

2013

Congregational Data Analysis Report

CONGREGATIONAL SURVEY
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REPORT OVERVIEW

This report highlights the results of a survey conducted on the congregation of Ultimate Ministries (fictitious) during the month of April 2013. Ultimate Ministries (fictitious) is one of the 688 listed places of worship in the Wichita Kansas area. The questionnaire was distributed to approximately 103 congregants whose association with the church ranged between one and thirty years.

The questionnaire required respondents to answer questions in five categories or sections (A, B, C, D and E). Section A. deals with the role each respondent plays in congregational activities; Section B. asks about beliefs and attitudes; Section C. solicits views on worship services; Section D. asks for opinions on professional ministry; and, Section E. gathers demographic and personal information about the congregation.

Of the 103 respondents, 76 received the survey electronically via Survey Monkey, while 27 respondents received manual or paper surveys. A total of 68 respondents completed the survey.

FREQUENCY CALCULATION

In reading the charts, it is important to highlight that percentages are calculated based on the frequency of responses to a question or part of a question and will not necessarily equal 100%. For example, in Chart 1, there were 56 respondents who attended Sunday school and/or 10:00 am Sunday Service and/or Bible study 2-3 times a month. Thirty-five out of 56 (35/56) or 62% attends Bible Study; (54/56) 96.4% attends 10:00 am Sunday Service; and, (21/56) 37.5% attends Sunday school. These percentages collectively will not equal 100% because each respondent (church member) can give multiple responses.

Section A.

CONGREGATIONAL AND DENOMINATIONAL ACTIVITIES

This section analyses the frequency and intensity of church members' involvement in church activities. These activities included Bible Study, Sunday school and Sunday morning 10 am service.

Chart 1.

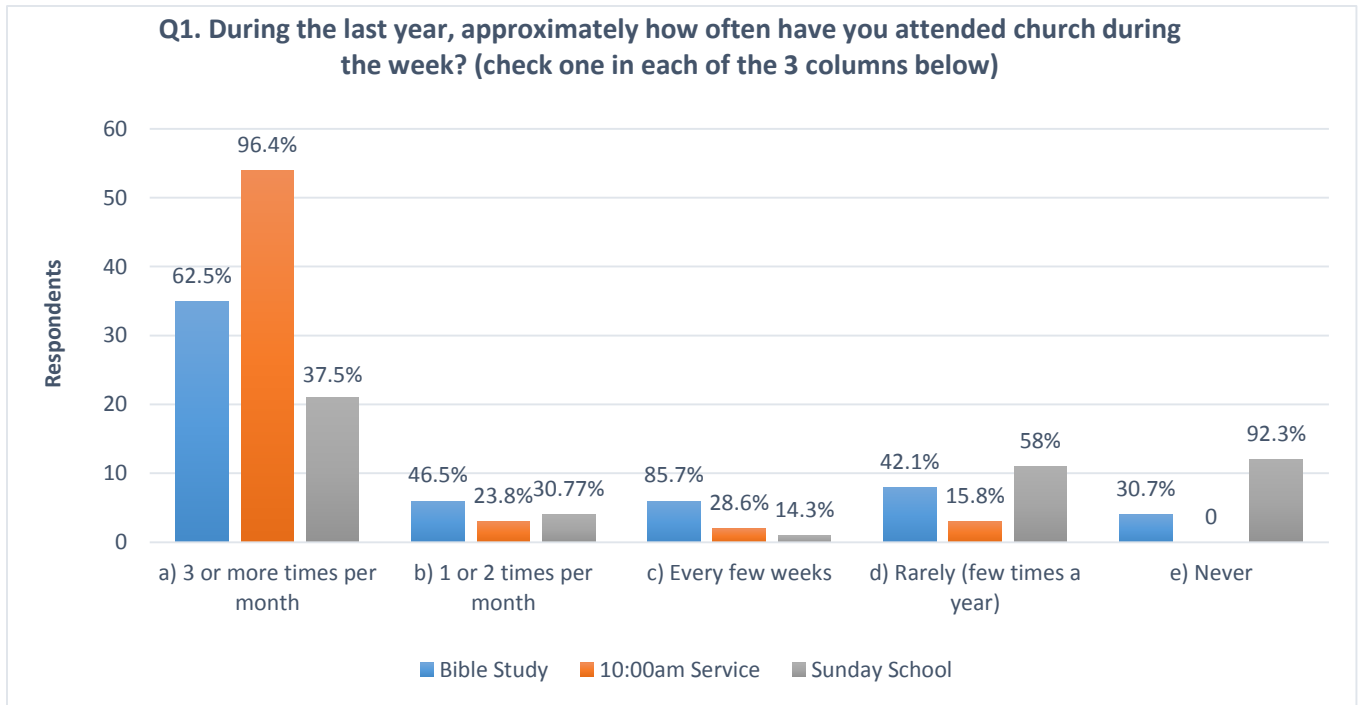
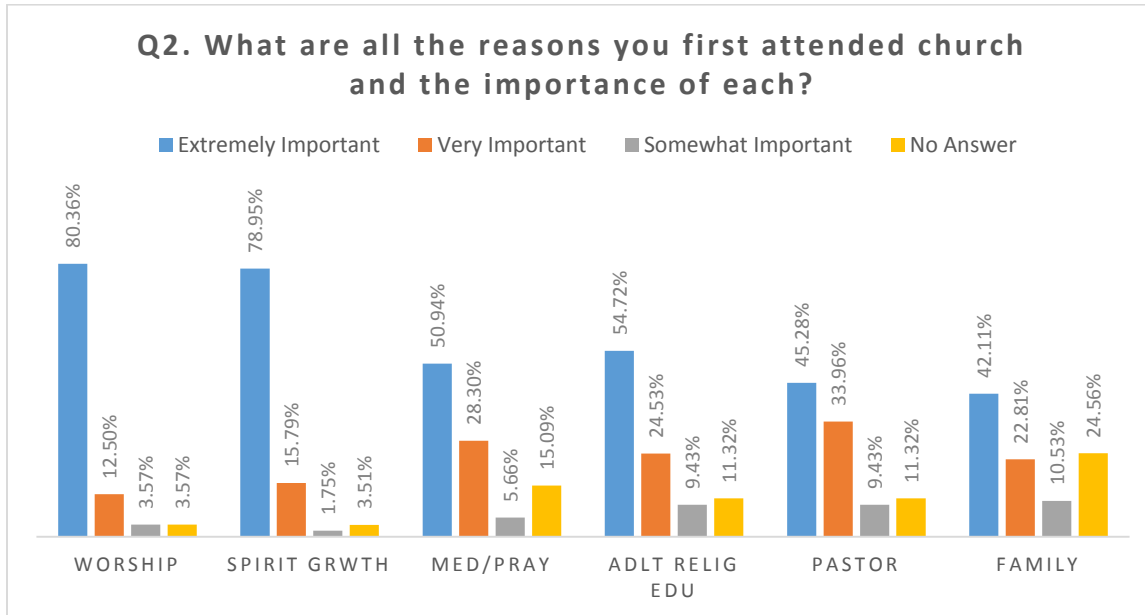


Chart 1 presents the distribution of church member attendance to different activities during the year (Sunday school, Bible Study, Sunday Morning 10 am Services). Fifty-six members responded to this question (N=56). A large percentage, (96%) of respondents stated that they attend Sunday morning service three or four times a month; 62.5% attend Bible study; and, 37.5% attend Sunday school three or four times a month. Thirty-two members reported that they “Never” or “Rarely” attend weekly church activities. Of this group, 71.8% rarely or never attend Sunday school; 9.3% Sunday 10 am service; and, 37.5% Bible study, respectively.

