

Research Data on Adventist Young People: Gen Z and Millennials

Believe, Behave, Belong?

G. Steele, D.Min.
British Columbia Camp Meeting
2023

«As the Holy Spirit moves upon the hearts of the children, co-operate with His work. Teach them that the Saviour is calling them, that nothing can afford Him greater joy than for them to give themselves to Him in the bloom and freshness of their years.»

(Ellen G. White, MH, 44)

“

“The Lord has appointed the youth
to be his helping hand.”

(EGW, 7T, 64, MYP, 72)

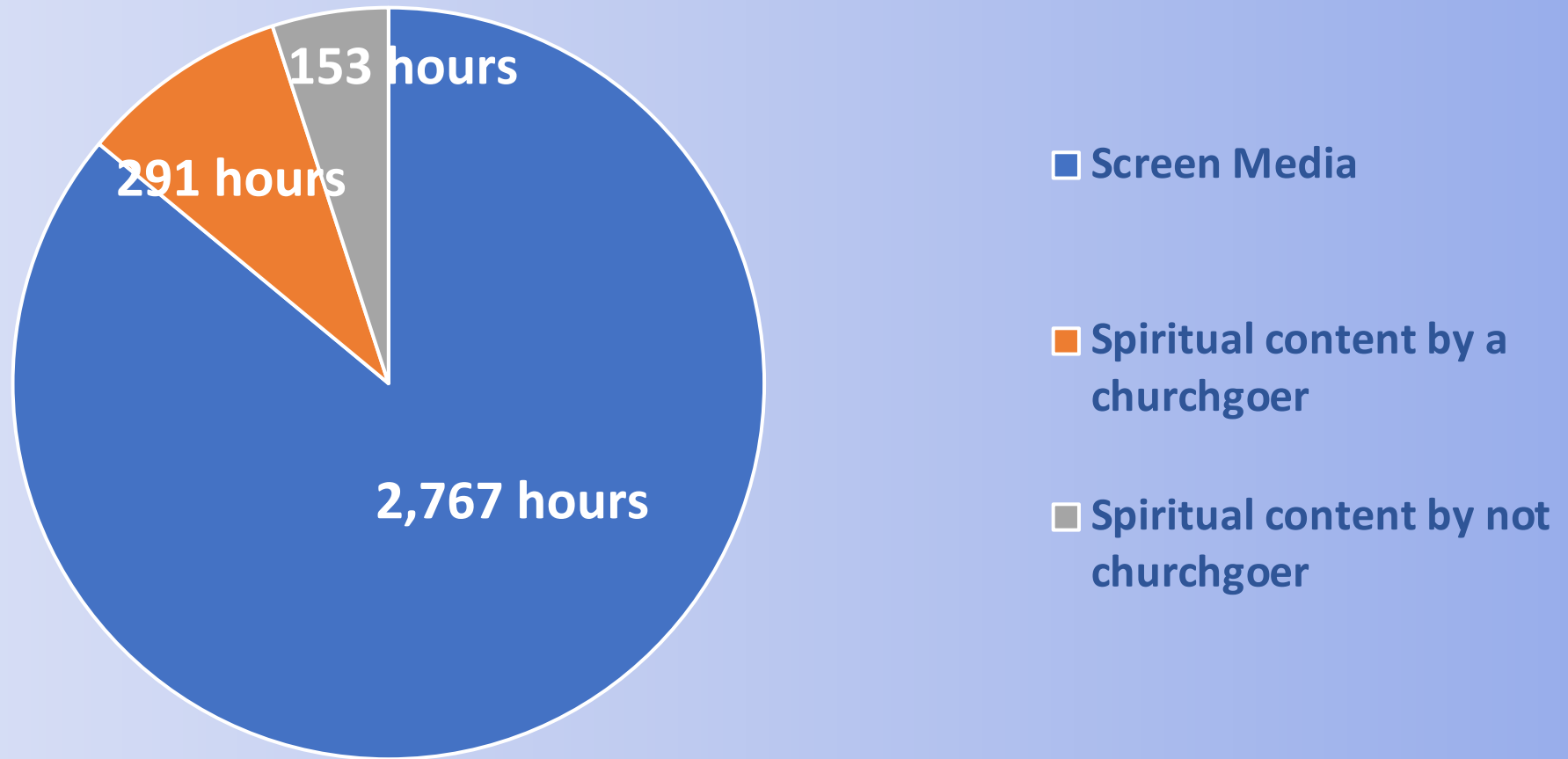
- Do you remember the day of **September 11, 2001**?
 - Where were you when you heard the news?

Do young people live in a different world now?

Generations

- **Elders**—born before 1946 (1928-1945) – Radio – dominant way of receiving information
- **Baby Boomers**—1946-1964 – TV
- **Generation X (Gen X)**—1965-1980 (or early 80s) – Computer revolution, life before the Internet, dial phones, pay-phones (coin-operated)
- **Millennials (Gen Y)**—1981 (or early 80s) -1996 (or late 90s)—Information revolution, the Internet became part of life, cordless phones, September 11 (old enough to remember)
- **Generation Z (Gen Z)**— 1997 (or late 90s)-2012 – Digital revolution, iPhone, social media

Typical 15-to-23-year-old Usage of Screen Media Hours per year, estimates



(David Kinnaman & Mark Matlock, *Faith for Exiles: 5 Faith for a New Generation to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2019), 26.

Millennials & Gen Z

- iSelf era
- Do-it-Yourself movement
- Social media era
- Era of FOMO (the fear of missing out, not fitting in)
- Even committed Christians are busier today and attend the church less frequently
- Other options for socialization (sports, fitness centers, social media)
- Don't like to be bored, multitasked
- Gen Z - wants independence, like to work alone, office for themselves, manage their own projects, don't want to depend on others. More of them skipping higher education and going straight to the workplace compared to Millennials who are very educated
- While **Gen Z** is the most unchurched generation, it's also **the most open generation to spirituality**.

(David Kinnaman & Mark Matlock, 28)

(<https://biz.mann-ivanov-ferber.ru/2018/07/18/5-xarakteristik-pokoleniya-z/>)

Millennials & Gen Z

- Traditional brands – New brands
- Thoroughly thought choices – Impulse
- Search – YouTube
- Major purchases – investment in education
- Messages – meetings with friends
- Social media
- Information checked – faith in reliable sources
- Both - high quality content (texts and bright illustrations)
- (<https://www.retail.ru/articles/8-otlichiy-pokoleniya-z-ot-pokoleniya-y/>)

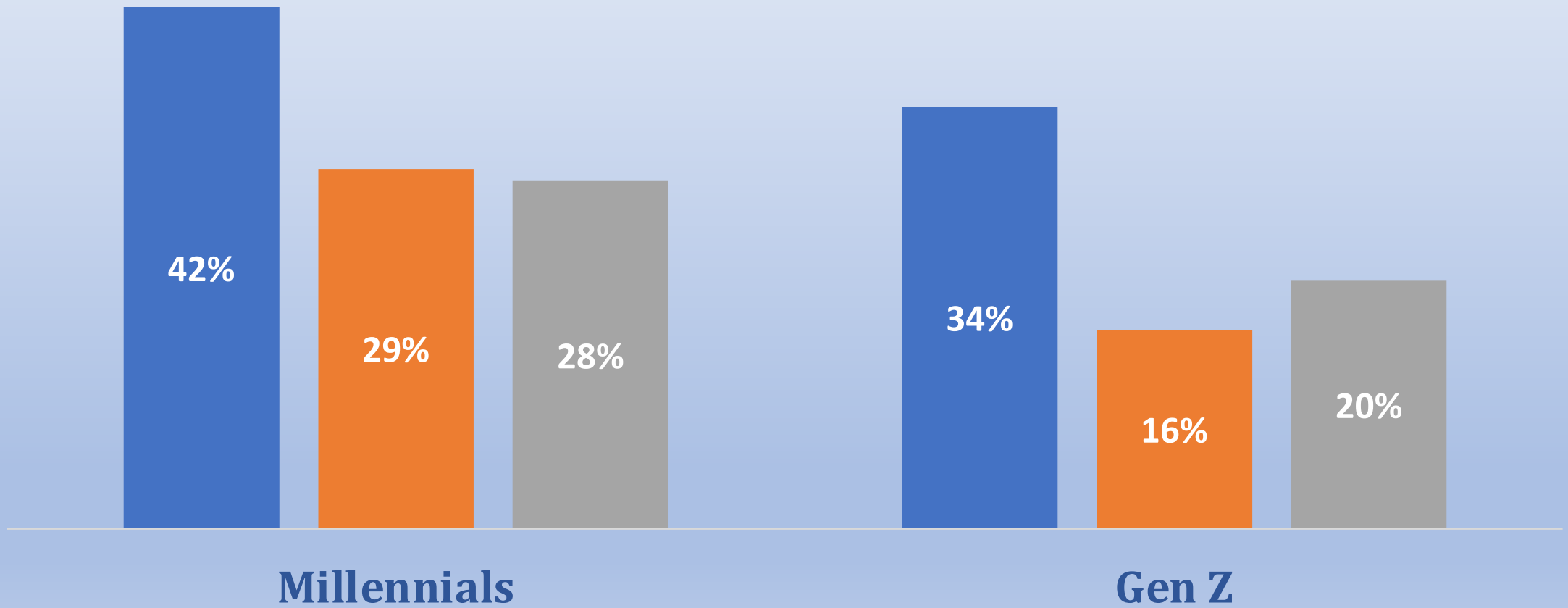
Barna: Millennials

- Personal achievements (35%) and hobbies (35%)
- Lying is wrong (42%)
- it is acceptable to be born one gender and feel like another
- want to finish their education(52%) and start their carrier (51%) and be financial independent (59%) by age 30
- Only (28%) want to get married by then – age 30
- Become more mature spiritually by age 30 (29%)

Barna: Generation Z (teens)

- Most important – personal achievements (43%) and hobbies (42%)
- Lying is wrong (only 34%)
- 69% - it is acceptable (definitely + probably) to be born one gender and feel like another
- 66% want to finish their education and start their carrier and be financial independent (65%) by age 30
- Only 20% want to get married by then – age 30
- Only 34% have my religion/belief as identity today and 16% have as a future goal to become spiritually mature

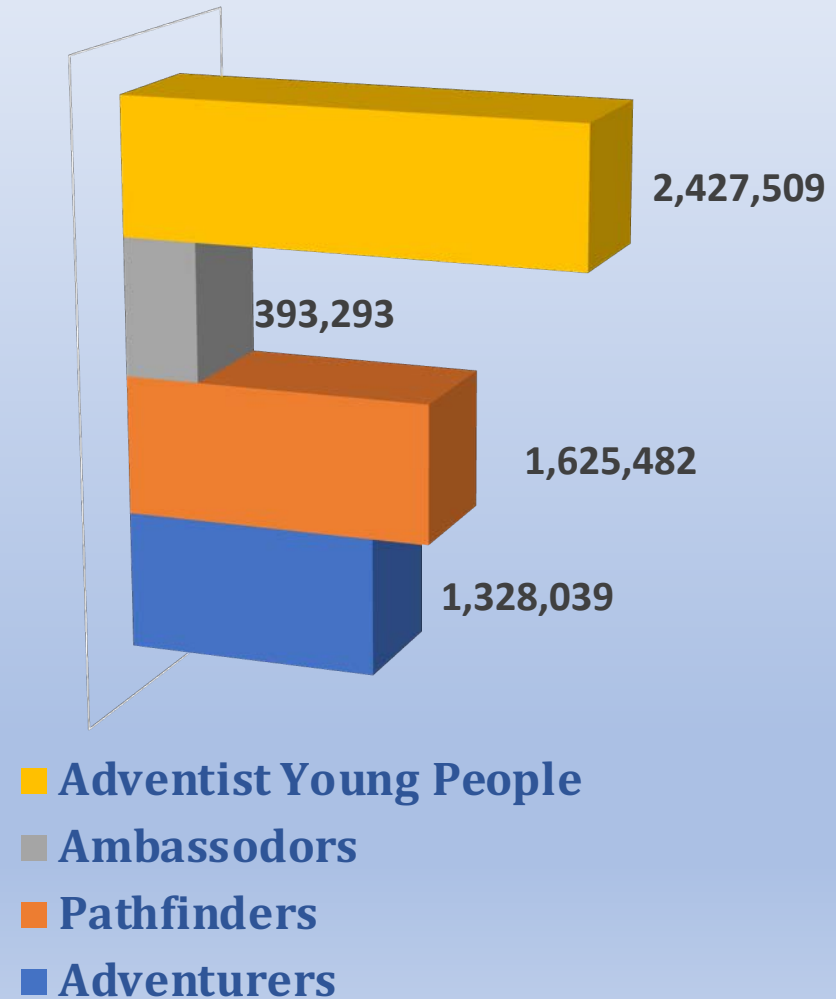
- Lying is wrong
- To become spiritually mature by age 30
- To get married by 30



Barna Group, *Gen Z: The Culture, Beliefs, and Motivations Shaping the Next Generation*, 2018, 53-57.

