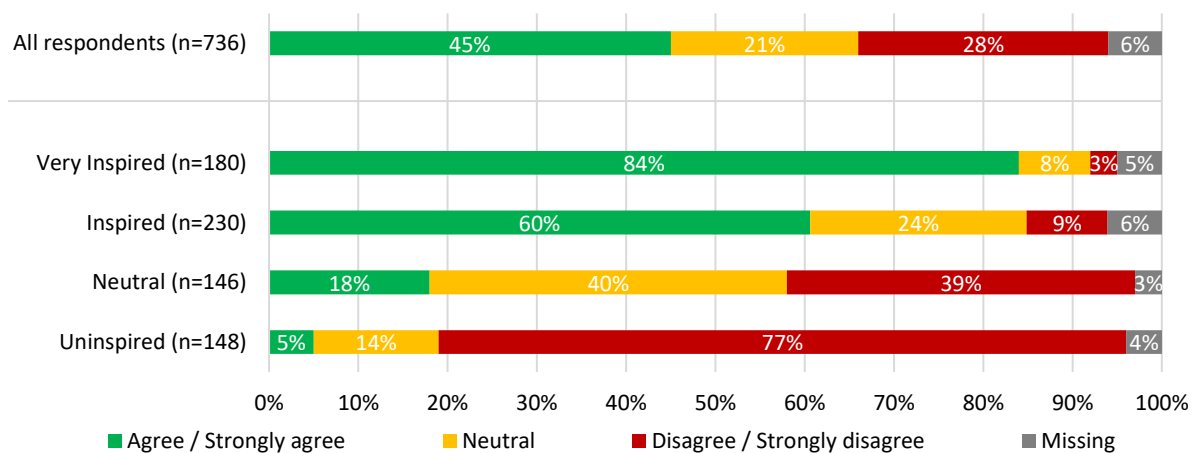

Figure 7. Agreement with the statement "This will help develop better leadership structures", by inspiration with the Bishop's proposal

Figure 8 shows that 61% of all respondents *Agreed* or *Strongly agreed* with the statement *"This will mean less duplication of resources and buildings"*. On the other hand, 17% *Disagreed* or *Strongly disagreed* with this statement.
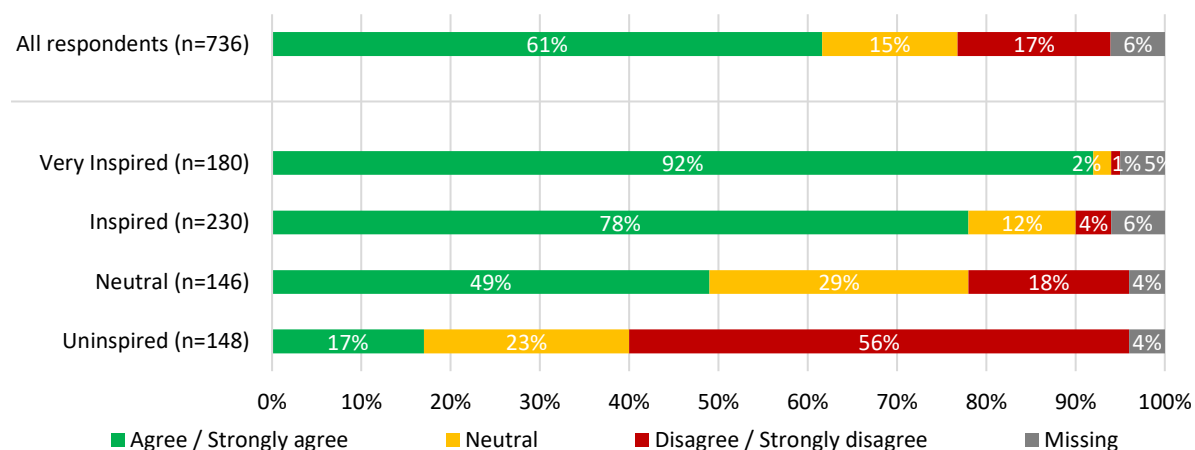

Figure 8. Agreement with the statement "This will mean less duplication of resources and buildings", by inspiration with the Bishop's proposal

The levels of agreement with these statements are clearly correlated with the level of inspiration with the Bishop's proposal. For example, respondents who were Very inspired by the proposal were <u>significantly more likely</u> than those who were Uninspired by the proposal to Agree / Strongly agree that:

- *This will help parishes to become more vibrant* (84%, compared with 3%; Figure 6)
- *This will help develop better leadership structures* (84%, compared with 5%; Figure 7)
- *This will mean less duplication of resources and buildings* (92%, compared with 17%; Figure 8)

<u>In summary</u>, respondents who do not support the Bishop's proposal were less likely to think that it will help parishes become more vibrant, help develop better leadership structures, and it will mean less duplication of resources and buildings. Additional feedback in relation to these statements is summarised on the next page.