CHART 2



When asked about the reasons they first attended Ultimate Ministries (fictitious) and to rate the importance of each reason (Chart 2), approximately (80.4%) first attended for the worship experience, which they felt was “extremely important”. Approximately (79%) felt that their spiritual growth is extremely important and that is why they first attended. Just over fifty percent (50.4%) stated that meditation and prayer was their main reason; 54.7% attended for adult religious education; 45.3% because of the pastor; and, 42.1% either because of the family atmosphere or because they had or have relatives attending the church.

If we collapse or combine the “extremely important” and “very important categories”, we would discover that the three main reasons members first attended Ultimate Ministries (fictitious) were because of (1) Spiritual growth; (2) Worship; and, (3) the Pastor. The overwhelming majority (95%) first attended because of their “very important” need for spiritual growth, followed by the need to worship (92.8%), while 79.2% attended because of the pastor’s influence.

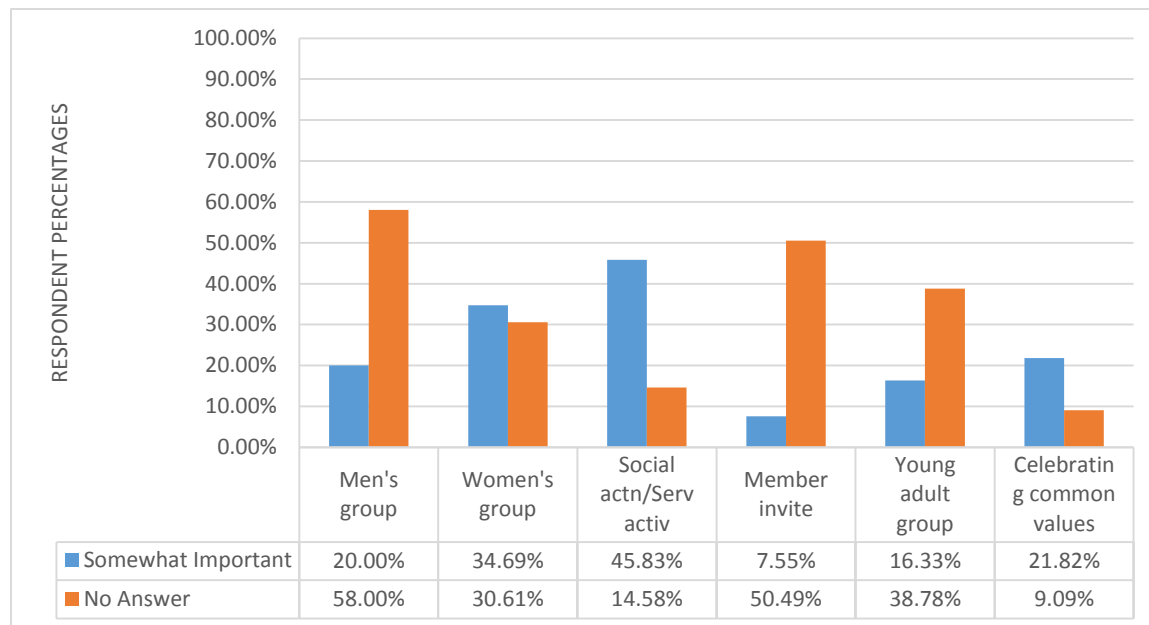
Note also in (Chart 2) that respondents felt that **Adult religious education** (79.2%); **Meditation and prayer** (79.2%); and, **Family atmosphere or relations** (64.9%) were also key factors influencing their initial decision to attend the church.

Four respondents offered the following comments as other reasons for deciding to visit the church. These reasons are: 1) “The presence of the Lord is in the midst of the church”. 2) “How the message was taught”. 3) “Family history”; and, 4) “I wanted my children to have a strong Christian foundation in an “organized” church setting though, I

personally, was not that interested in attending “organized” church for my own spiritual growth after years of being dissatisfied with the “organized church due to church politics”.

Conversely, respondents were not motivated to join the church because of several reasons noted in Chart 2.a.