Adventist Kids, Youth, & Young Adults around the World (as of 2017)

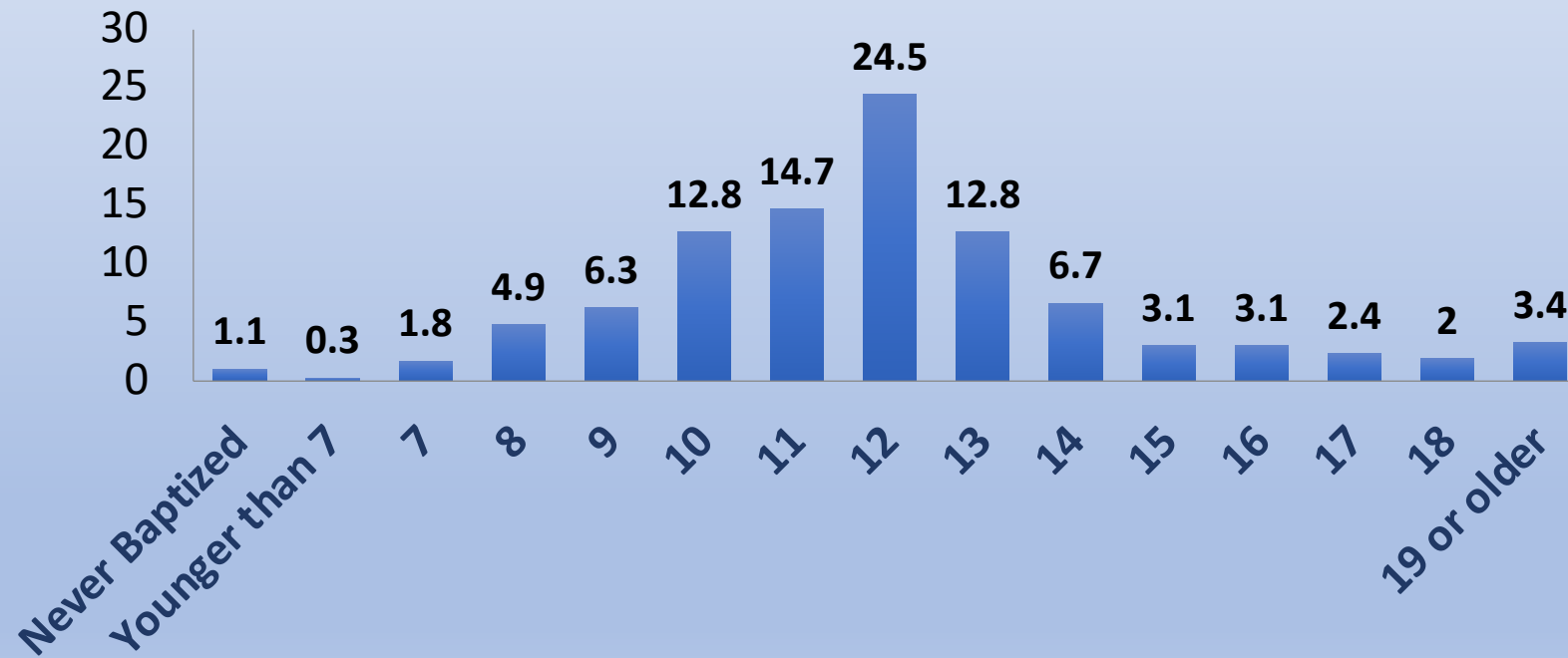
Adventurers – ages 4-9
Pathfinders – 10-15
Ambassadors –16-21
Young adults – 21-30+



Age at Baptism?

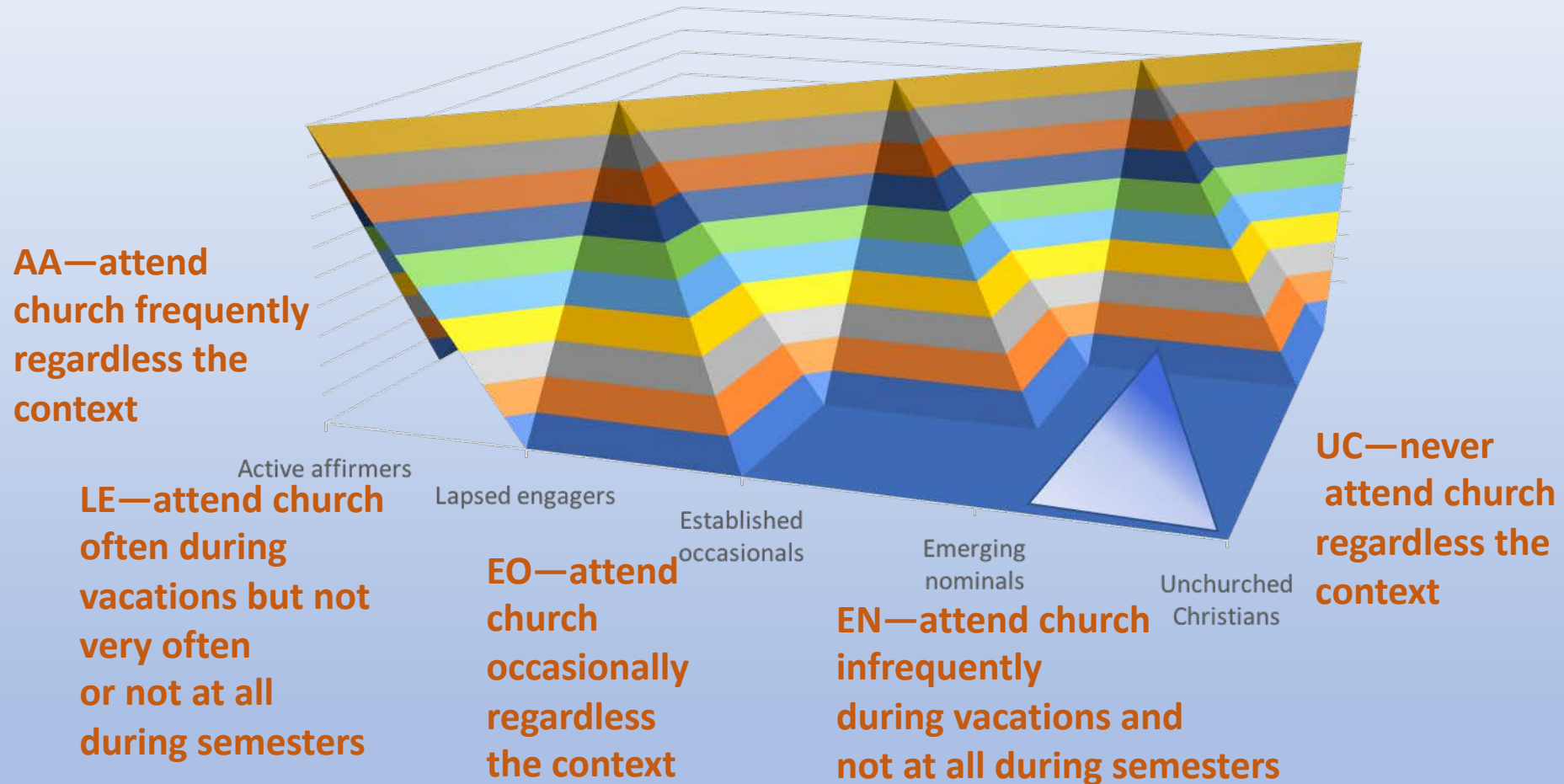
21st CCS:

65% before 12 years of age



Douglas Jacobs (SAU) & team, "21st Century Connection Study" (21st CCS), 2012-2013

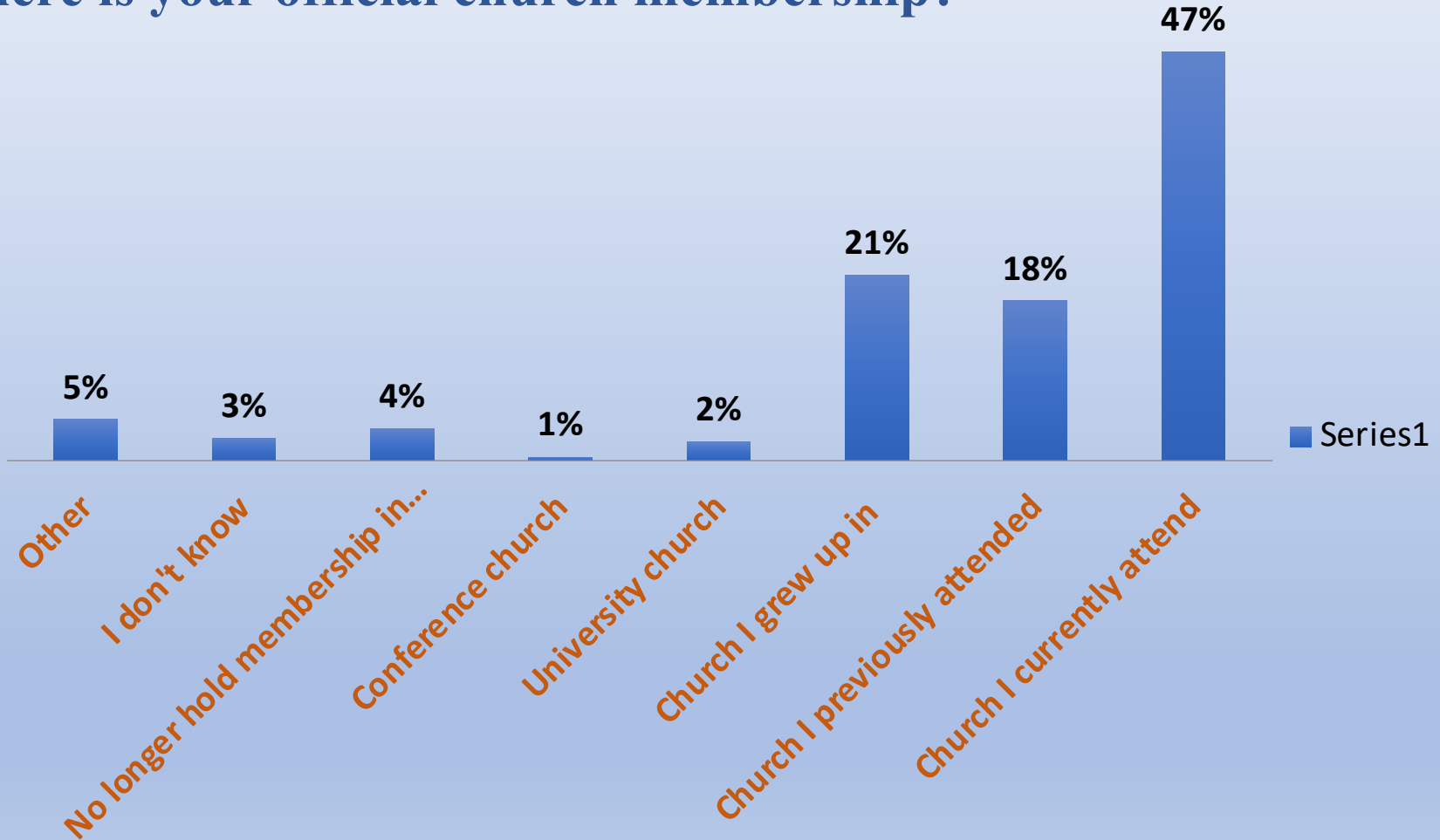
Mathew J. Guest
*The Hidden Christians of the University Campus: Public Visibility
and the Future of Religion in the UK*



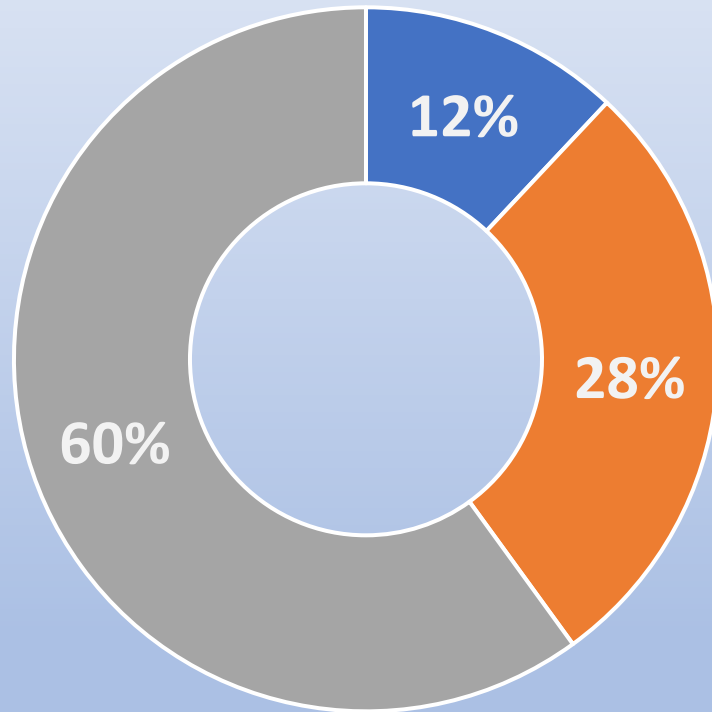
Transitional Lifestyle of Young People

Not in regular church attendance (21st CCS)

Where is your official church membership?



2017-18 Global Church Member Survey (2017-18 GCMS) Samples & Young People Subsamples



■ Youth up to 20

■ Young people 21-35

■ Members 36+

Total sample:
N=63,756

21-35 years of age:
N=17,970

Up to 20 years old:
N= 7,490

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The BELIEFS & PRACTICES of ADVENTIST YOUNG ADULTS



Findings from the 2018
Global Church Member Survey

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The BELIEFS & PRACTICES of ADVENTIST ADOLESCENTS

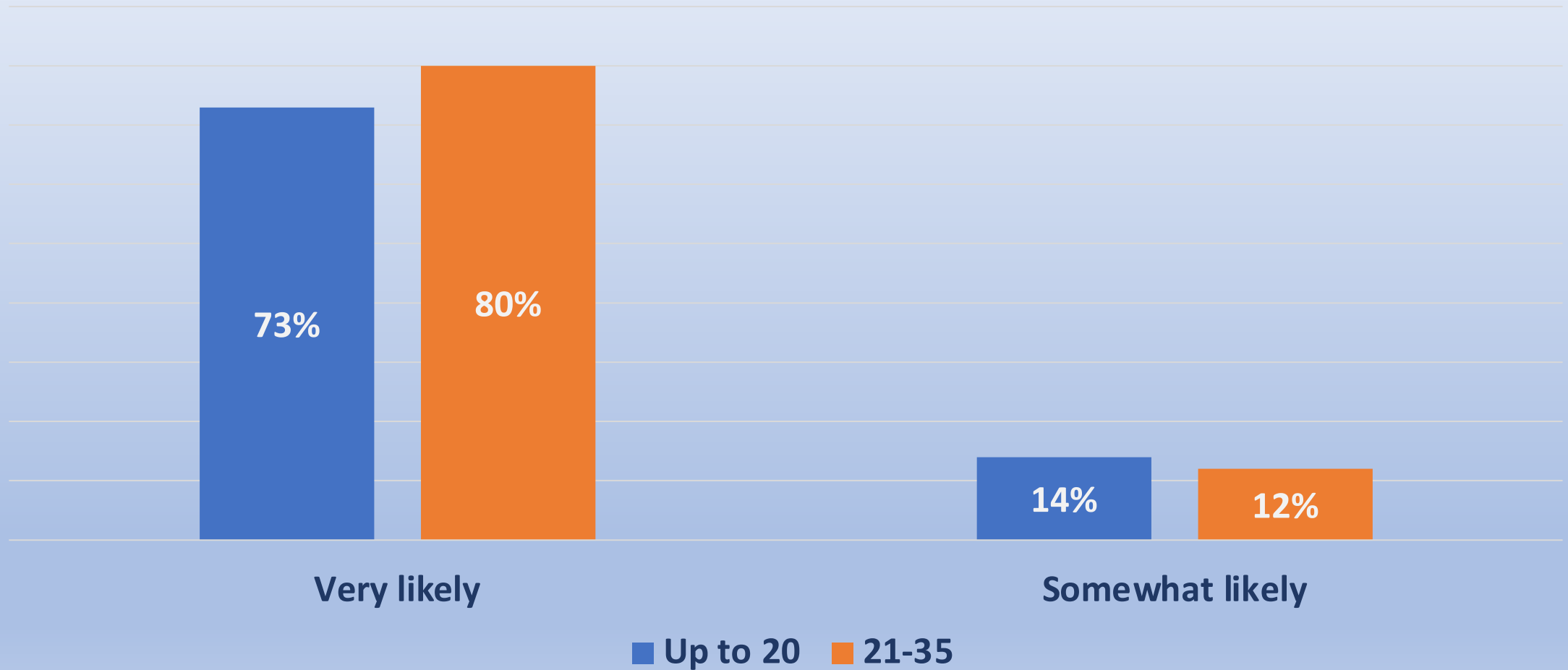


Findings from the 2018
Global Church Member Survey

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How Likely is it that you will Be Attending a Seventh-day Adventist Church for the Rest of your Life?