When asked if they had any comments about these three statements, n=463 respondents chose to provide additional feedback. Their comments are summarised in Figure 9.
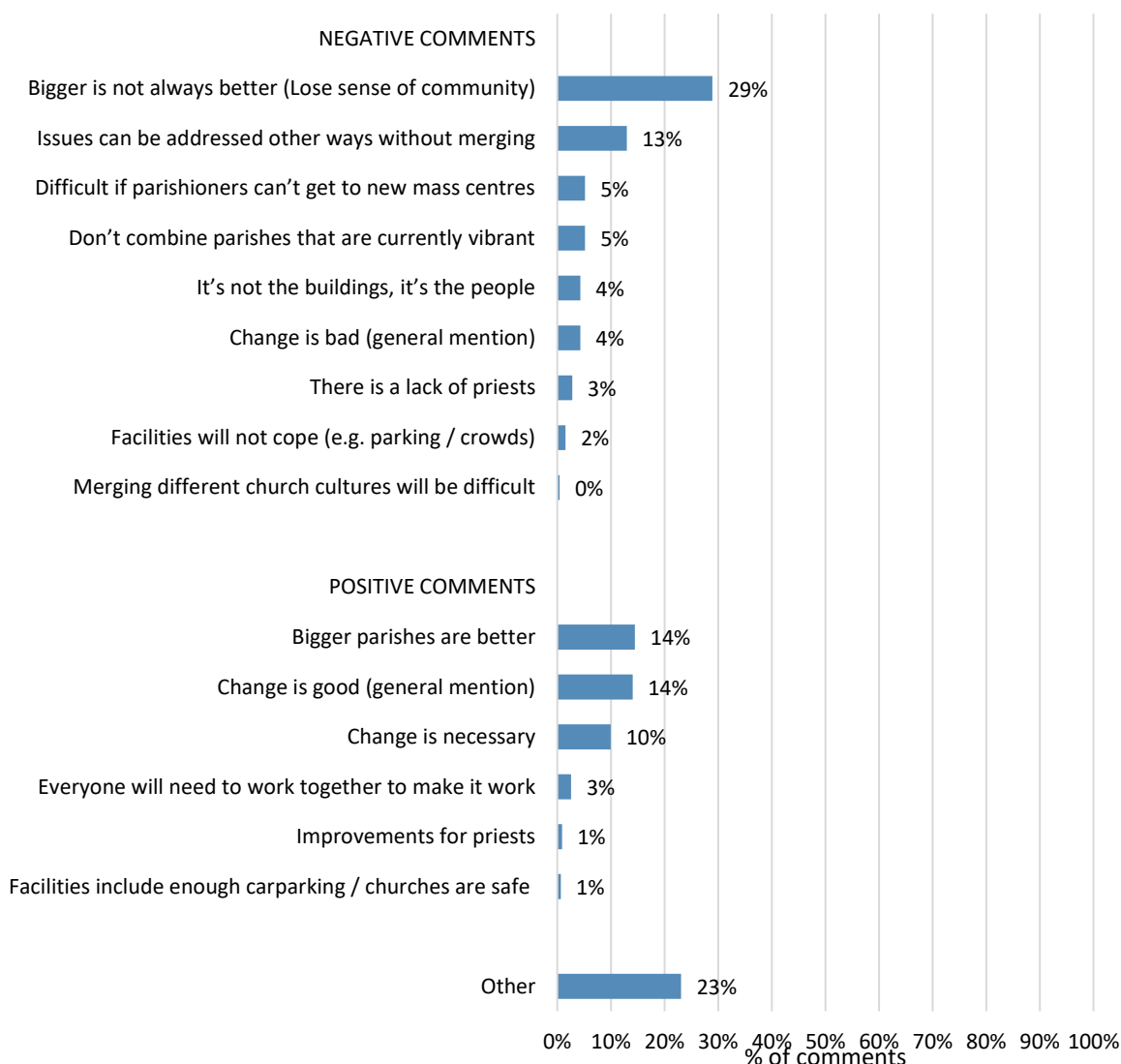

Figure 9. Comments related to statements about merging parishes (n=463*)
*Sub-sample based on those respondents who provided a valid comment.
Percentages do not sum to 100% because each comment could relate to multiple themes.

Comments about bigger parishes being better referred to improved leadership structures, more enthusiasm, more vibrant, more resources, and less duplication of resources and buildings. Positive comments about priests referred to reduces overseas priests' costs, encourages men to the priesthood, and fellowship with other priests.

2.3. Accessibility of proposed parish

Respondents were asked, *if Bishop Paul's proposed plan were to go ahead, where they think they would most likely attend* Mass. The results are presented in Figure 10.
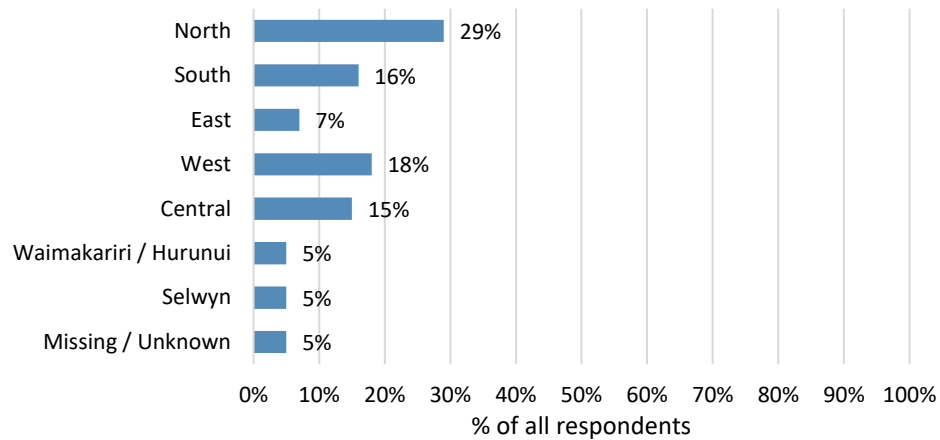

Figure 10. Where respondents think they would most likely attend Mass if the Bishop's proposal were to go ahead (n=736)