Chart 2.a: Factors That Did Not Influence Members Decision to Join the Church

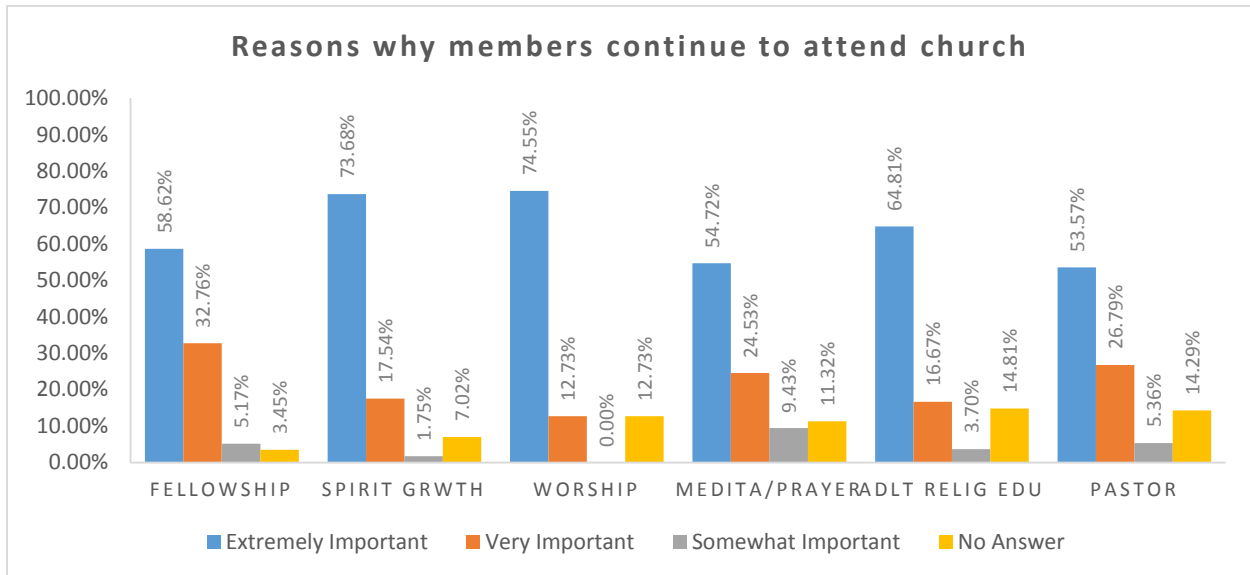


In Chart 2.a., 7.5% or 4 out of 53 stated that being invited by a member was “somewhat important” or not significantly important. Just over fifty percent (50.4% or 27 members) did not respond. Moreover the men’s, women’s or young adult groups did not play a major role in attracting new members to the church. Interestingly, 45.8% or 22 out of 48 respondents indicated that social action or service activities of the church did not greatly influence their initial visit to the church. This may be an area the church can consider focusing on in the future.

Respondents were asked to give reasons why they continue to attend Ultimate Ministries (fictitious) (UM) and the importance of each reason (“Extremely important”, “Very important”, “Somewhat important”, and “No answer”). Chart 3 presents six main reasons why members continue to attend the church. When you combine the “Extremely important” and “Very important” response categories, just over ninety-one percent (91.3%) stated that they continue to attend the UM because it promotes or fosters a condition of sharing similar religious views and interests (fellowship). The

second reason is “spiritual growth” 91.2%; third reason is “worship” experience 87.3%; fourth reason is “meditation/prayer” 82.4%; fifth reason is because of the “adult religious education” 81.5%; and, sixth reason is because of the pastor 80.3%, respectively.

CHART 3



When asked to give other reasons why they continue to attend Ultimate Ministries, three respondents gave the following reasons: 1) Loyalty, hope for ministry progress. 2) Although coming for my children, initially, I have truly come to appreciate the entire church. 3) To encourage more involvement of youth in morning service.

To gauge member involvement in church activities, each respondent was asked to indicate their level and frequency of participation (weekly, monthly, 2-3 times a year, etc.) during the last year (see Appendix 1, p.19). There were 10 choices: Adult religious education; Board of Trustees; Children’s religious education; Denominational meetings or workshops; Choir/other music performance; Committee or task Force; Service as congregational leader; Sunday service (greeter, usher, etc.); Sunday service (as leader/participant; and, Support groups (for men and women).

The most significant levels were recorded for weekly participation in the following activities: 1) Adult religious education; 2) Choir/other music performance; and 3) Sunday service (as leader/participant). For the “Adult religious education activity, approximately 55.8% (or 29 out of 52) attend weekly; 7.69% attend monthly; 13.4% 2-3 times a year; 7.6% attend yearly; and, 13.58% never attend.

Eighteen respondent (35.3%) indicated that they attend choir/music performances on a weekly basis; 17.65% 2-3 times a year; while 39.2% never participate. There were 28

respondents (54.9%) who indicated their participation in Sunday services (as leaders/participants) weekly; 7.4%, yearly; 33.3%, “never”, respectively.

The aforementioned shows the frequency in which church members participate in church activities. [Appendix 2](#) (p.19) shows the number of hours members participate in each activity. Approximately 15% of respondents reported that have been involved in church activities two (2) or fewer hours during the year; 43% for 3-5 hours; 21.3% for 6-9 hours; 11.4% for 10-15 hours; and, 9.8% for 15 hours or more, respectively.

[Appendix 3](#) (p.20) highlights responses to Q6 which asked survey participants to give three reasons why they attend worship services and the importance of each reason. The highest percentage (66.7%) stated that “personal reflection and meditation” was the main reason they attend church, followed by “intellectual stimulation” (49.2%). The third highest ranking reasons for attending worship services were “Celebration of common values” and “Hearing, playing or singing music”—each received a response rate of 42.8%. Other responses include: “Sense of belonging” (26.9%); “Support and encouragement for social action” (15.8%); and, “Fellowship period during and after services” (14.2%), respectively.

In trying to ascertain their feelings about church lay leadership, respondents were asked to answer “Yes” or “No” to whether the current lay leadership 1) is representative of different segments of church membership; 2) encourages and supports development of new programs; 3) is responsive to concerns of all segments of the congregation; and, 4) is concerned with implementing the vision of the pastor (see [Appendix 4, p.20](#)). Out of 53 respondents, approximately 39 (73.5%) answered “Yes” that lay leadership is representative of different segments of church membership, while 26.4% said “No”. Approximately 64% believe lay leadership “encourages and supports development of new programs” and 36% said “No”. Almost fifty-seven percent (56.9%) thinks that the lay leadership is responsible to the concerns of all segments of the congregation—43% do not. Finally, just over eighty percent (81.8%) believe that the lay leadership is concerned with implementing the vision of the pastor, while 18% do not.

Ultimate Ministries (fictitious) has been in existence for many years in Wichita and has seen varying levels of membership throughout the course of time. In [Appendix 5](#), (p.21) we can see responses to the question: “What are your personal feelings about our membership growth?” Of the 60 respondents, 85% or 51 were in favor of expanding the membership at the UM “to allow more people to benefit from the Baptist church in general and the church in particular. About 9 members or 15% had a neutral response to this question, which may be something to explore.

Section B.

BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

In trying to use an empirical approach to better understand the general sense of what the congregation believed, they were asked to select from one or more of 13 different viewpoints that closely match their beliefs. These viewpoints include: Theism, Deism, Atheism, Non-Theism; Naturalistic Theism; Open” Agnosticism; “Strict” Agnosticism, or Skepticism; Humanism; Mysticism; Earth-Centered Spirituality; Neo-Paganism; Feminist spirituality; and, Pantheism. Appendix 6, (p.21) shows that although 100% of respondents believe in Theism: *“find support and challenge in a God with whom they have a personal relationship”*, at least 5% at one time believed or still believe in Naturalistic Theism: *“The powers traditionally attributed to a supernatural deity are inherent in the natural world, which thus elicits my respect and devotion”*. Just over thirteen percent (13.6%) believed or still believe in Humanism: *“That human beings are responsible for “goodness” and “meaning,” and that we must rely on one another for support”*, 3.39% believed or still believe in Feminist spirituality: *“Join with others in reclaiming the Divine Feminine through honoring the sacredness of the earth”*, while 18.6% believed or currently believe in Pantheism: *“Equate God with the forces and law s of the universe”*. At least one respondent offered Calvinism as another belief system.

REPORT FINDINGS

This sections describes the findings of the data analysis.

CONGREGATIONAL AND DENOMINATIONAL ACTIVITIES

This section describes the findings relating to member participation in church activities.