2017-18 GCMS



Devotional practices (2017-18 GCMS)

How Often do you Engage in these Activities?
[Daily or more often than once a day]

Daily or more often +
more than once a week:

Sabbath School:

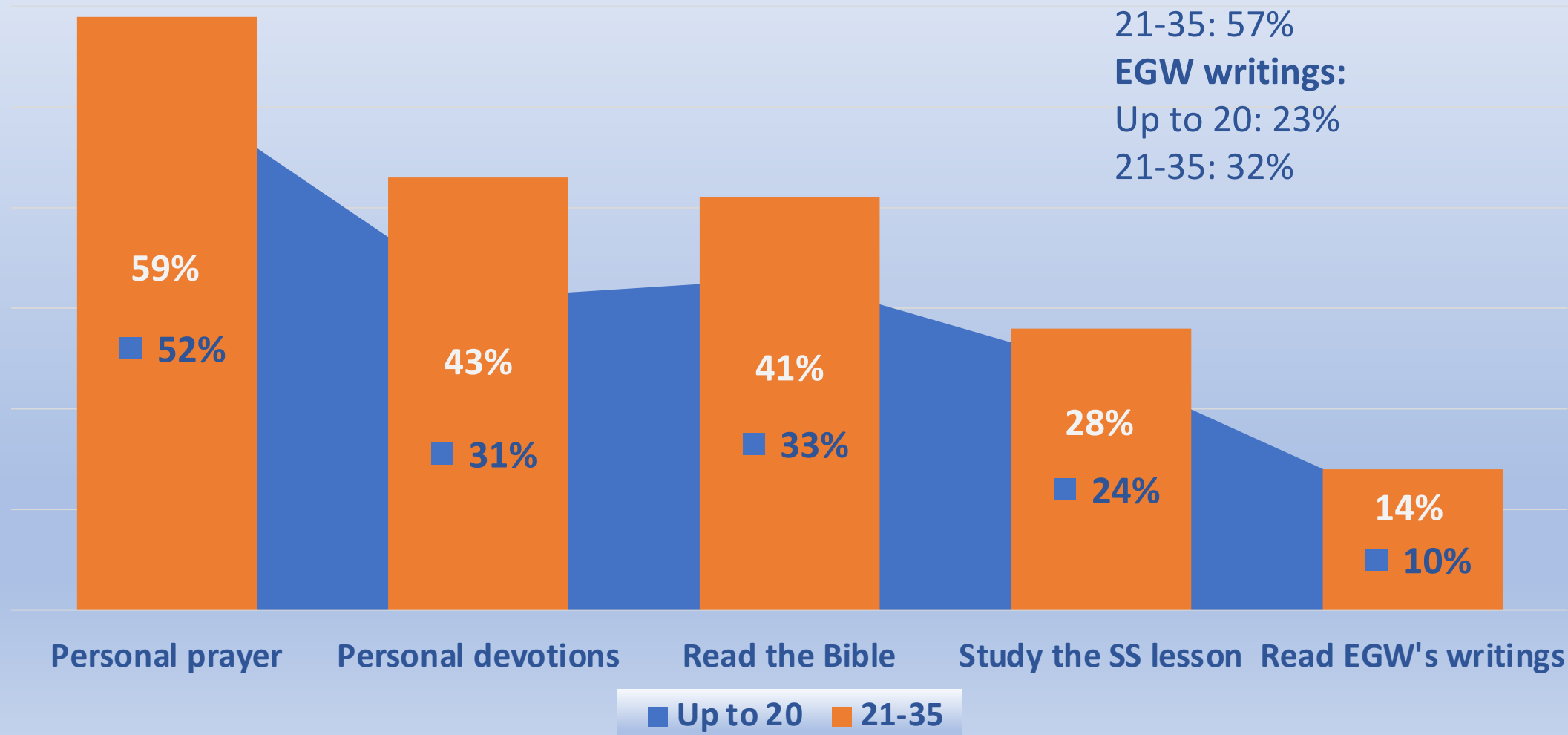
Up to 21: 46%

21-35: 57%

EGW writings:

Up to 20: 23%

21-35: 32%



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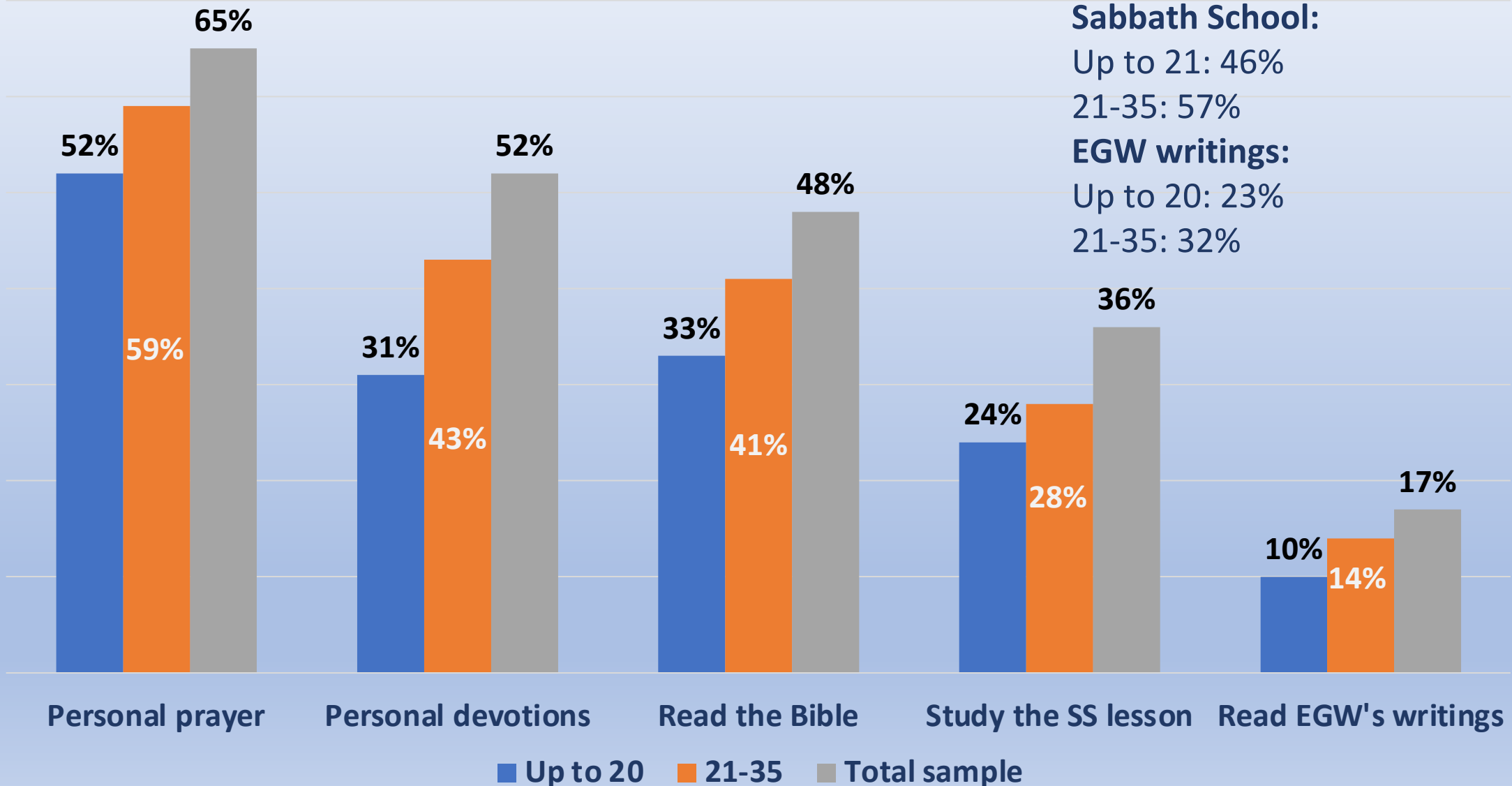
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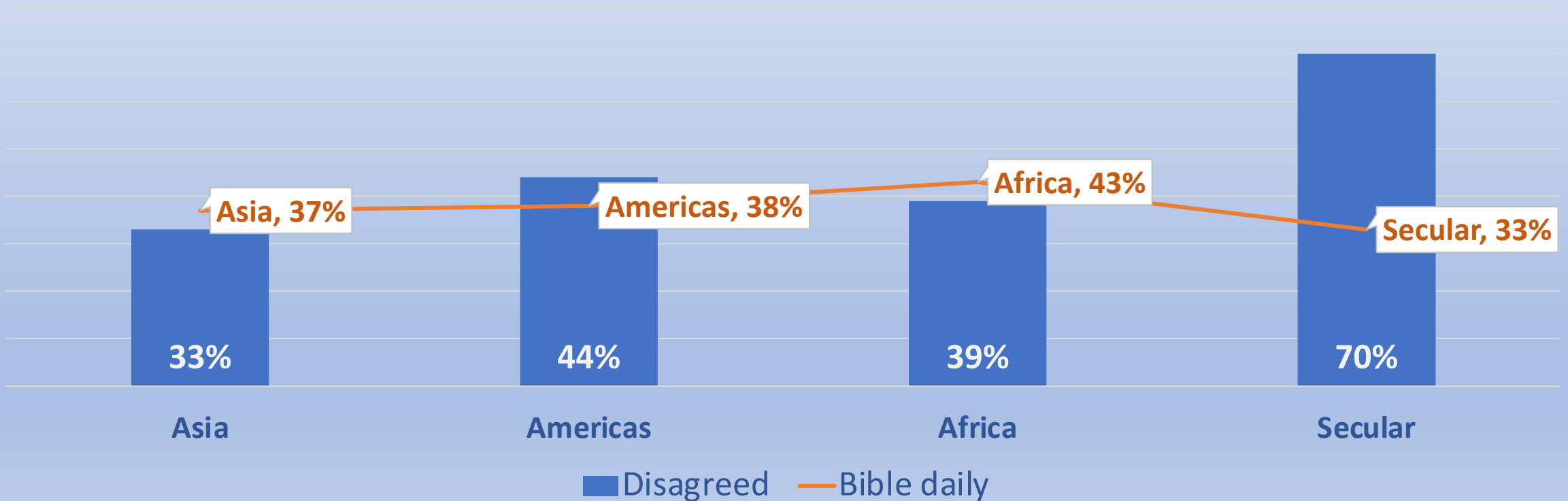
21-35: 32%



Differences in Responses in Different Cultural Contexts

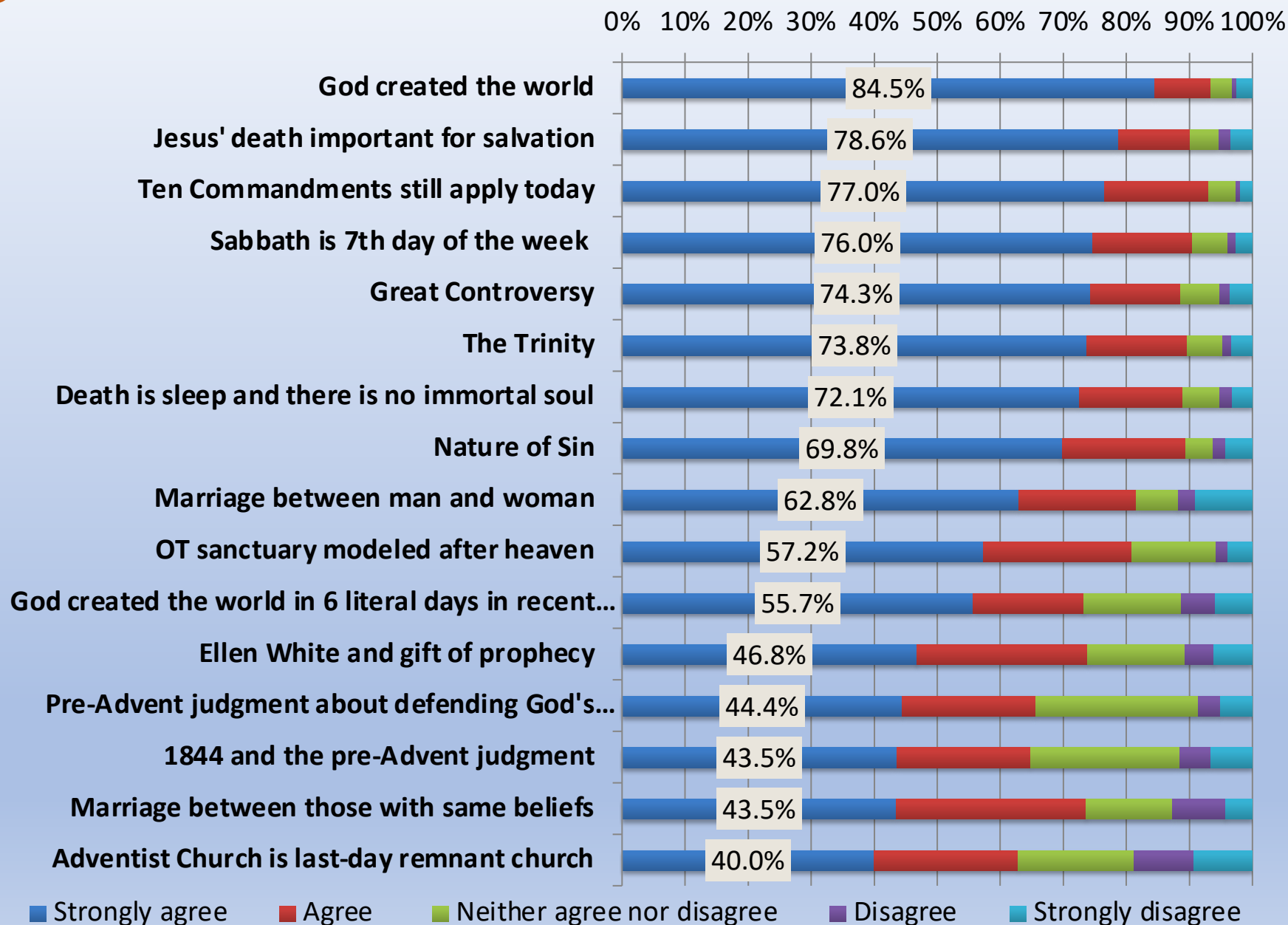
2017-18 GCMS

Responses on reading the Bible daily and
Disagree or strongly disagree with
“Although I am religious, it does not affect my daily life”
Ages: 15-35