Respondents were asked, *if Bishop Paul's proposed plan were to go ahead, would they still be able to attend Mass and Reconciliation as they want or need.* Overall, 75% said *Yes*, while 20% said *No* (Figure 11).
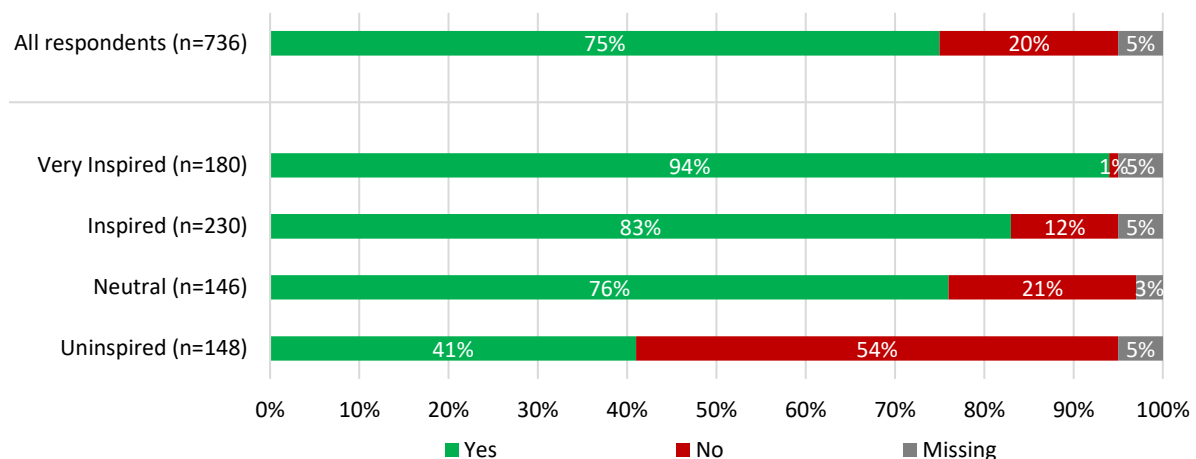
Figure 11. Whether respondents would still be able to attend Mass and Reconciliation as they want or need, by inspiration with the Bishop's proposal

Figure 11 also shows that respondents who were Very inspired or Inspired by the Bishop's proposal were <u>significantly more likely</u> to state that they would still be able to attend Mass and Reconciliation as they want or need (94% and 83%, respectively), compared with respondents who were Uninspired by the proposal (41%).

There was also no significant difference in whether the respondents from each proposed new parish thought that they would be able to attend Mass and Reconciliation as they want or need.

The n=147 respondents who stated that they would not be able to attend Mass and Reconciliation as they want or need were then asked to explain why. Of these, n=133 provided a valid response. Their comments are summarised in Figure 12.
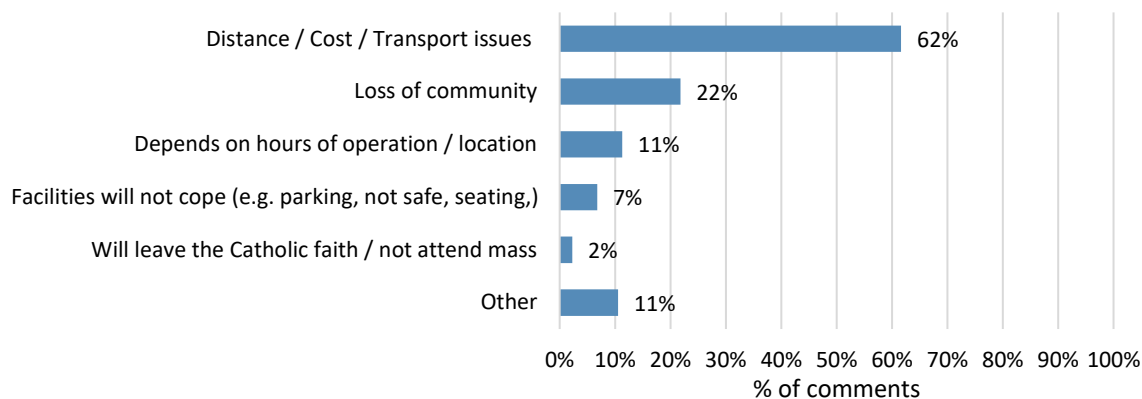

Figure 12. Reasons why respondents will not be able to attend services (n=133*)
*Sub-sample based on those respondents who provided a valid comment.
Percentages do not sum to 100% because each comment could relate to multiple themes.

Figure 12 shows that the most frequently mentioned theme related to distance and transport issues (e.g. no public transport, too far to drive / walk). The figure also shows that a small proportion of these respondents stated that they would leave the Catholic faith if the parishes were merged.

In summary, respondents who did not support the proposal were more likely to think that they would not be able to attend services as they want or need. In addition, the most frequently mentioned reasons why respondents would not be able to attend services were related to distance and transport issues.

2.4. Proposed grouping of parishes

Respondents were asked *if they believe their existing parish has been grouped with the right parishes*. Figure 13 shows that 52% of all respondents believe the grouping is correct, while 14% believe the grouping is incorrect. A further 26% were unsure, and 8% did not answer the question.
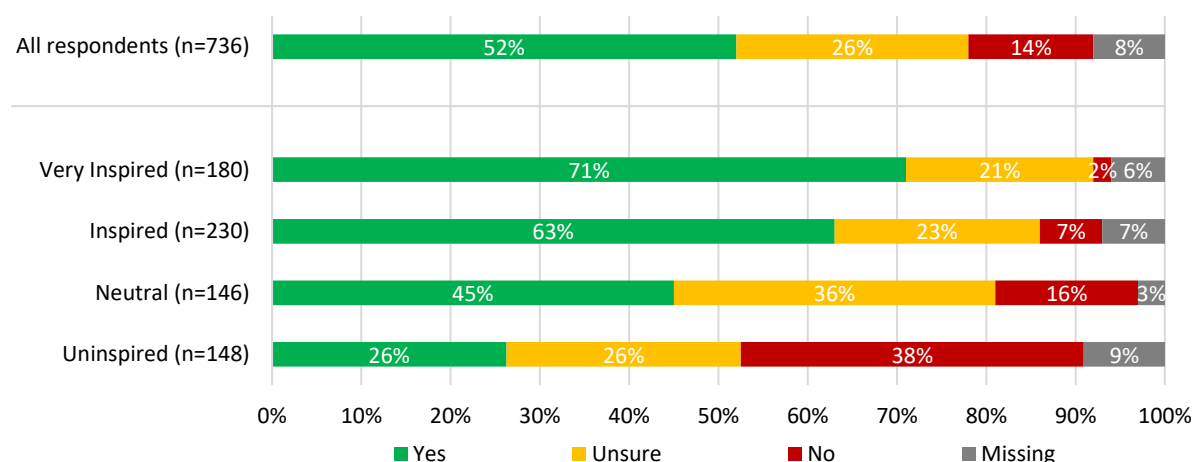

Figure 13. Whether respondents believe their existing parish has been grouped with the right parishes, by inspiration with the Bishop's proposal

Figure 13 also shows that respondents who were Very inspired or Inspired by the Bishop's proposal were significantly more likely to believe their existing parish has been grouped with the right parishes (71% and 63%, respectively), compared with respondents who were Uninspired by the proposal (26%).