OBSERVATIONS

- 71.8% of the member reported that they rarely or never attend Bible study on a yearly basis.
- 79.2% believe that adult religious education is very important yet only 37.5% attend Bible study 3-4 times a month.
- 95% first attended the church because of their need for spiritual growth, but over fifty percent (50.9%) of existing members did not appear to make any effort to invite new members to the church.
- 85% are in favor of the membership growing to allow more people to benefit from the Baptist faith in general and the UM in particular.
- Church groups (men’s, women’s and youth) play a marginal role in attracting new members although respondents believe that these groups are very important

- 45.8% or 22 out of 48 respondents indicated that social action or service activities of the church did not influence their initial visit to the church.
- 56.9% of church members believe that the lay leadership is responsive to the concerns of all segments of the congregation; conversely, 81.8% believe the lay leadership is concerned with implementing the vision of the pastor.
- There is considerable agreement (75%) that religious education of church youth is important, yet 63.4% of adults are “never” involved in providing religious education to teens in the church.

BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

The following observations were made of the Ultimate Ministries (fictitious) member population regarding their attitudes and beliefs.

OBSERVATIONS

- 100% of the members indicated a belief in Theism although some associated their beliefs with Naturalistic Theism, Humanism, Feminist spirituality and Pantheism.
- More people occasionally meditate than occasionally prayer
- There were mixed thoughts on who Jesus is: 55% believe that Jesus was Devine; 34% believe that He was human, but was uniquely in relationship with God; 9.43% believe that Jesus is an example of a model for living an ethical and caring life; and, 3.8% believe that Jesus did live, but was totally/fully human. Fifteen members or 22% failed to share their beliefs.
- 63.1% share the belief that when a body dies the person’s spirit or soul lives on; 10.5% believe that a person’s memory lives on in the minds of their love ones; and 22.1% believe that at some point in the future, a person’s body and soul are resurrected.

VIEWS ON WORSHIP SERVICES

This section highlights findings relating to members’ views on worship services.

OBSERVATIONS

- Over seventy percent (70.9%) believe that the pastor should preach nearly every Sunday. Approximately 29.09% felt that the pastor should preach no more than three (3) times a month.

- Members believe that the main objectives of Sunday morning service are: First, to help the congregation better understand themselves and to be more introspective as confirmed by 95% agreement. Second, to provide a supportive environment for self-development—93% agreement. Third, to show new paths for individual growth and inspire reverence and awe—confirmed by 91% agreement.

VIEWS ON PROFESSIONAL MINISTRY

This section describes the findings relating to members' views on professional ministry.

OBSERVATIONS

- 60.7% think one pastor is adequate for the church's current needs; however, 72.7% believe that lay participation is very important.
- Members believe that the six major functions of the pastor are: 1) Presenting stimulating and challenging Services (65.5% agreement). 2) Assuring efficient and effective church administration (55.1% agreement). 3) Participating in religious education for children and youth and fostering a sense of fellowship and community within the church (32.7% agreement). 4) Providing visible leadership in the community beyond the church (27.6% agreement); and, 6) Caring for and counseling individuals.

ABOUT YOU AND US

This section describes the characteristics of Ultimate Ministries (fictitious) members.

OBSERVATIONS

- 85% of the membership believe that the church needs to expand membership, but only six members stated that they joined the church within the past two years.
- Over seventy percent (71.9%) of the congregation is over 50 years old, with 15.7% between 70 and 79 years old and 1.7% over 80.
- 25% of the church population said that their health is between very poor to fair which makes them prone to illness, yet 10.3% said that the church did not reach out to them when they were ill, and 19% said that they receive just a little.
- Tithing for some higher income members may not be commensurate with their reported income

- Approximately 12.2% of the congregation are single, over half (52.6%) are married and 19.3% are divorced. Twelve percent (12.3%) are widowed and 3.5% said that they were living with a domestic partner.
- Almost eighty-four percent (83.6%) said that they have been attending the church as a Baptist for more than 15 years. Another 9% have been attending the church between 6 and 15 years and 7.2% between 0 and 5 years

CONCLUSION

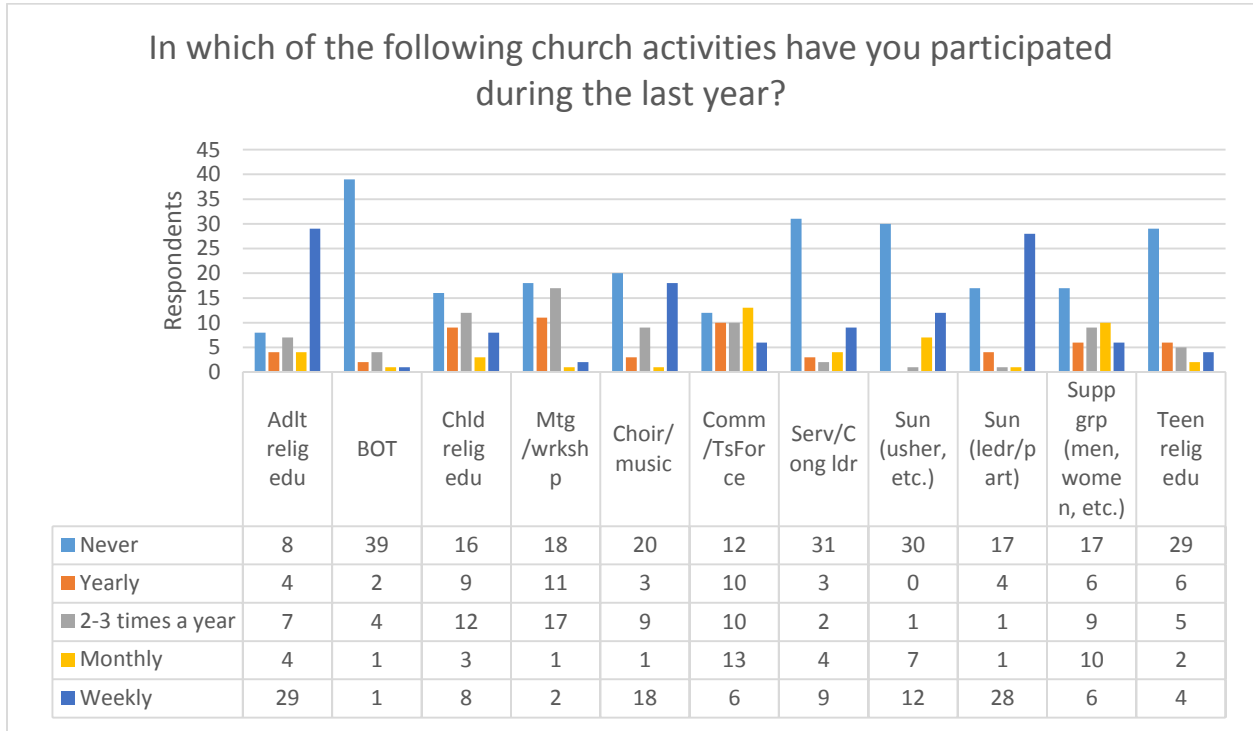
It is reasonable to infer from these findings that Ultimate Ministries (fictitious) is on the right path towards developing a transformative ministry that supports the spiritual needs of the current congregation. The emotional and physical wellbeing of most congregants are challenges that merit the attention of church leaders. Encouraging evidence exists to suggest that the church is making good progress in its efforts to better engage with the larger community. This evidenced-based research is the appropriate standard by which to implement change and monitor the outcome.