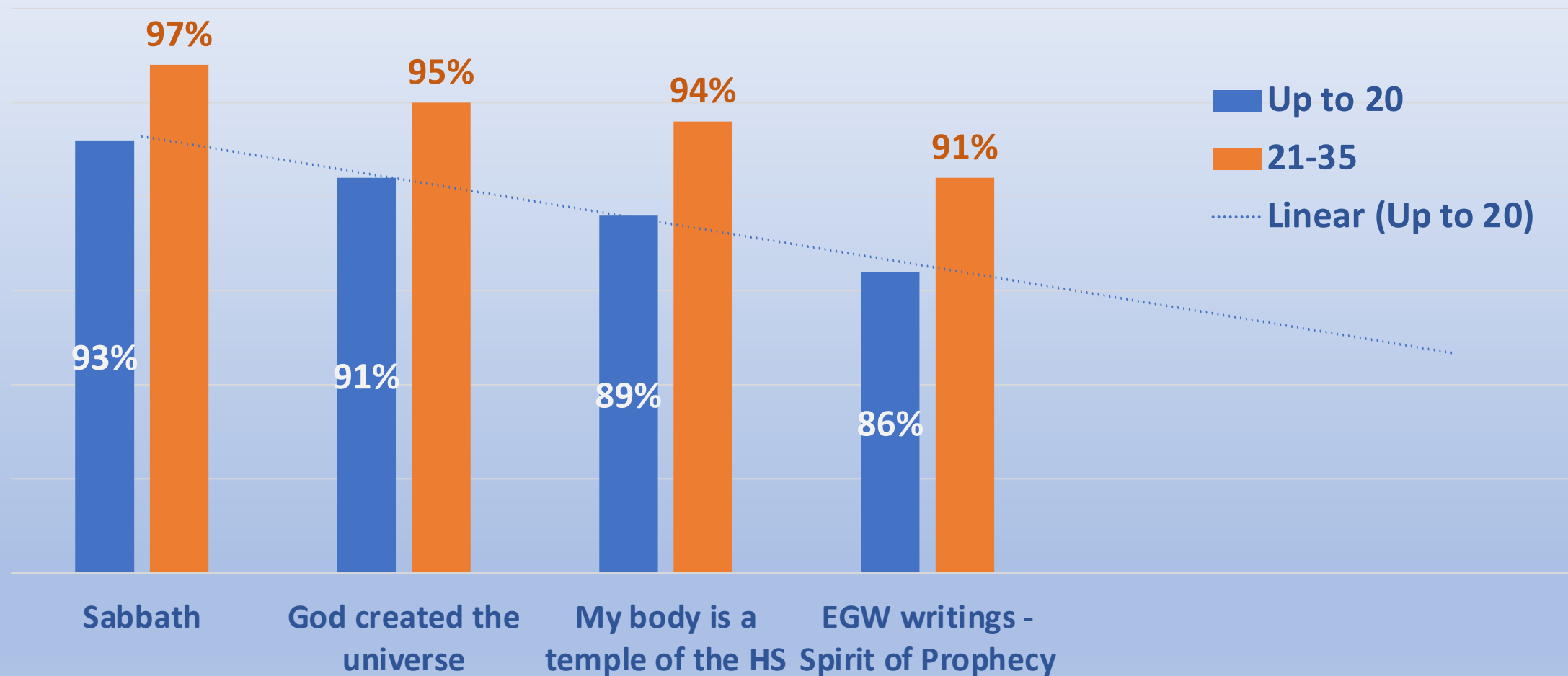
Agreement with Adventist Doctrines

(21st CCS)

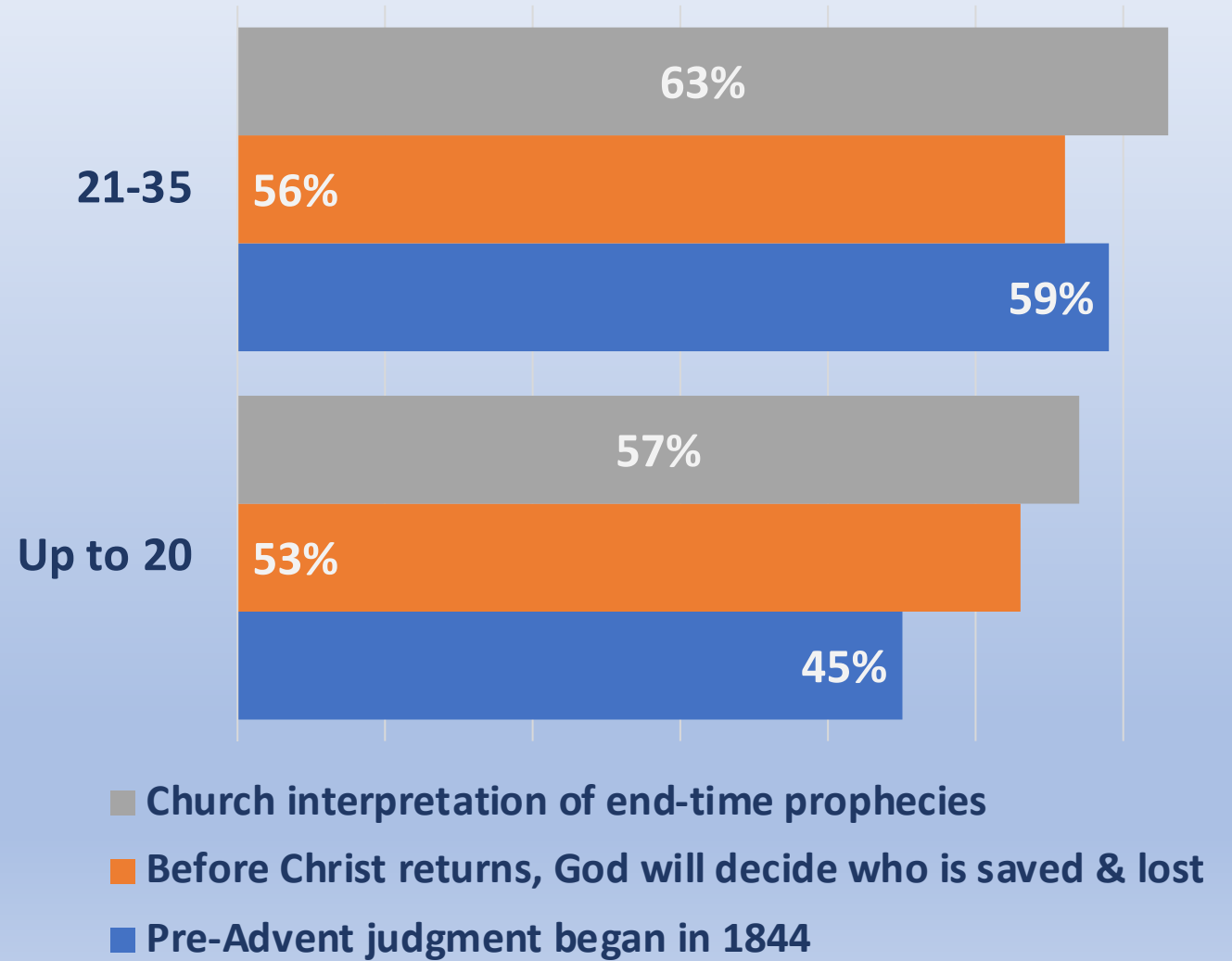
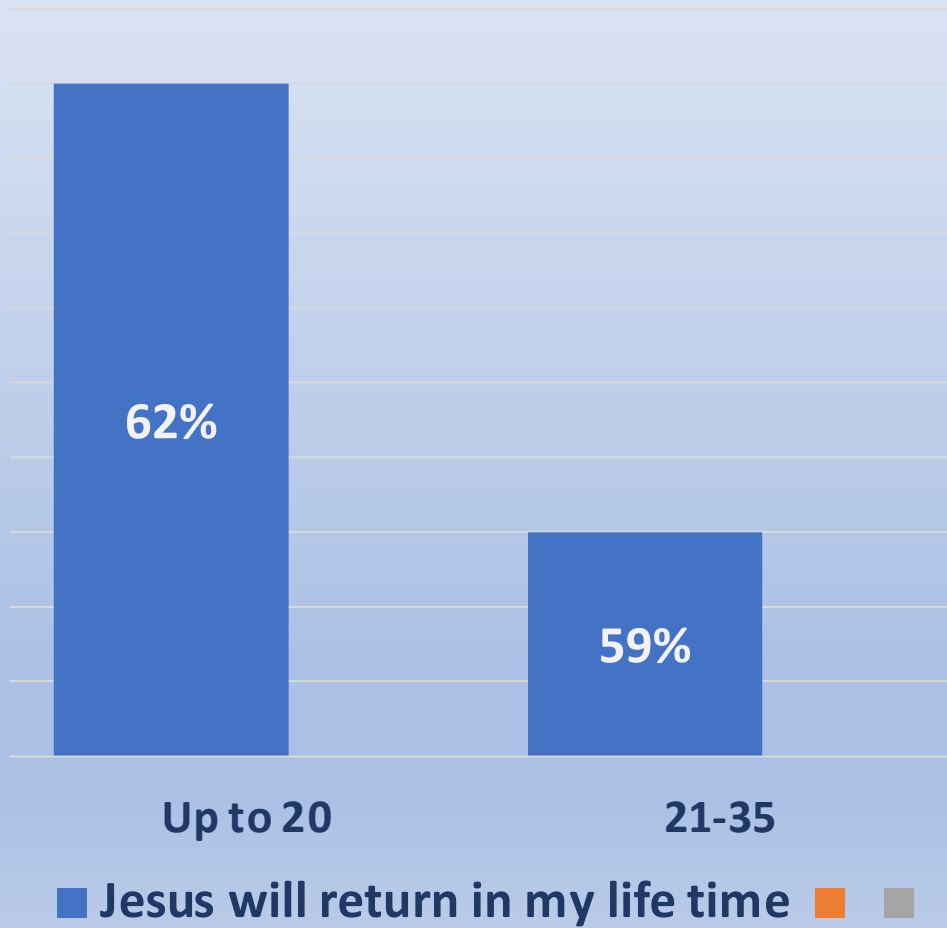