Conversely, respondents who were Uninspired by the proposal were significantly more likely to believe their existing parish has not been grouped with the right parishes (38%), compared with those who were Very inspired or Inspired by the proposal (2% and 7%, respectively).

Respondents who did not believe their existing parish has been grouped with the right parishes
This subset of respondents were asked *which parishes they think their parish should be grouped with*. Their answers are summarised in Figure 14.
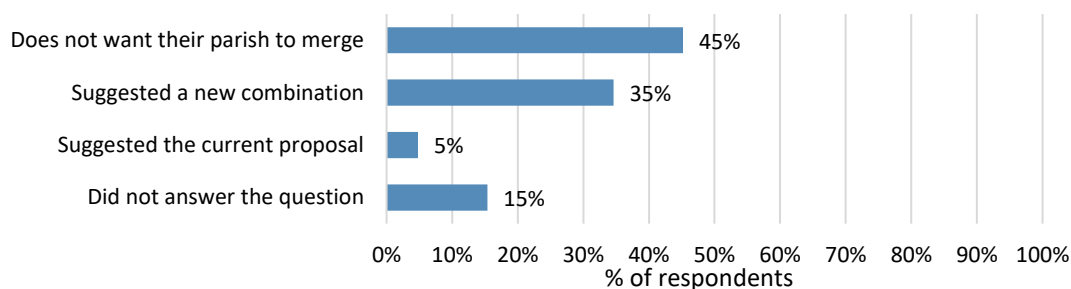
Figure 14. Summary of alternative suggestions for merging parishes (n=104*)
*Sub-sample based on those respondents who did not believed their existing parish has been grouped with the right parishes

The figure shows that most of these respondents did not want their parish to be merged with any other parishes (45%), while 5% suggested the same groupings proposed by the Bishop. Only one-third of these respondents (35%) actually suggested a new combination.[1]

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[1] A separate spreadsheet is available that shows how many respondents from each parish believe the groupings are correct/incorrect, how many do not want their parish to be merged, and how many want their parish to be merged with different parishes.

Respondents who were unsure if their existing parish has been grouped with the right parishes

This subset of respondents were asked to explain *why they were unsure*. Out of the n=191 respondents, n=153 respondents chose to provide a comment. Their feedback is summarised in Figure 15.
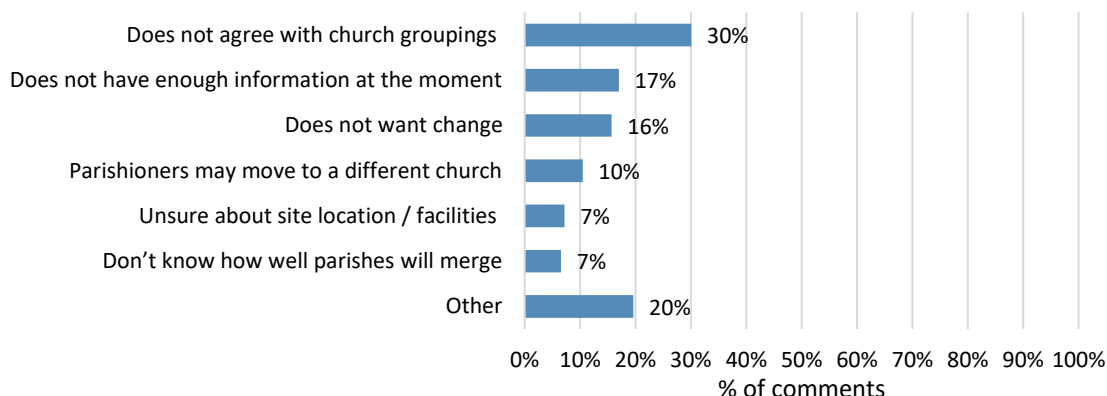

Figure 15. Reasons why respondents were unsure if their existing parish has been grouped with the right parishes (n=133*)
*Sub-sample based on those respondents who provided a valid comment.
Percentages do not sum to 100% because each comment could relate to multiple themes.

Respondents who believed their existing parish has been grouped with the right parishes

This subset of respondents were asked whether they *felt that the proposed main site for their region is the best site*. Figure 16 shows that, out of these respondents, 72% believed that the proposed site is the best site, while 19% did not.
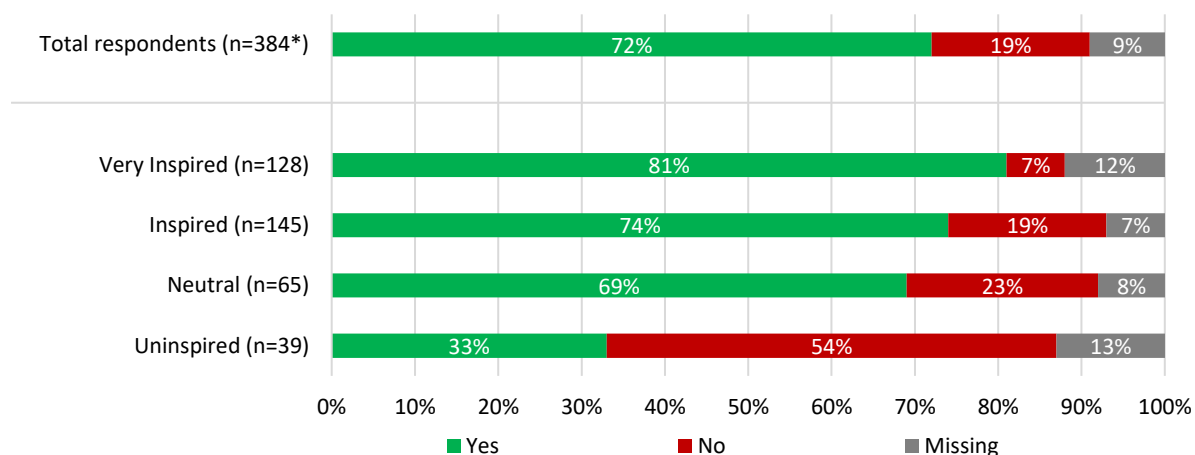
Figure 16. Whether respondents felt that the proposed main site for their region is the best site, by inspiration with the Bishop's proposal
*Sub-sample based on those respondents who believed their existing parish has been grouped with the right parishes (n=384)