RECOMMENDATIONS

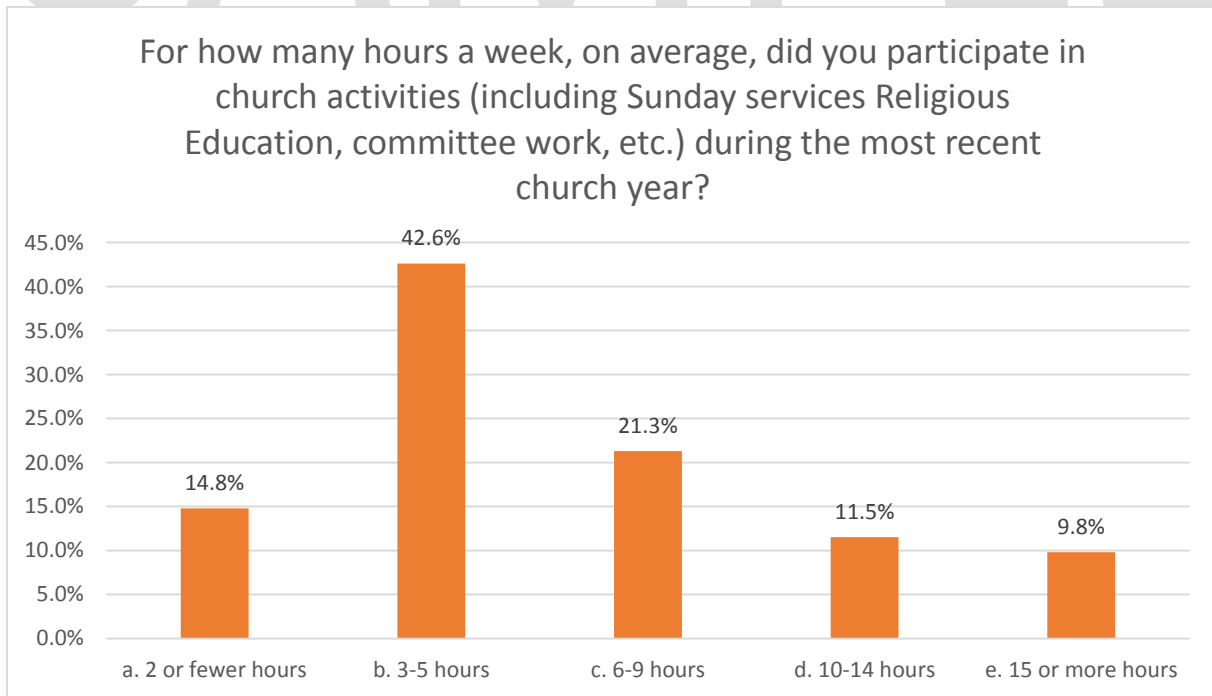
We recommend the following action steps:

- Conduct an analysis to determine why members are not engaged in church activities (Bible study, Sunday school, Youth educational activities, etc.).
- Provide visible leadership in the community beyond the church.
- Develop a formal process for recruiting new members to the church that members can follow
- Clarify the role of the lay leadership so that the congregation does not see their role only as implementing the vision of the pastor
- Provide a clear vision for the church that members understand and can identify with
- Reevaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of church groups and bring them to a status where they could become a recruiting mechanism for new members.
- Conduct an analysis to determine the feasibility of establishing services to assist singles, divorced, and widowed members of the church.
- Reevaluate current methods of providing services to those in need, especially the sick and elderly, within the church.