Church Doctrines—Support

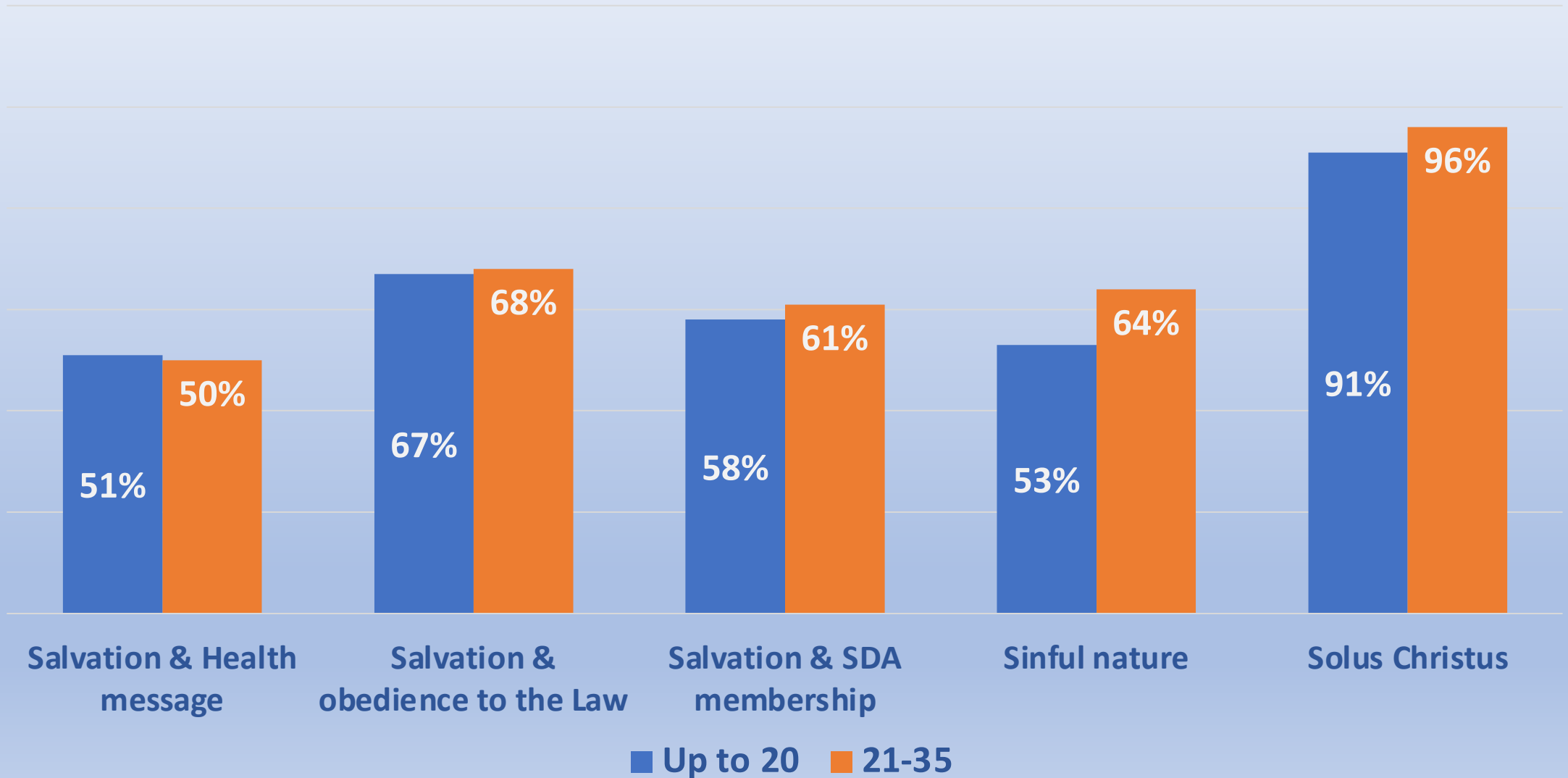
2017-18 GCMS



Some More Results on Doctrines 2017-18 GCMS

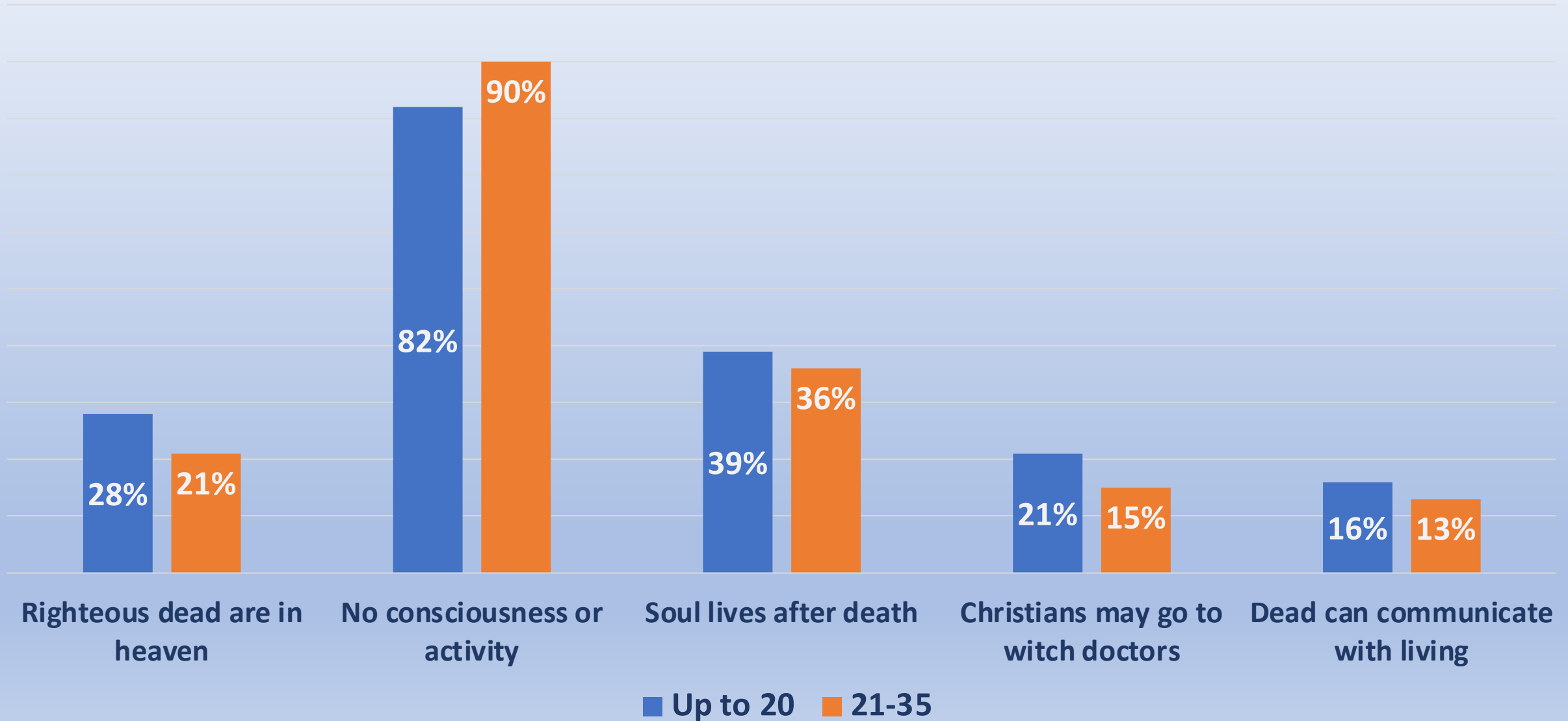


Doctrines: Salvation 2017-18 GCMS



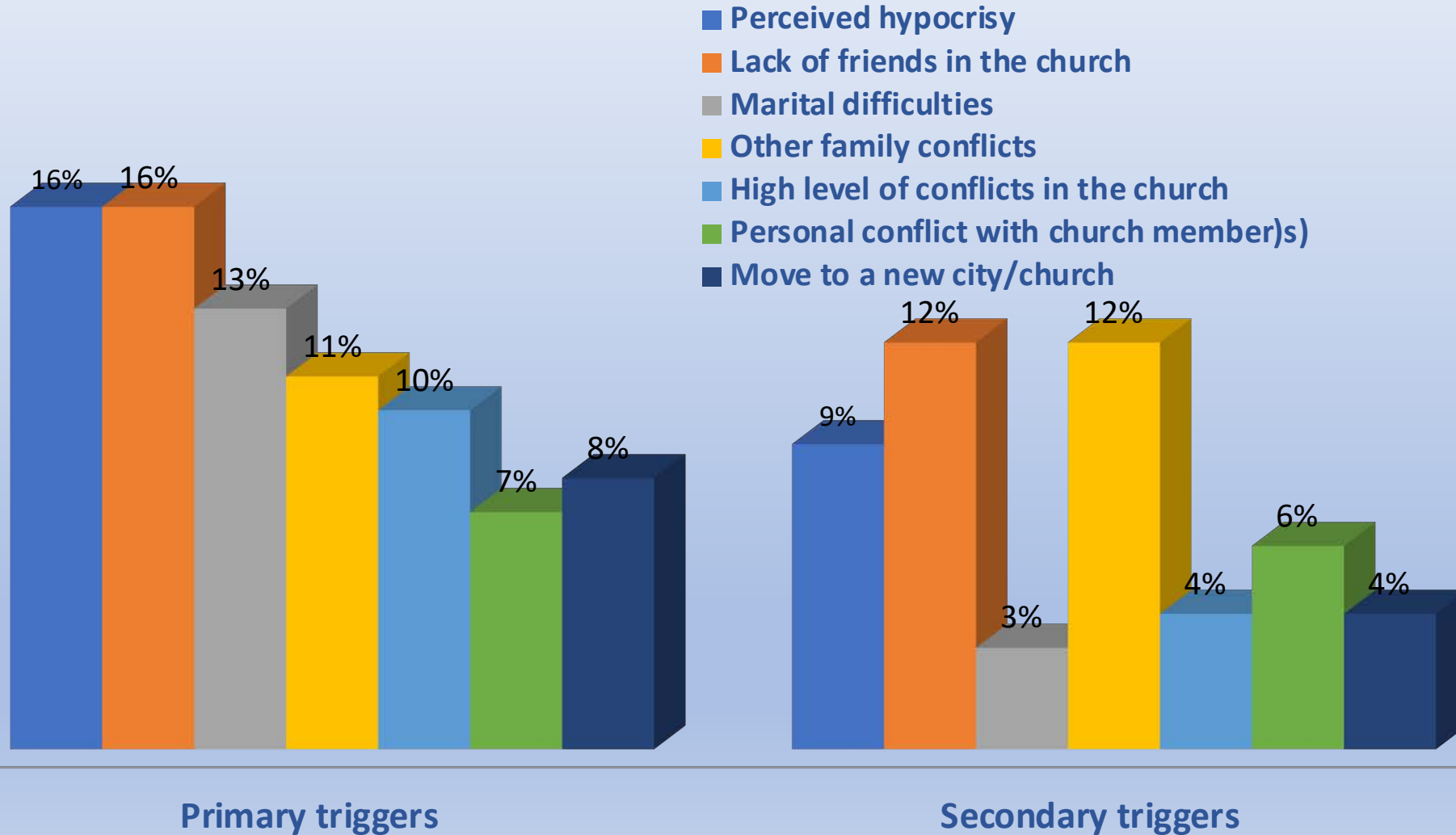
Doctrines: the State of the Dead

2017-18 GCMS



What event triggered your decision to leave?

Primary & Secondary Triggers (LS, young people)



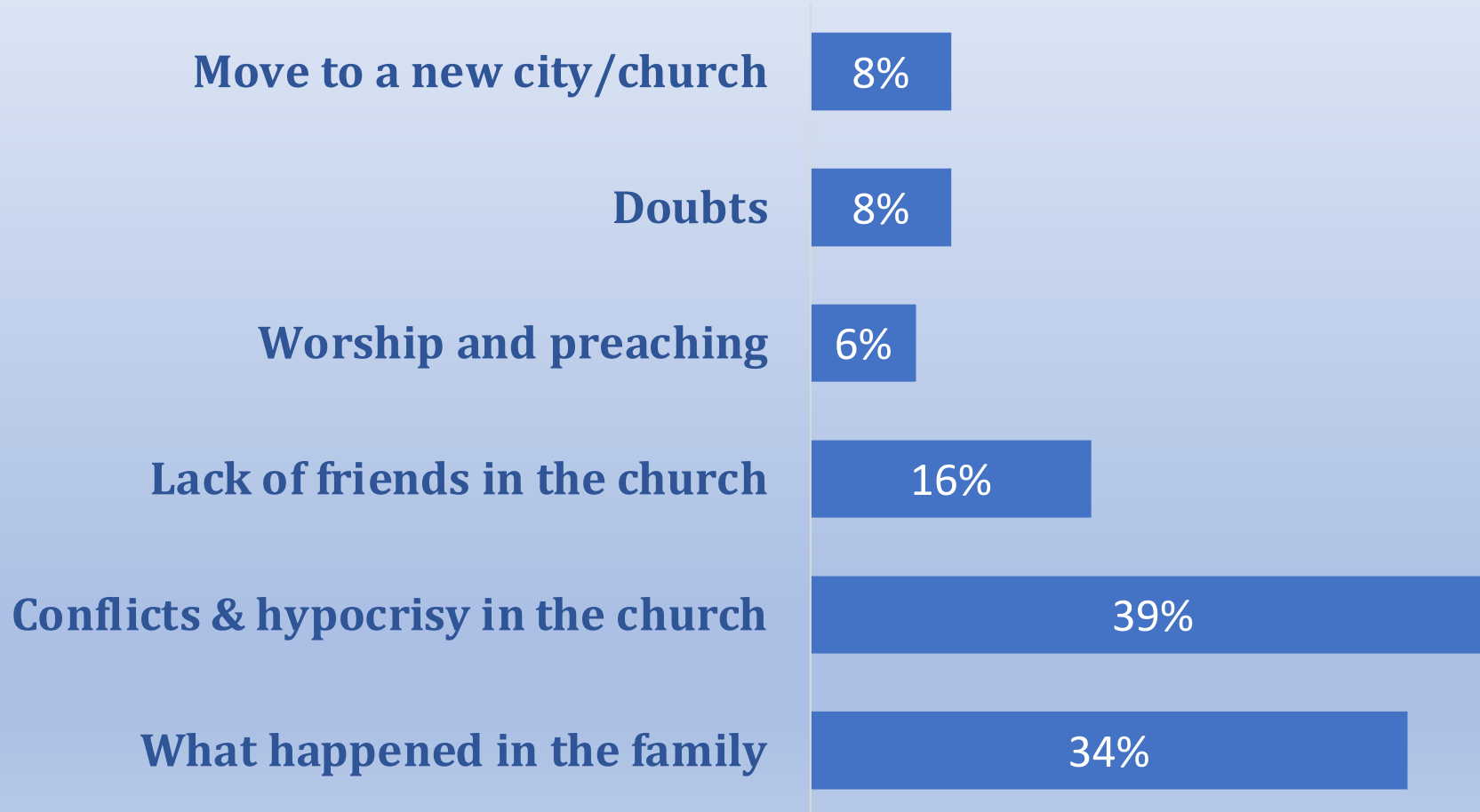


Need of friends & support

Church climate

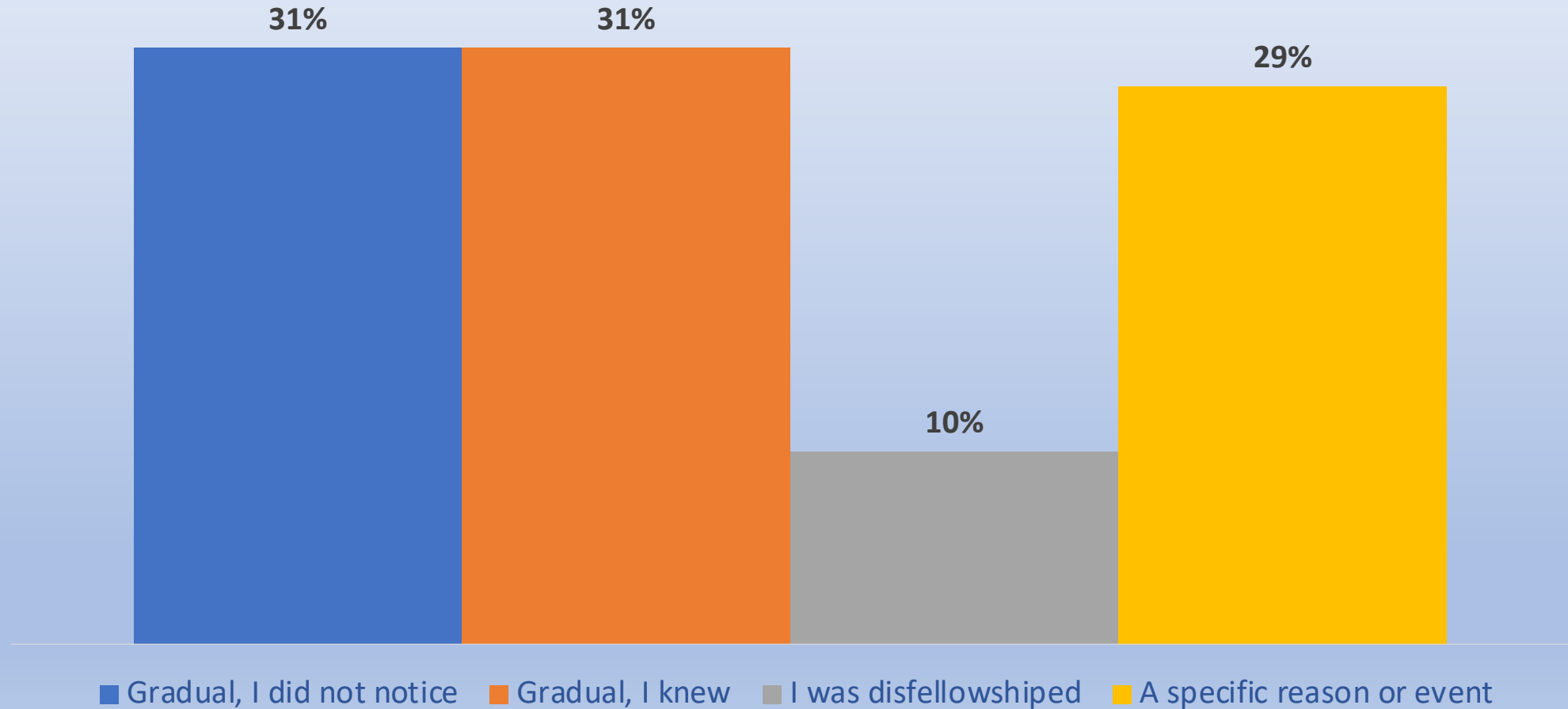
What triggered your decision to leave?