Figure 16 also shows that respondents who were Very inspired or Inspired by the Bishop's proposal were significantly more likely to believe that the proposed main site for their region is the best site (81% and 74%, respectively), compared with respondents who were Uninspired by the proposal (33%).

Conversely, respondents who were Uninspired by the proposal were significantly more likely to believe that the proposed main site for their region is not the best site (54%), compared with those who were Very inspired or Inspired by the proposal (7% and 19%, respectively).

Respondents who <u>did not</u> believe that the proposed main site for their region is the best site were subsequently asked *to explain why*. Out of the n=73 respondents, n=68 chose to provide a comment. Their feedback is summarised in Figure 17.
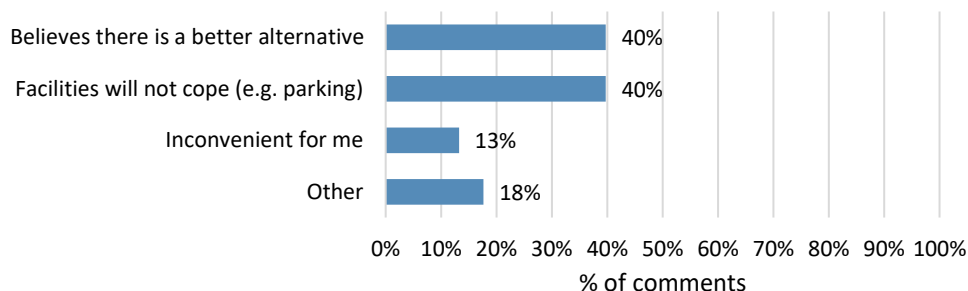
Figure 17. Reasons why the proposed main site for their region is <u>not</u> the best site (n=68*)
*Sub-sample based on those respondents who provided a valid comment.
Percentages do not sum to 100% because each comment could relate to multiple themes.

Respondents who believed that there is a better alternative often claimed that the site of their current parish would be the better option.

<u>In summary</u>, respondents who do not support the proposal were less likely to think that their current parish has been grouped with the right parishes. Almost half of those who did not think that the groupings were correct indicated that they did not want their parish to be merged with any other parishes, whereas only one-third actually suggested a new combination of parishes. On the other hand, the majority of respondents who agreed with the parish groupings also agreed that the proposed main site was the best location for the new parish.

2.5. Concerns about amalgamating parishes

All respondents were asked if they had any concerns about amalgamating parishes. In total, n=572 respondents chose to provide additional feedback. Their comments are summarised in Figure 18.
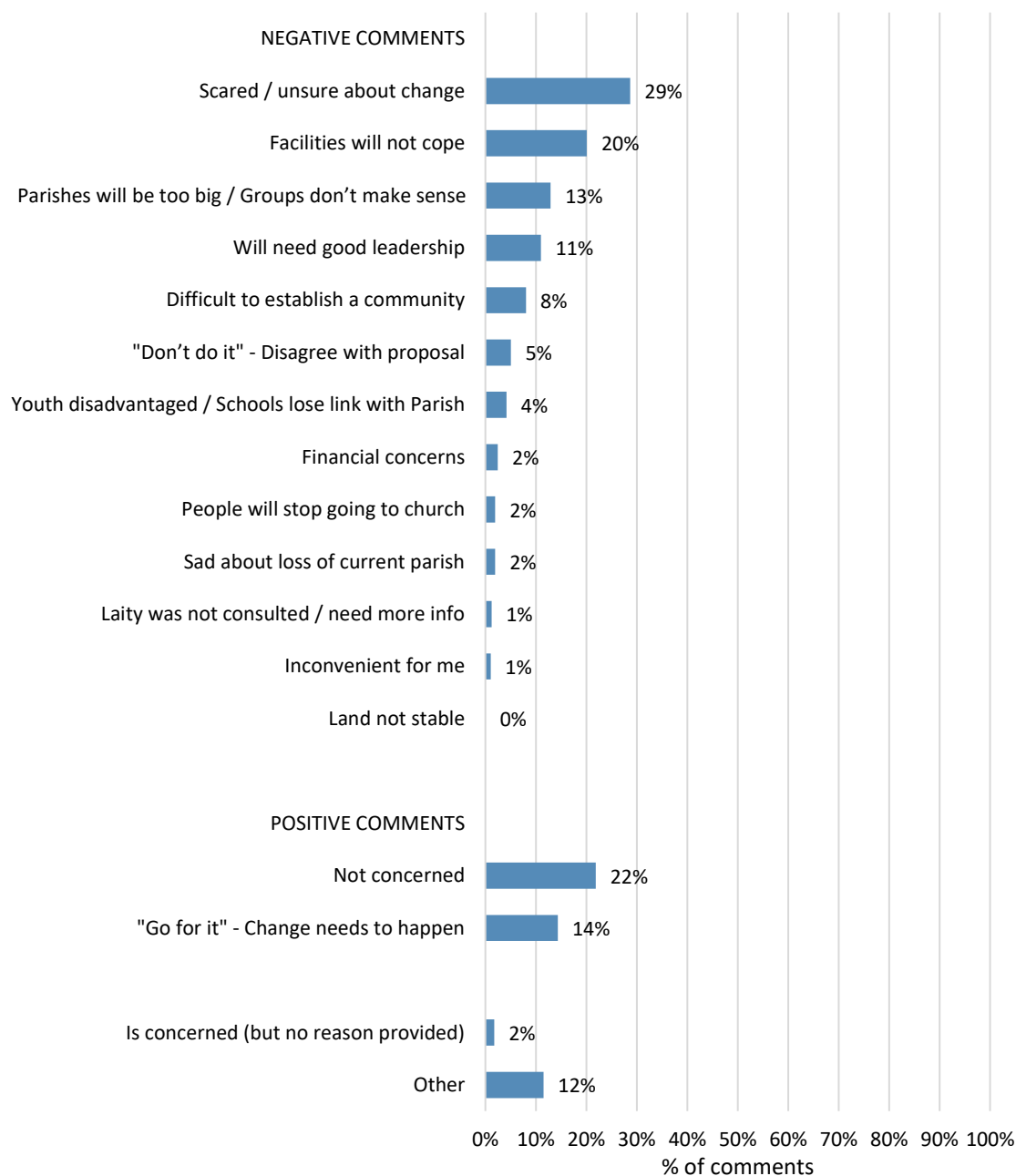
Figure 18. Concerns about amalgamating parishes (n=572*)
*Sub-sample based on those respondents who provided a valid comment.
Percentages do not sum to 100% because each comment could relate to multiple themes.