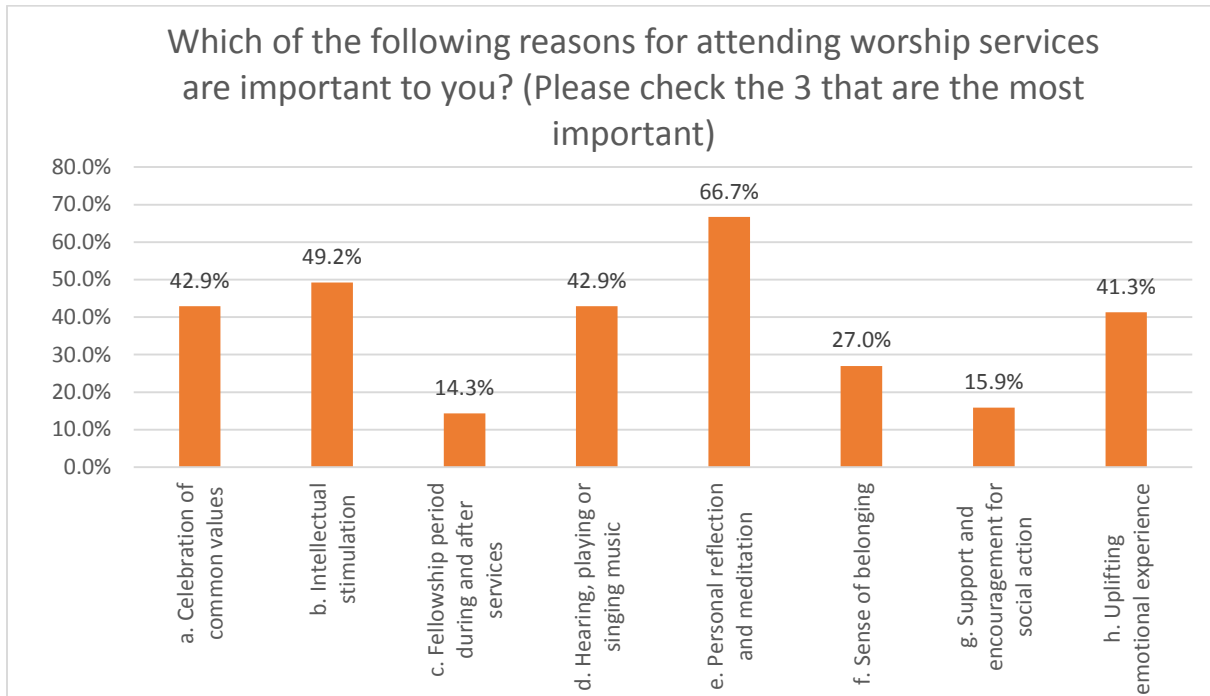
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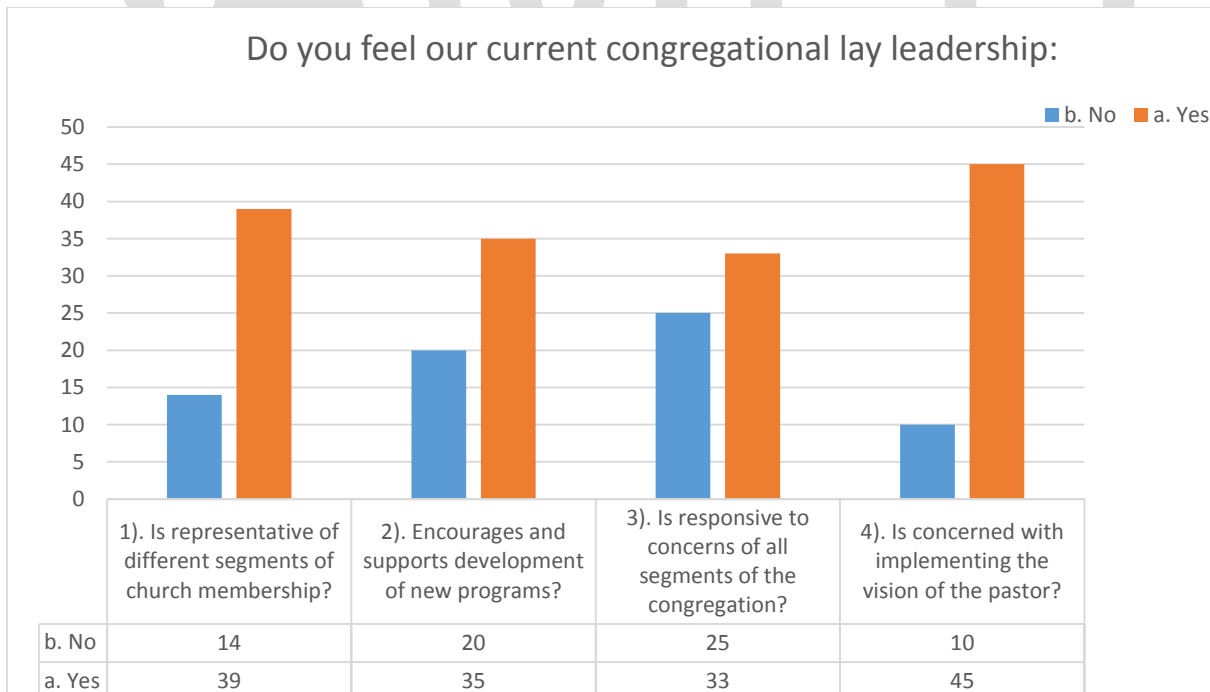
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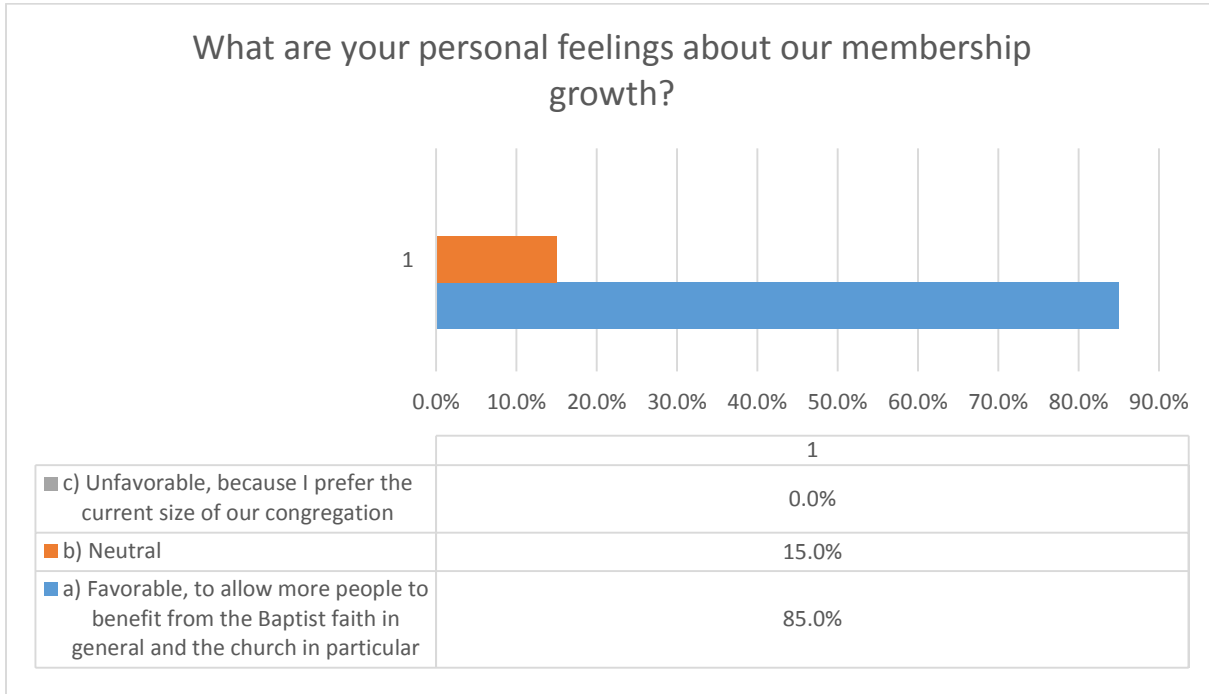