Major themes (LS, young people)



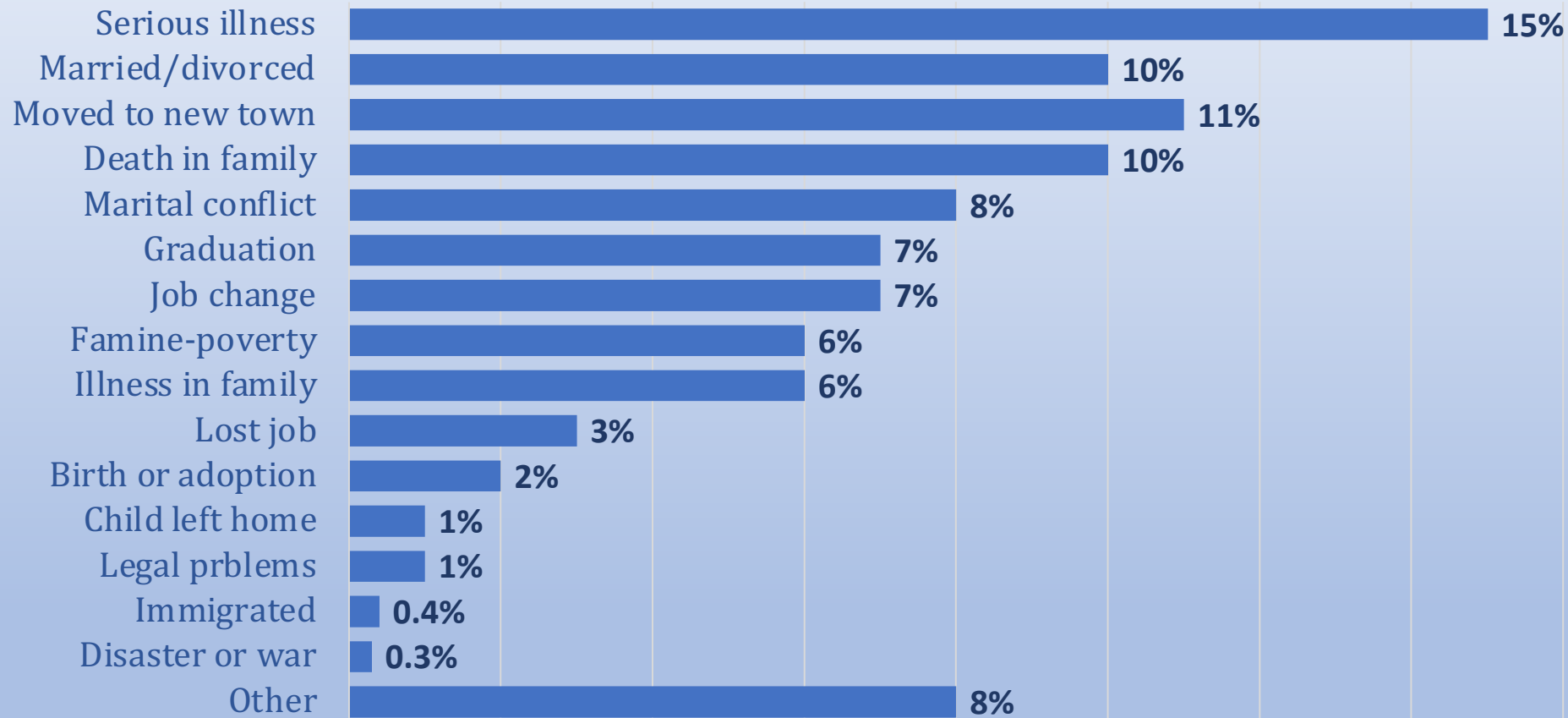
How did you leave the church?

(LS, young people)



GC ASTR, "Leaving the Church" (LS) – Retention study, 2013

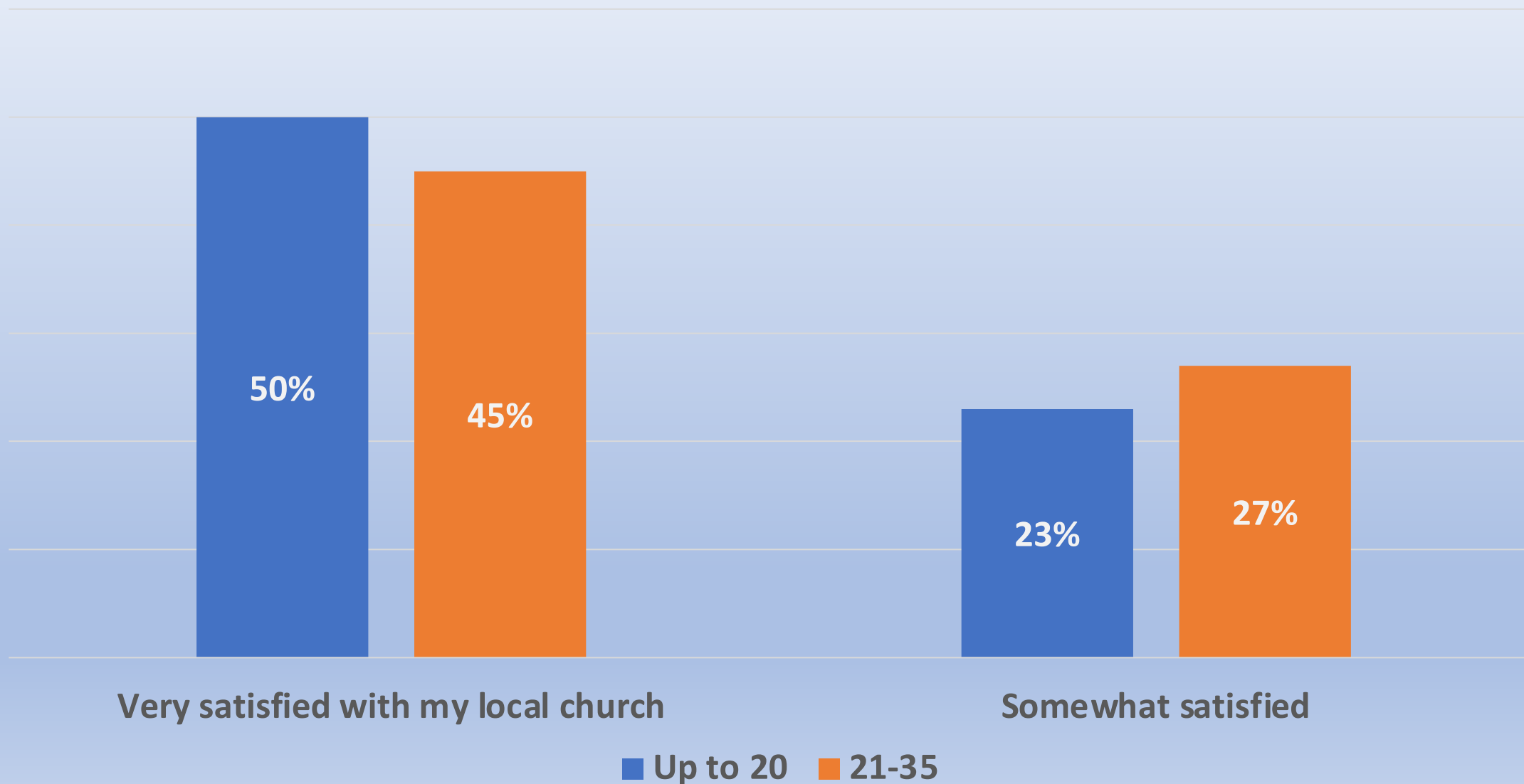
Life Events (F&IM)



Life events in the year leading up to decision to stop attending the church (F&IM)

How are you satisfied with the local church?

2017-18 GCMS

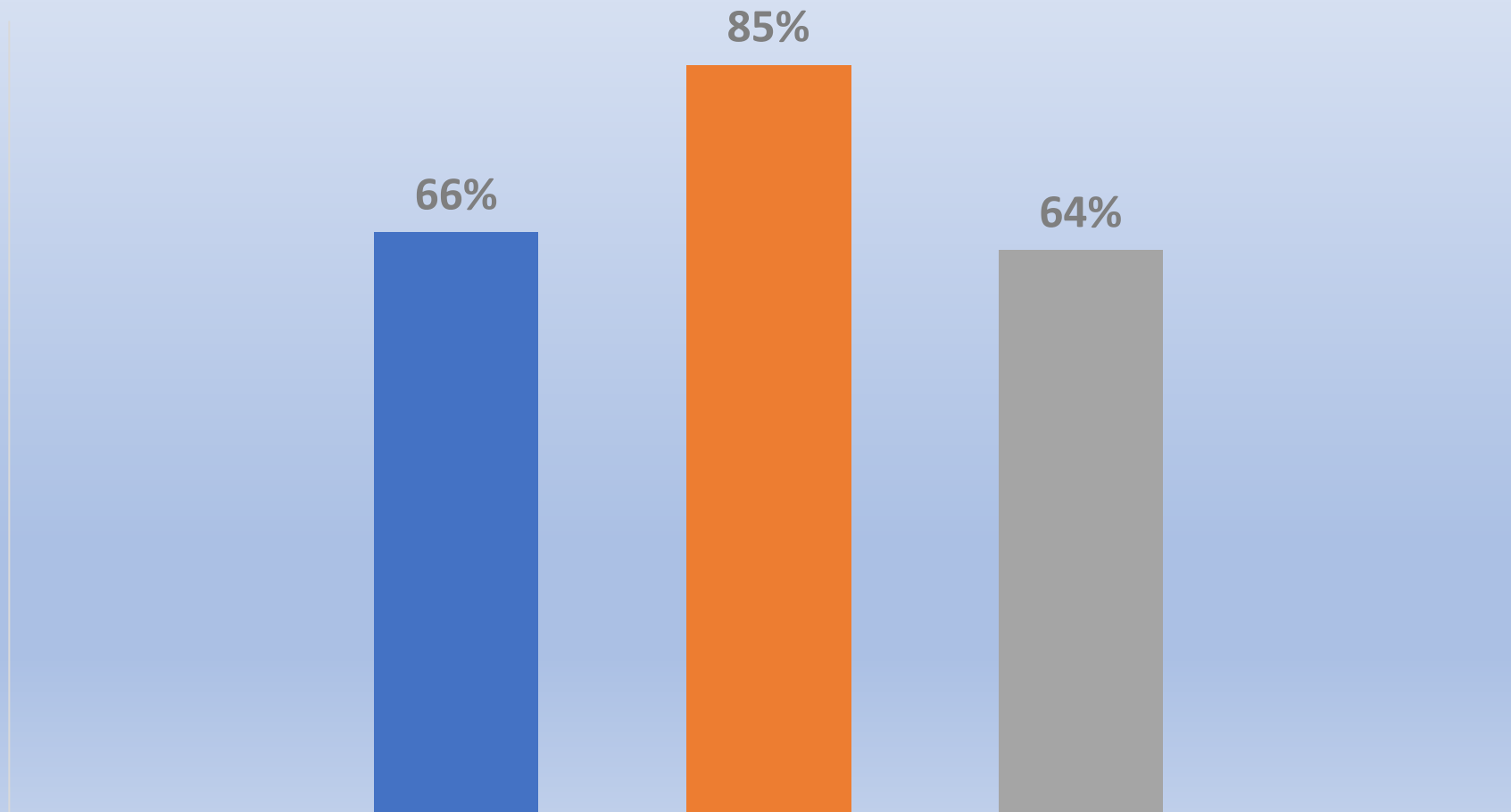


➤ **Programs for all Members of the Family**

- Sabbath School for small children, youth, young people
- Programs for children, pathfinders, young people
- Correlation between satisfaction with local church and programs for all family members

What attracts young people to the church? (21st CCS)