Respondents who were scared of change mentioned things like losing existing friends and/or community, losing identity, bigger is not always better, cultural needs will not be met, history and family connection will be lost, and concerns for the needs of the Country.

Comments about facilities not coping mentioned things like parking, heating, issues around traffic, environment of new church not being prayerful, access to mass centre for elderly, meeting spaces, distance, climate issues, and land size.

Respondents who commented on leadership mentioned things like leadership is not inclusive, takeover mentality, domination of larger parishes over smaller parishes, competent lay leaders, the right leadership is critical, traditions will be lost, untrained leaders, loss of lay ministry, and paid/unpaid roles.

3. Opinions about vibrant parishes

All respondents were reminded that *Bishop Paul desires that every parish in the diocese is vibrant.* They were then asked to *indicate how important they consider several elements to be in terms of contributing to vibrancy of parish life*. The 5-point rating scale ranged from 1 being *Not important* to 5 being *Very important*. Figure 19 presents the proportions of all respondents who thought the elements were *Important* (i.e. a rating of 4 or 5), *Neutral* (i.e. a rating of 3), and *Not important* (i.e. a rating of 1 or 2). While the perceived importance of each item varied, overall all elements were viewed as important (at least two-thirds of all respondents thought that each item was important).
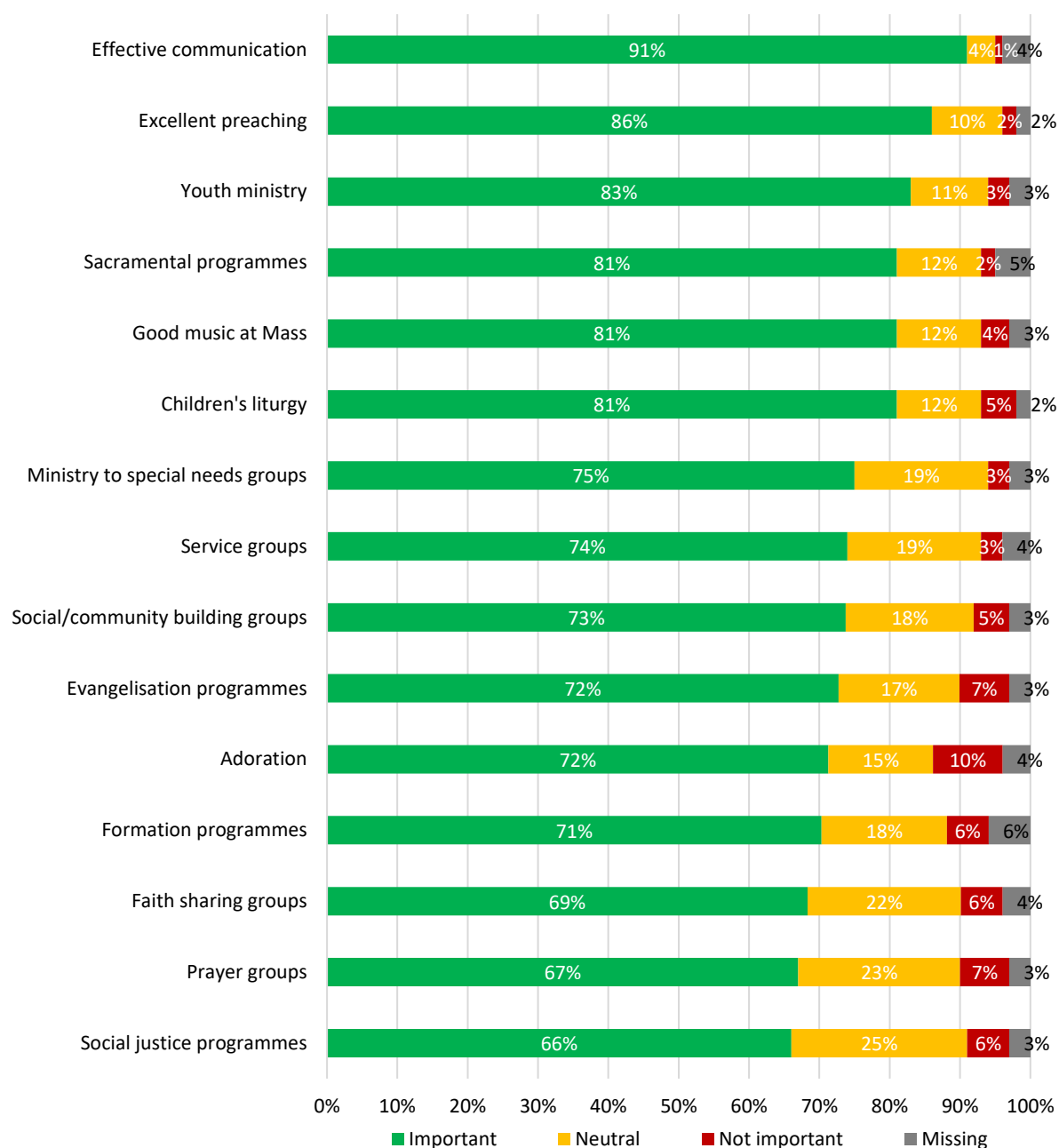
Figure 19. Importance of elements in terms of contributing to vibrancy of parish life (n=736)