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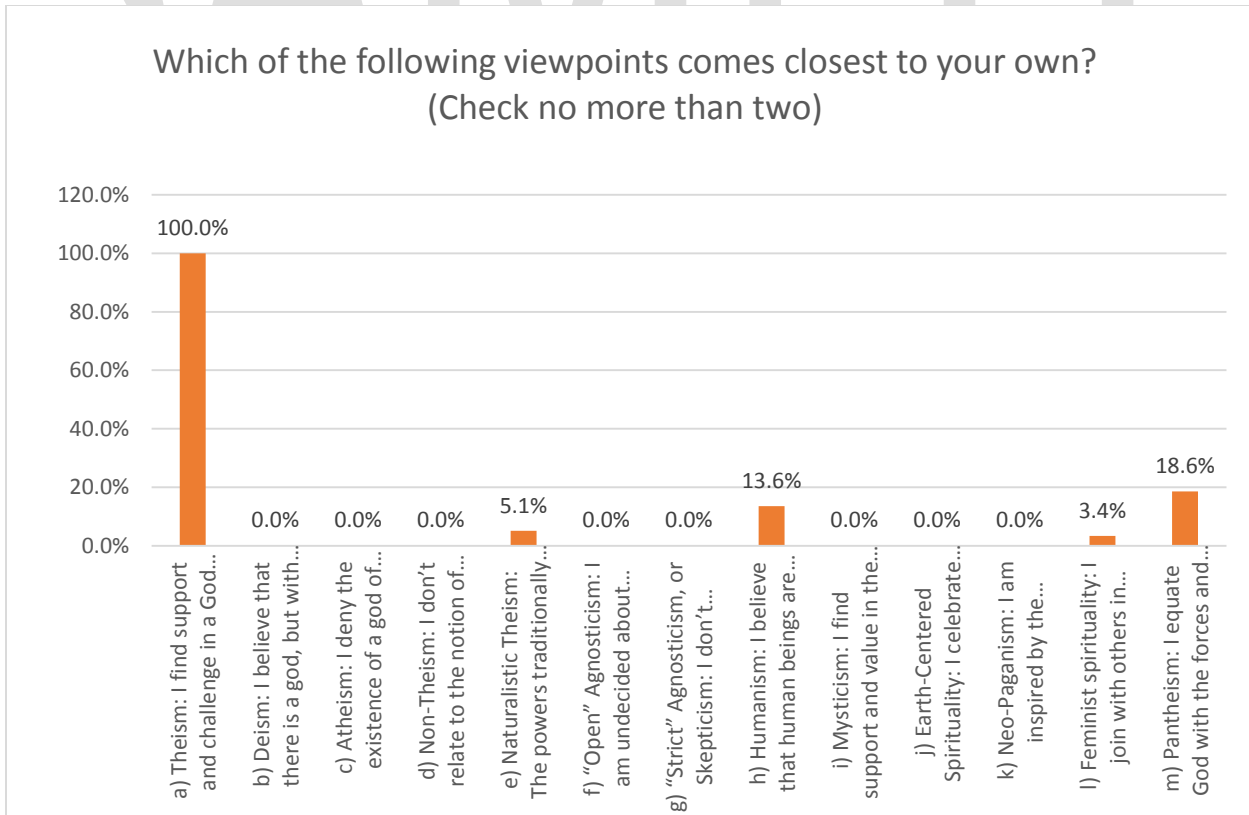
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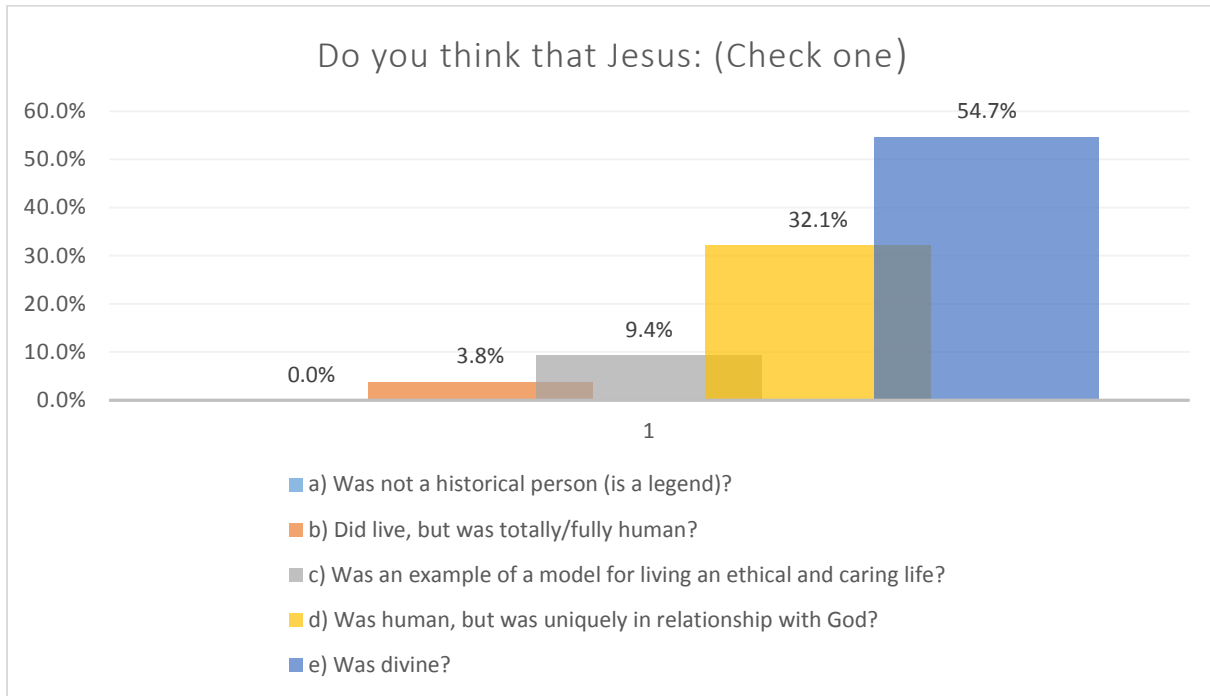
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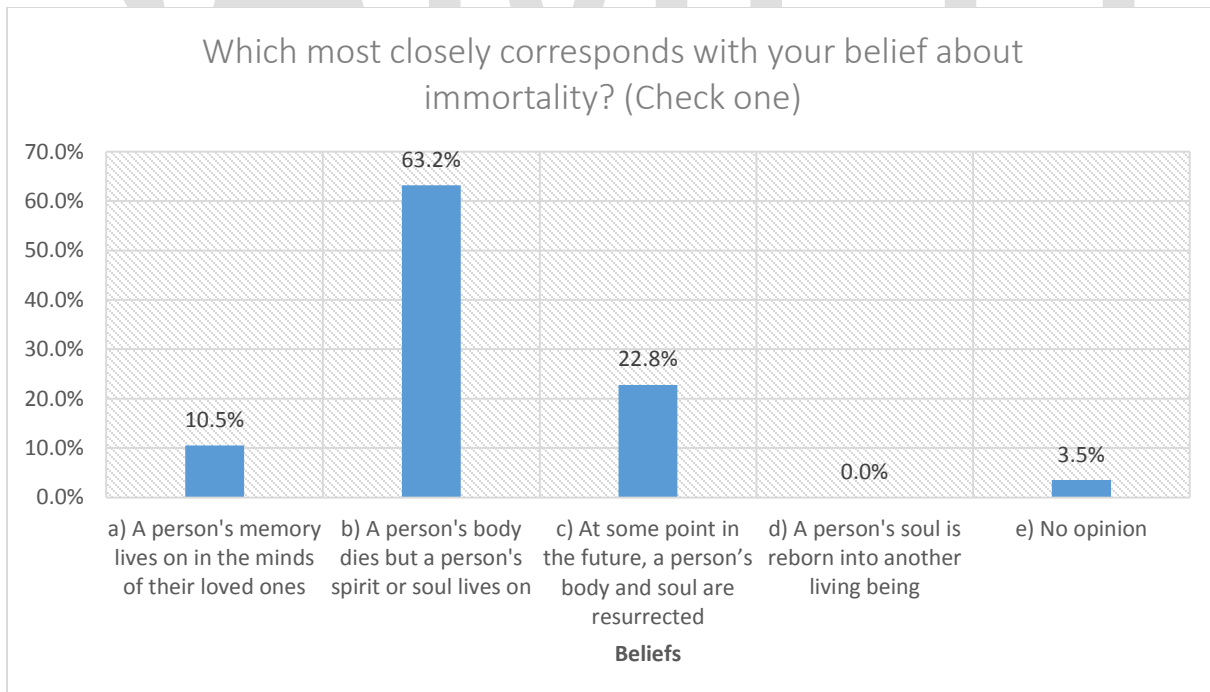