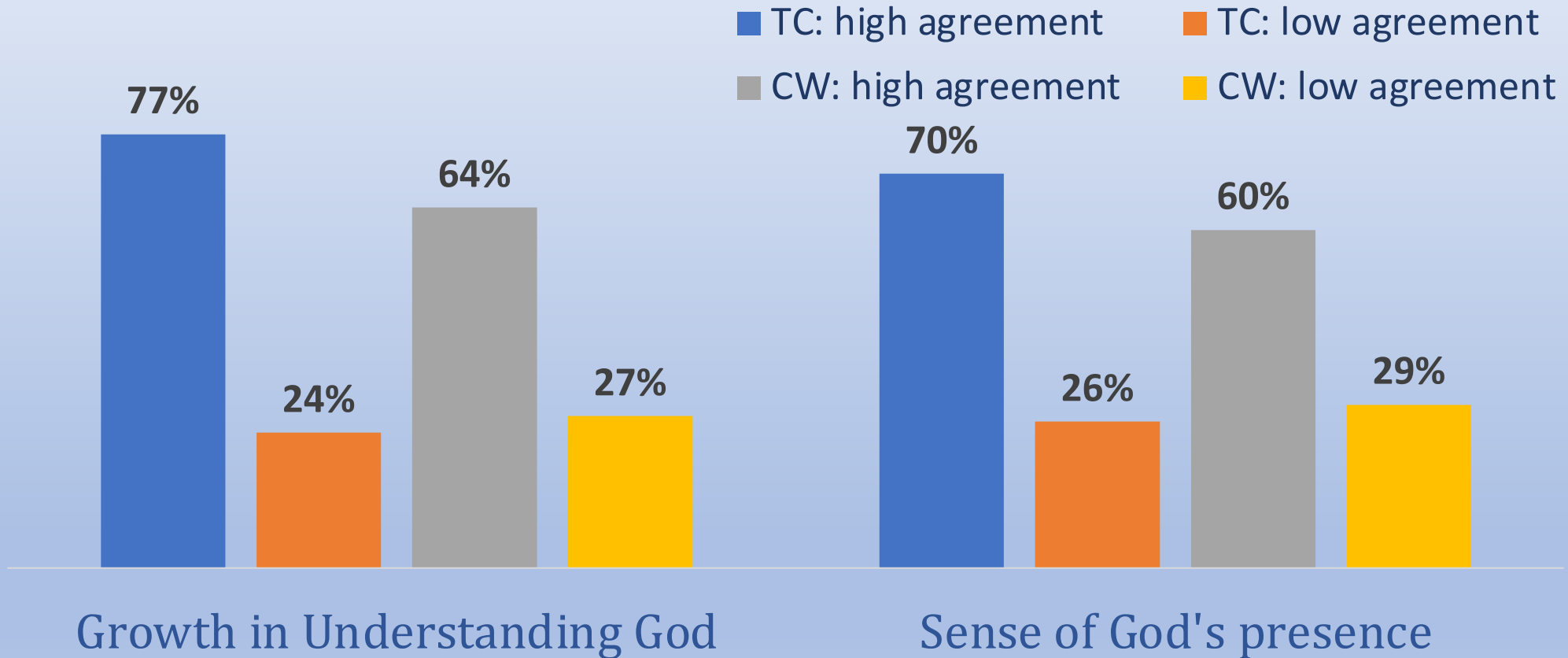
■ Having people of their age ■ Relevance of sermons
■ Pastor's personality



➤ Meaningful Worship Experience

- Who is on the stage? Are there people like me?
- Do I feel that I worship God through music, songs, prayers, etc?
- Does pastor's personality attract me?
- Are the sermons relevant?
- Do they make me think?

Worship Experience and Thinking Climate (TC) & Church Warmth (CW) in the Church (V EU)

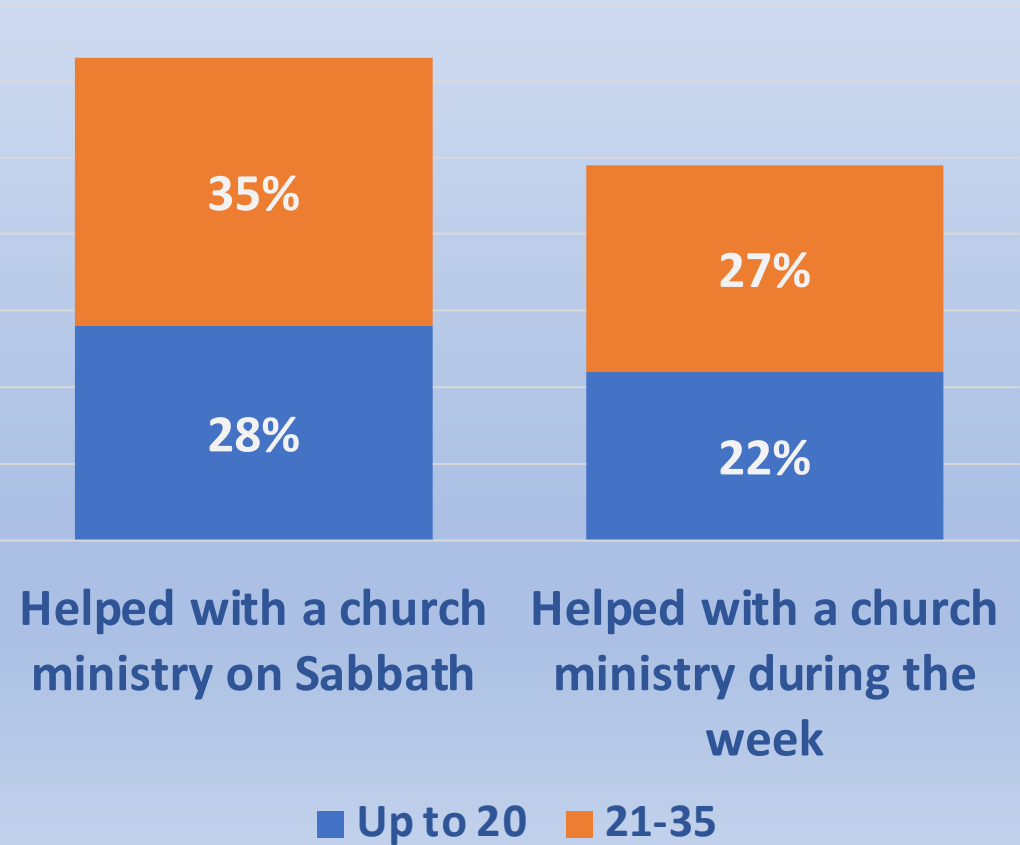


Valuegenesis Europe (V EU)

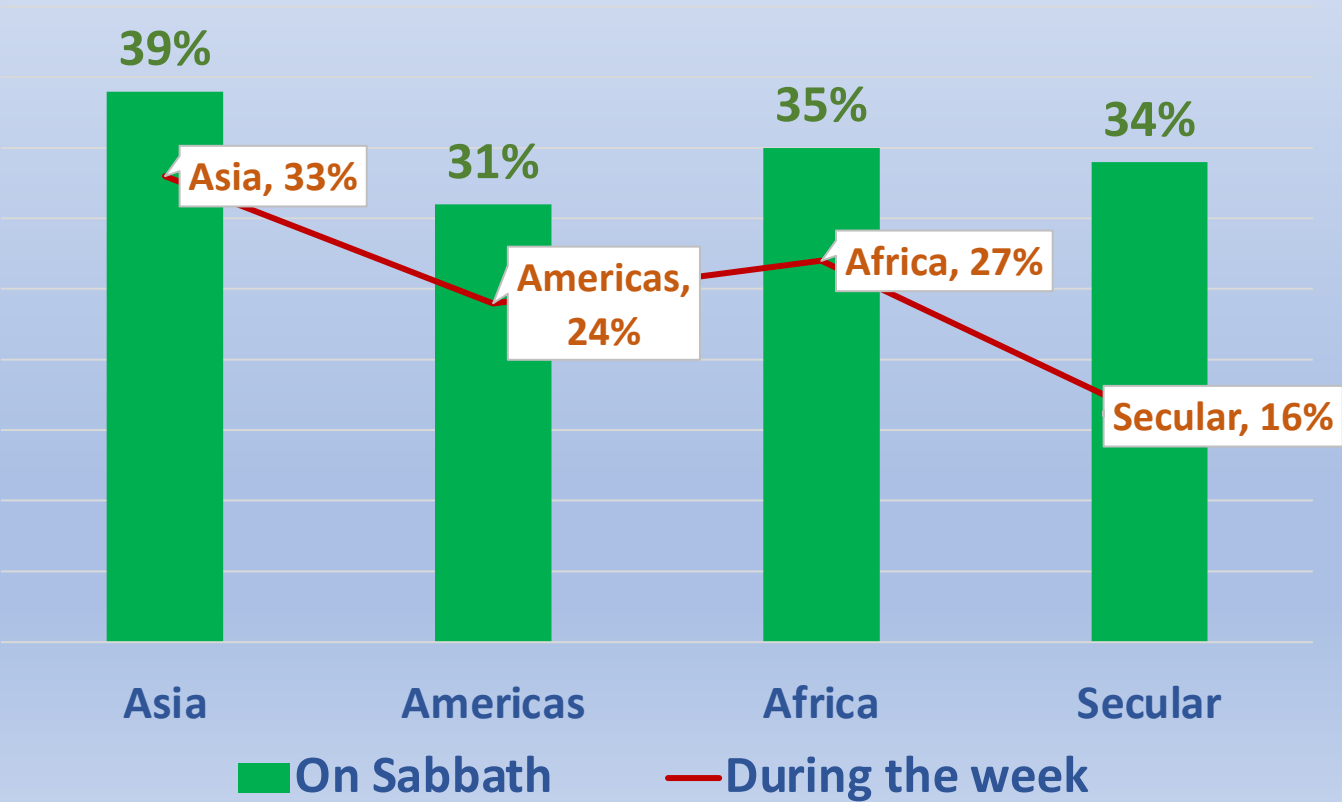
Involvement

2017-18 GCMS

Involvement in Church Ministry during the Last 12 Months
(Every week or more than once a week)

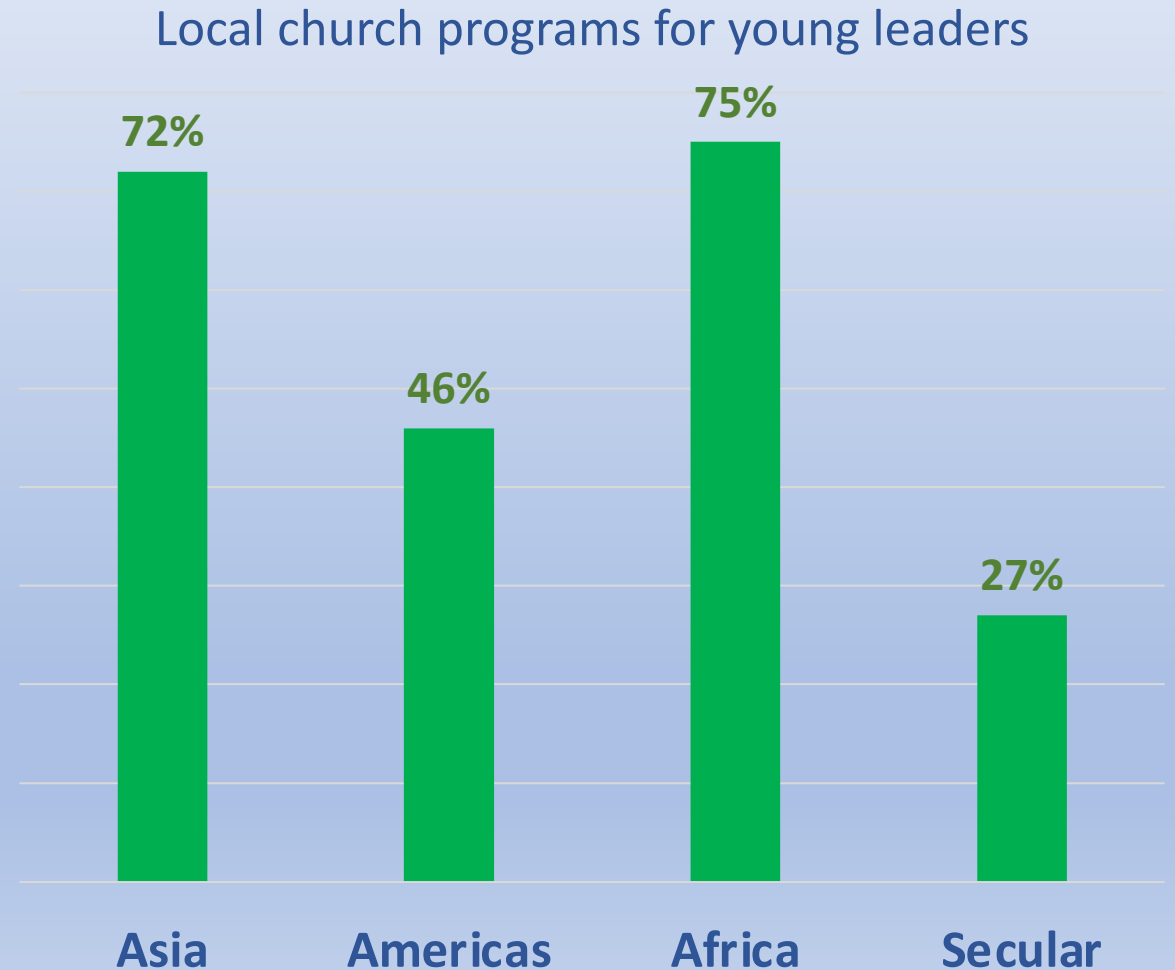
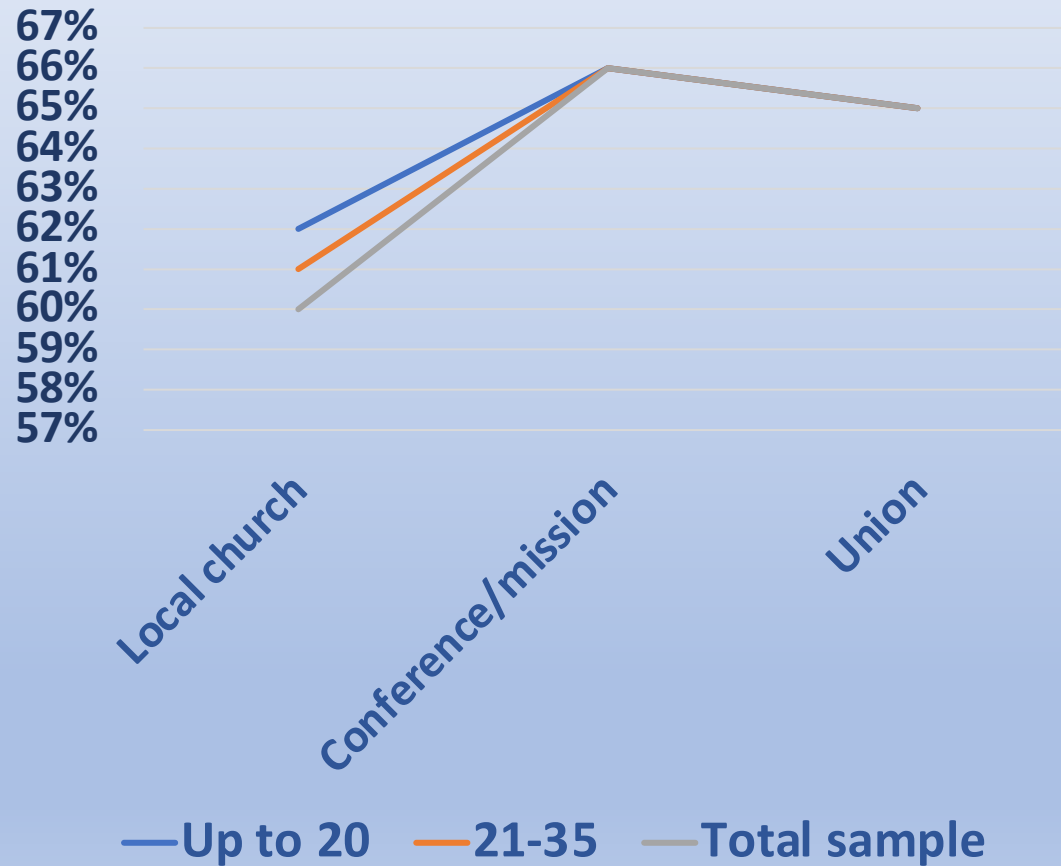