Opinions about what makes parishes vibrant was correlated with opinions about the Bishop's proposal. For example, respondents who were Uninspired by the Bishop's proposal were significantly less likely than those who were Very inspired to state that each element was important (Figure 20). Although, it should be noted that ratings of importance are still relatively high.
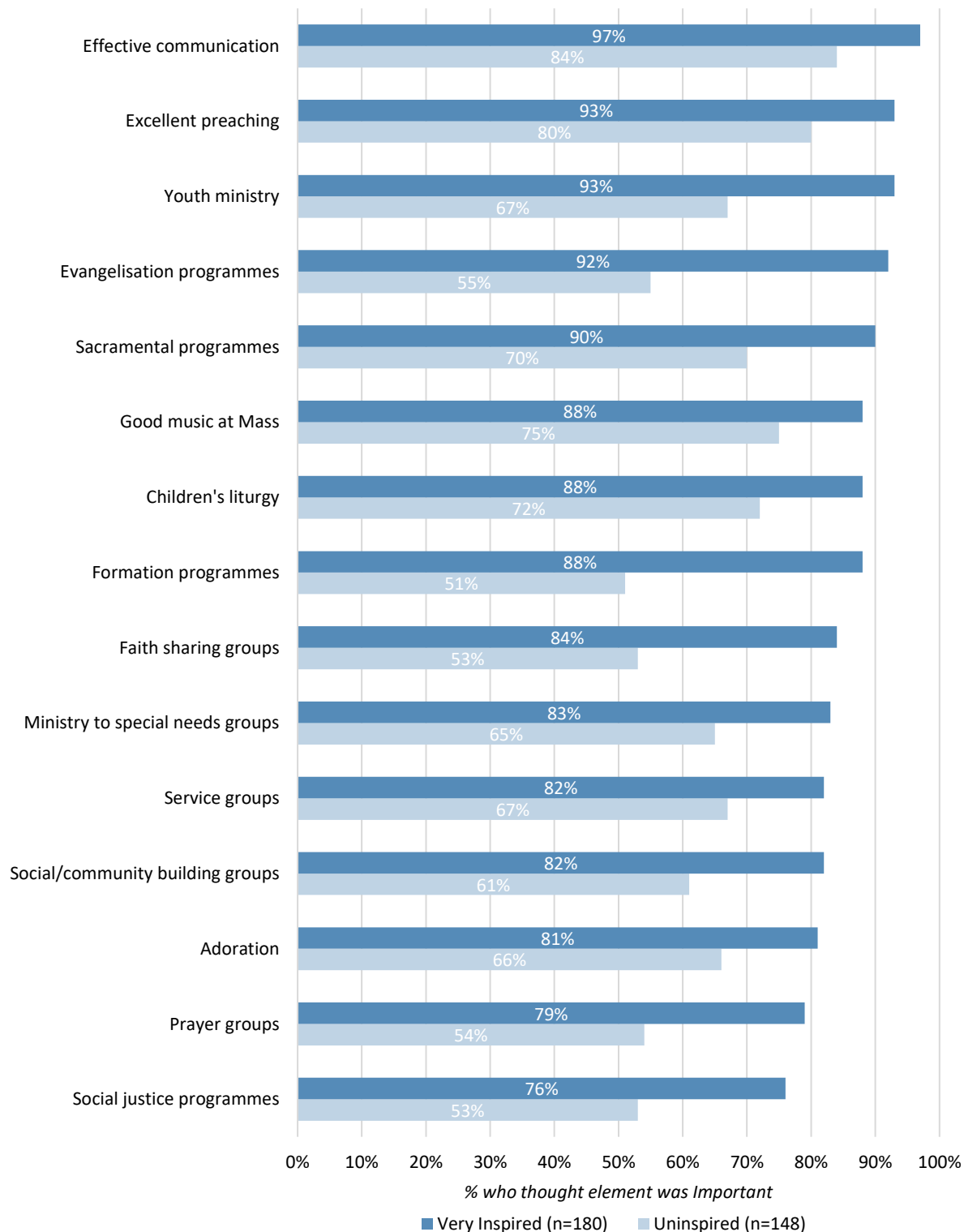
Figure 20. Importance of elements in terms of contributing to vibrancy of parish life

In summary, when presented with a list and asked which elements are important for creating vibrant parish life, overall all elements were viewed as important. However, respondents who did not support the proposal were less likely to think that the elements were important. The figure on the next page presents additional important elements that have not been covered in this list.

Other aspects of parish life that are important for vibrancy

Respondents were also asked to specify if there are *any other aspects of parish life they consider important for vibrancy*. In total, n=377 respondents chose to leave a comment, the remainder did not know or did not answer the question. Figure 21 provides a summary of the frequently mentioned themes.
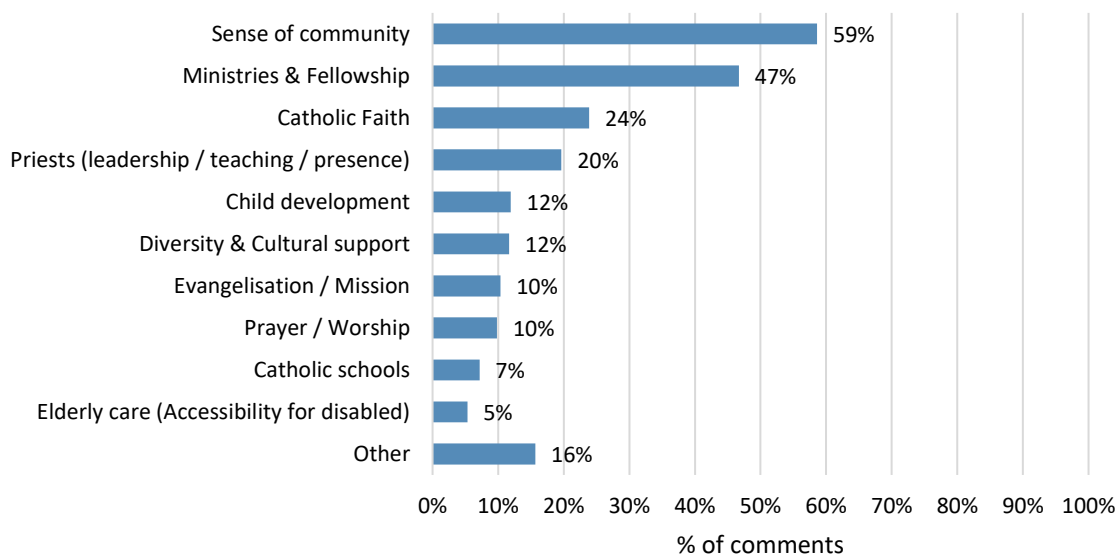
Figure 21. Other aspects of parish life that are important for vibrancy (n=377*)
*Sub-sample based on those respondents who provided a valid comment.
Percentages do not sum to 100% because each comment could relate to multiple themes.

"Catholic faith" refers to Education of faith, Adoration, Eucharistic Presence of Jesus, Bible Study, Sacramental programmes, Sacraments, Reconciliation, Liturgy, Retreats, Catechesis, etc.
"Ministries & Fellowship" refers to Volunteers, Fellowship, Lay ministers, Pastoral Team, Groups such as CWL, St Vincent de Paul, Dove etc.

4. Demographic characteristics of survey respondents

Table 1 and Table 2 present the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The column highlighted blue presents the proportion of each group in the total sample. The rows show the proportion of each group who were Uninspired, Neutral, Inspired, or Very Inspired with the Bishop's proposal. Due to the small number of respondents in some sub-samples the differences between groups should be treated as indicative only.

Table 1. Demographic profile of survey respondents, and proportion who are inspired with the Bishop's proposal

	n=	% of total	Uninspired	Neutral	Inspired	Very Inspired
What is your ethnicity?						
Asian	101	14%	22%	19%	38%	20%
European	564	77%	19%	21%	30%	26%
Maori	13	2%	8%	15%	31%	38%
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	9	1%	22%	11%	44%	22%
Other Ethnicity	32	4%	38%	19%	19%	19%
Pacific Peoples	7	1%	0%	14%	57%	29%
Missing	10	1%	50%	0%	30%	0%
What is your age?						
18 - 30	37	5%	27%	19%	30%	19%
31 - 40	84	11%	17%	20%	36%	27%
41 - 50	110	15%	14%	22%	30%	34%
51 - 60	97	13%	27%	18%	21%	31%
61 - 70	171	23%	24%	18%	30%	26%
71+	196	27%	15%	19%	39%	16%
Prefer not to say	17	2%	24%	41%	24%	6%
Unknown	24	3%	33%	25%	17%	25%
How frequently do you attend Mass?						
Daily	116	16%	18%	15%	39%	21%
Weekly	571	78%	21%	20%	30%	26%
Monthly	36	5%	19%	25%	31%	19%
On special occasions	11	1%	18%	36%	27%	18%
Never	2	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Where do you live?						
Ashburton District	6	1%	0%	17%	33%	50%
Christchurch City	614	83%	22%	20%	31%	23%
Grey District	2	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
Hurunui District	12	2%	17%	8%	33%	17%
Mackenzie District	1	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Selwyn District	41	6%	10%	17%	41%	27%
Timaru District	6	1%	50%	0%	33%	17%
Waimakariri District	45	6%	2%	24%	27%	40%
Waimate District	6	1%	0%	17%	17%	0%
Westland District	1	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Missing	2	0%	50%	0%	0%	50%
If Bishop Paul's proposed plan were to go ahead, where do you think you would most likely attend Mass?						
Central	111	15%	17%	16%	34%	28%
East	49	7%	18%	31%	29%	20%
North	213	29%	18%	22%	31%	23%
Selwyn	38	5%	13%	16%	42%	21%
South	116	16%	27%	18%	34%	22%
Waimakariri / Hurunui	39	5%	5%	26%	21%	44%
West	134	18%	28%	19%	30%	22%
Missing	36	5%	17%	11%	28%	25%

Table 2. Demographic profile of survey respondents, and proportion who are inspired with the Bishop's proposal (continued)

	n=	% of total	Uninspired	Neutral	Inspired	Very Inspired
Do you have a child/children attending primary school?						
No	579	79%	20%	19%	32%	23%
Yes	138	19%	19%	22%	26%	31%
Missing	19	3%	26%	21%	32%	5%
Do they attend a Catholic primary school?*						
No	29	21%	14%	14%	34%	38%
Yes	107	78%	21%	24%	23%	30%
Missing	2	1%	0%	50%	50%	0%
Do you have a child/children attending secondary school?						
No	602	82%	21%	20%	32%	23%
Yes	108	15%	17%	20%	25%	35%
Missing	26	4%	23%	23%	31%	12%
Do they attend a Catholic secondary school?*						
No	27	25%	22%	19%	15%	37%
Yes	78	72%	15%	21%	28%	35%
Missing	3	3%	0%	33%	33%	33%

*Sub-sample based on those respondents who had children who attended a Catholic primary/secondary school

In summary, the demographic characteristics of the sample are known. However, due to the small size of some of the sub-samples it is not possible to determine if there are statistically significant differences between the opinions of the demographic groups. Results based on a small number of respondents should only be viewed as an indication of what the results could be if more individuals had completed the survey.