Involvement in Church Ministry during the Last 12 Months
(Every week or more than once a week)
Ages: 15-35



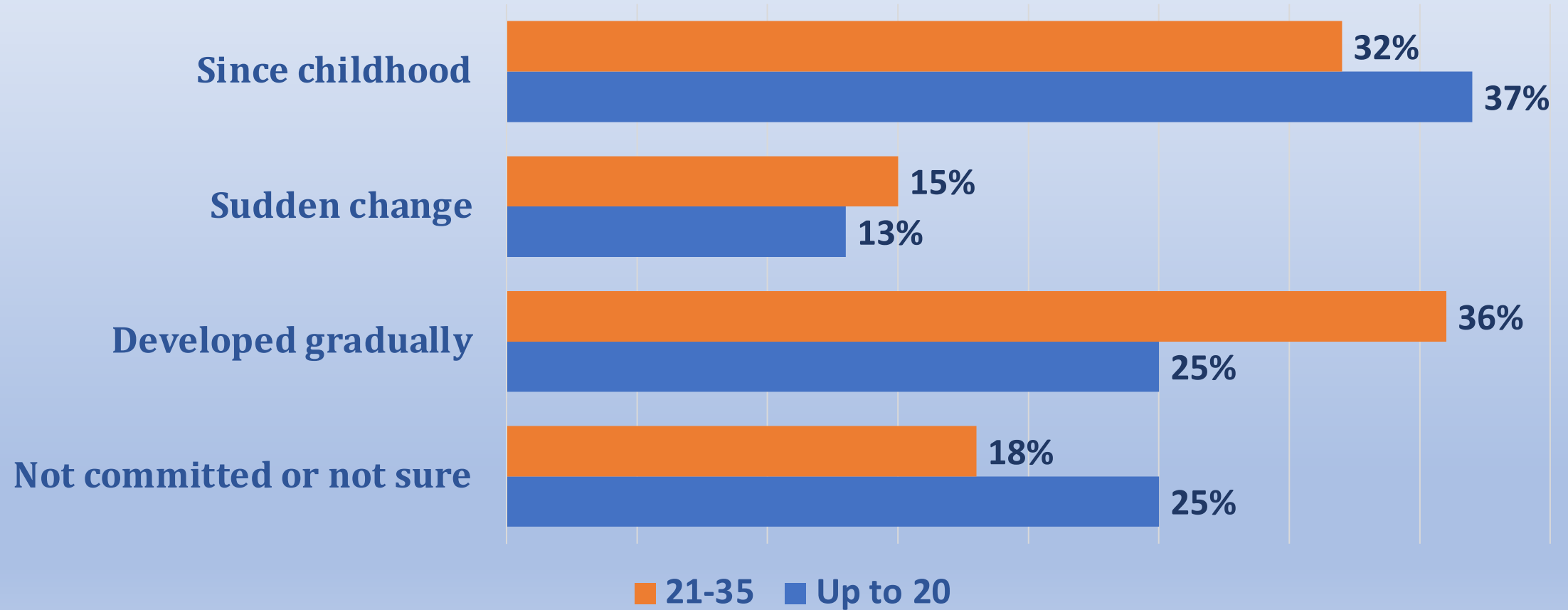
My Church Has a Program for Preparing Young People to Become Leaders (strongly agree or agree)

2017-18 GCMS



Your commitment to Jesus Christ

2017-18 GCMS



Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ

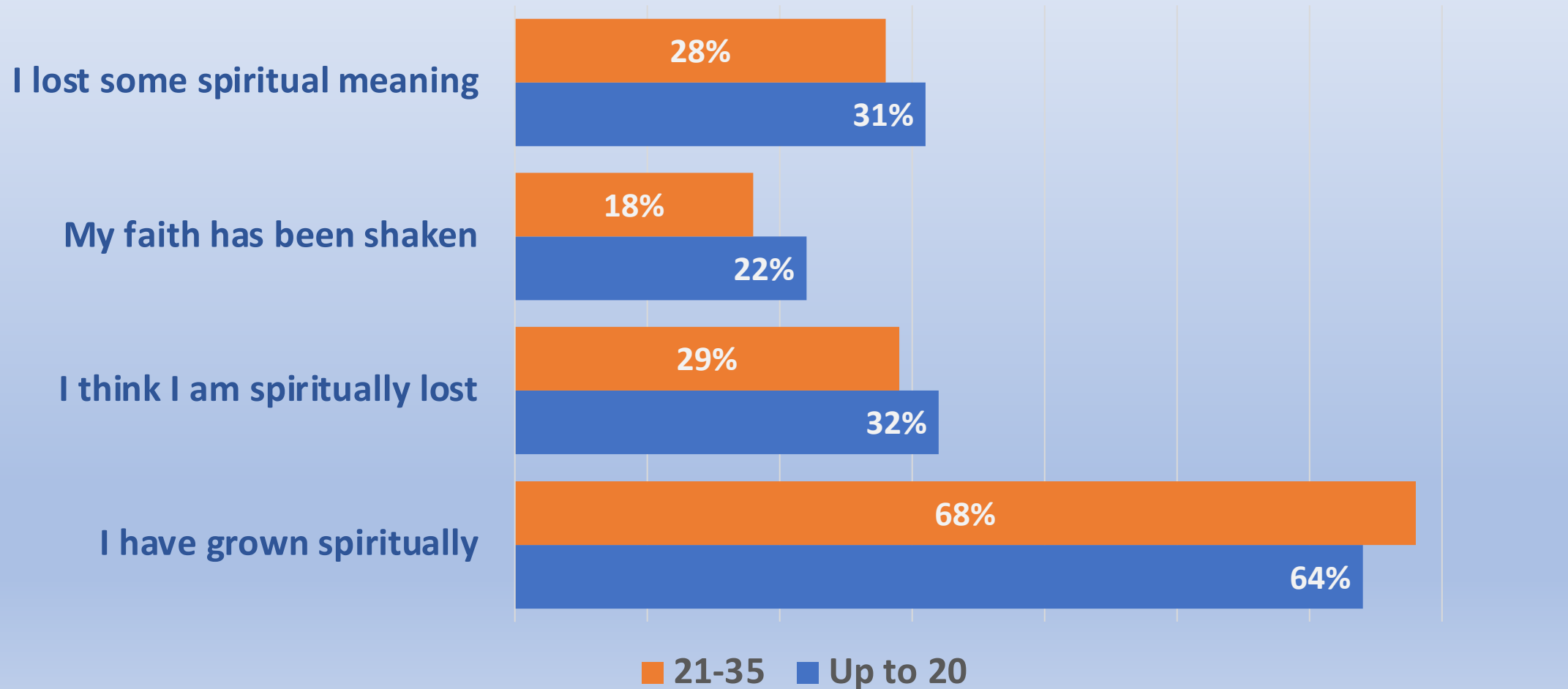
(21st CCS)

- 87% agreed that God is actively working in their lives
- 76% have assurance that they will make it to heaven by God's grace
- But only 59% agreed that they have a vibrant personal relationship with God

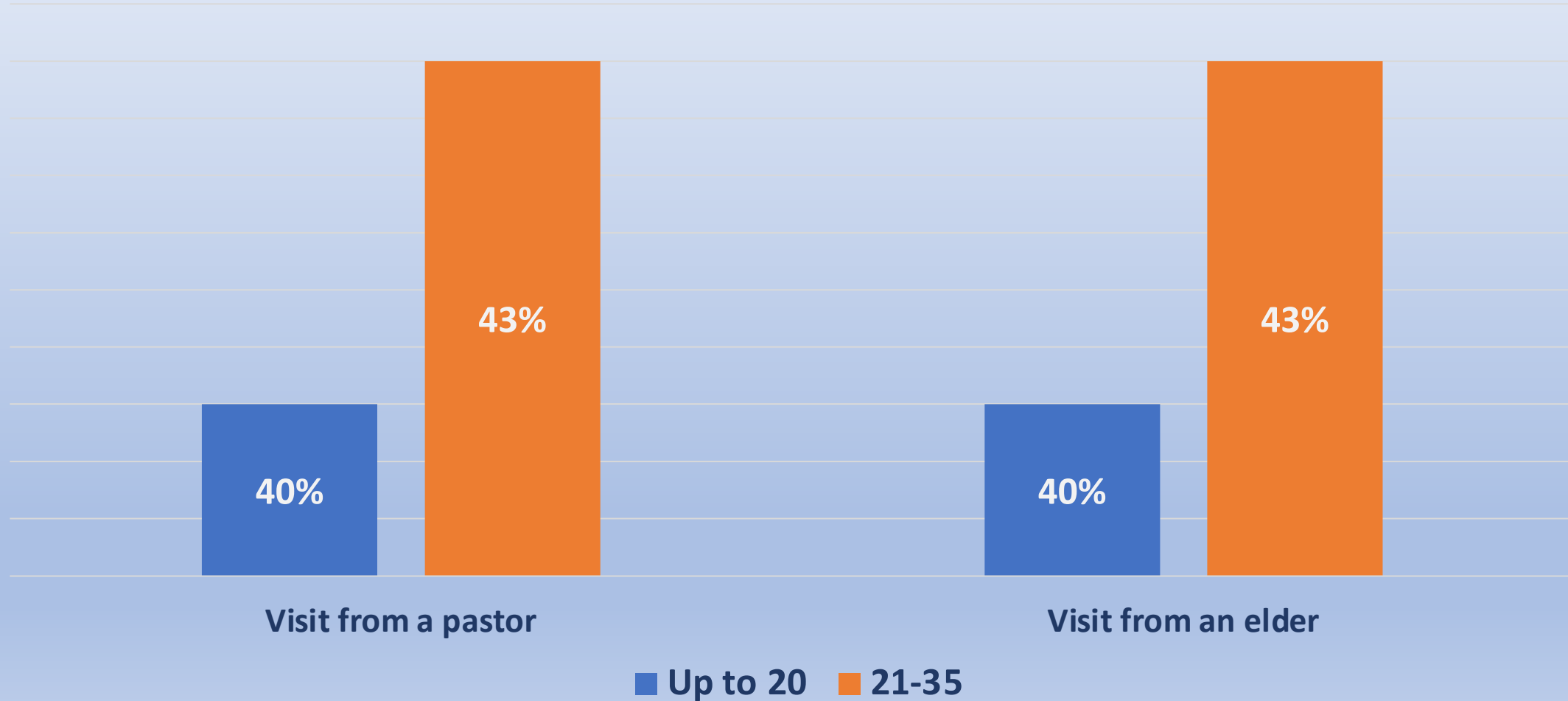
Spiritual Progress & Struggle

2017-18 GCMS

Somewhat true + true of me a great deal



Never visited by a pastor or elder in the last 12 months 2017-18 GCMS



What Kind of Church Attracts Young People?

- Location & facilities
- Doctrines
- Friends & people of their age group
- Warm climate/atmosphere in the church
- Meaningful worship experience
- Relevant sermons & thinking climate
- Opportunities to be involved
- Programs for all family members
- Discipleship program

Conclusions – Believe, Behave, Belong?

Factors that influence young people's retention:

- Age of baptism, preparation, doctrines
- Transitional lifestyle, life events
- Relevant worship & sermons, personality of pastor
- People of my age, friends in the church
- Atmosphere and intellectual level of the church
- Adventist education, mentorship in educational institutions
- Personal devotional time with God
- Involvement in church life
- Discipleship program for young people
- Personal relationships with and commitment to Jesus
- Reclaiming: Contacts and care of those who stopped attending

- Focus on young people, especially 16-21 age group (Ambassadors, high school and college students), in all aspects of their spiritual life and service.

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We provide leaders, pastors, Adventist researchers, and lay people with high quality research from the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.



Have you ever considered how God is able to use anyone, even in spite of their weaknesses? When we look at the story of Moses in Exodus 4:10–12, we discover that Moses thought he had a good understanding of his limitations, but God had other plans for his life. Once Moses got out of his own way and let God work, he was led to do amazing things. This story reveals of how God can use anyone to do something great. Today, we take a closer look at some research findings from the 2017-18 Global Church Member Survey that examines church involvement of people with disabilities.

[Read more](#)

Deutsch: Engagement von Menschen mit Behinderungen in der Kirche (Teil 2)

Español: Participación de las personas con discapacidad en la Iglesia (Parte 2)

Português: Envolvimento de pessoas com deficiência na Igreja (Parte 2)

Français: Participation des personnes avec handicaps dans l'Église (2ème partie)

తెలుగు: చర్చిలో వికలాంగుల ప్రమేయం (పార్ట్ 2)

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comes out twice a month

Research blogs
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languages

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Research Newsletter

In this issue:

- News and updates
- Involvement of people with disabilities in the church