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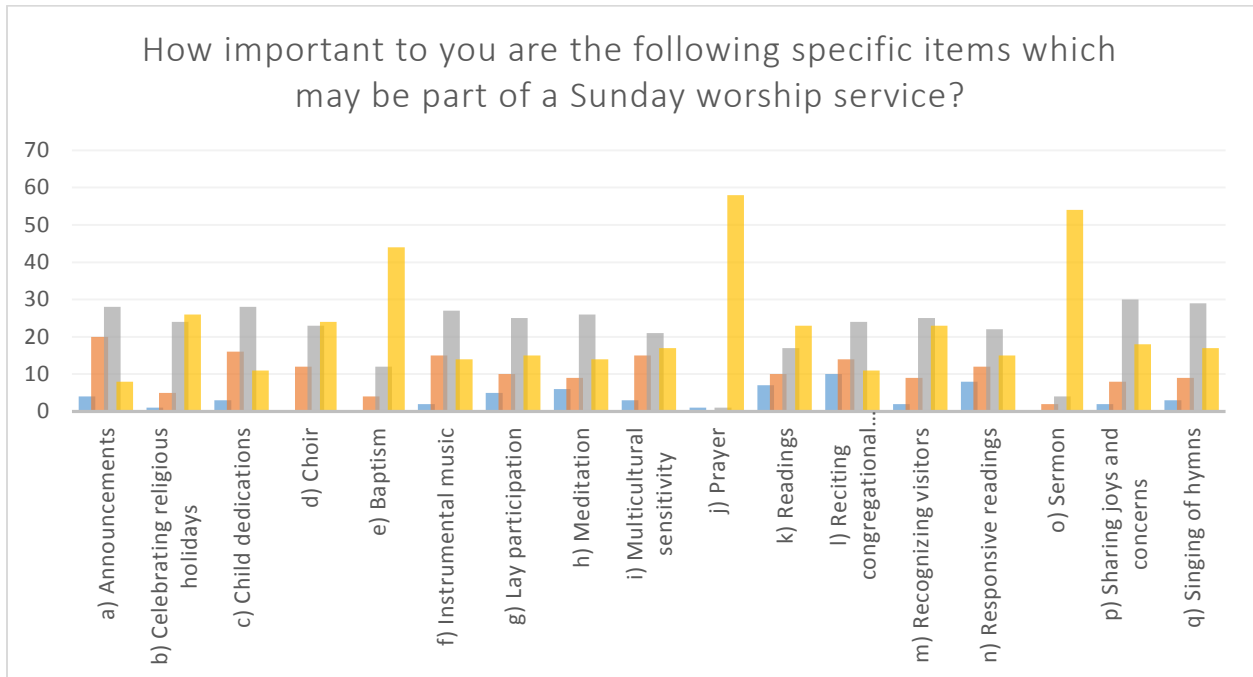
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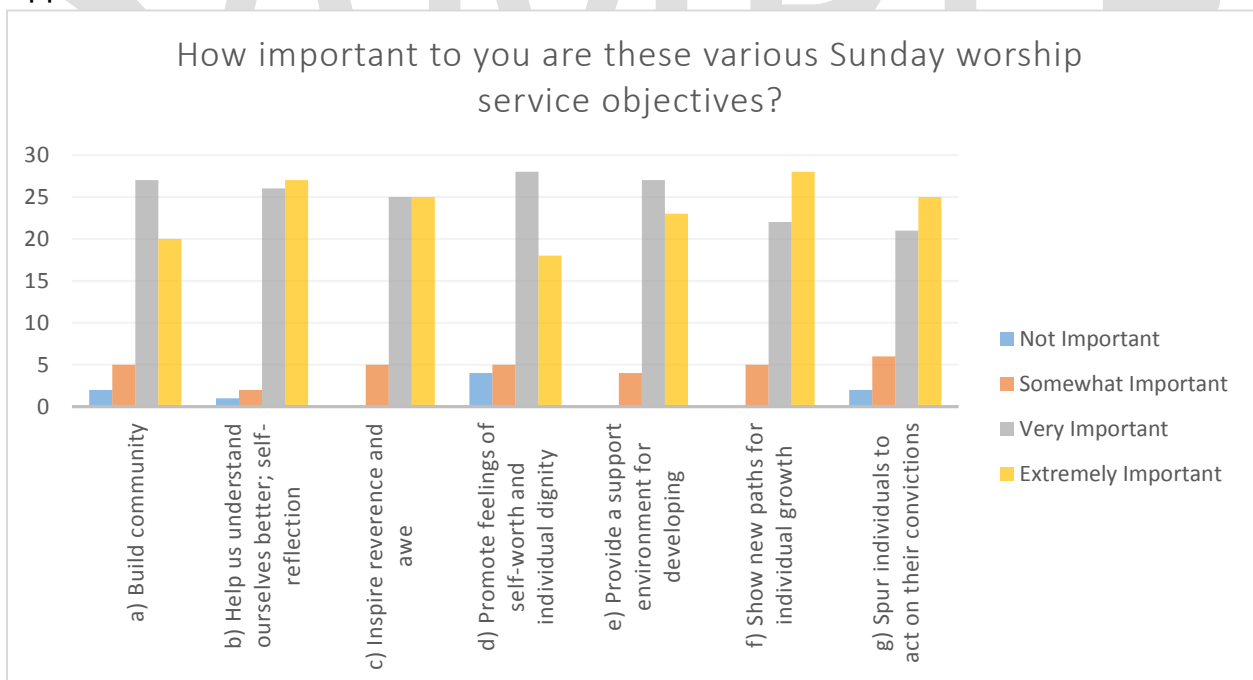
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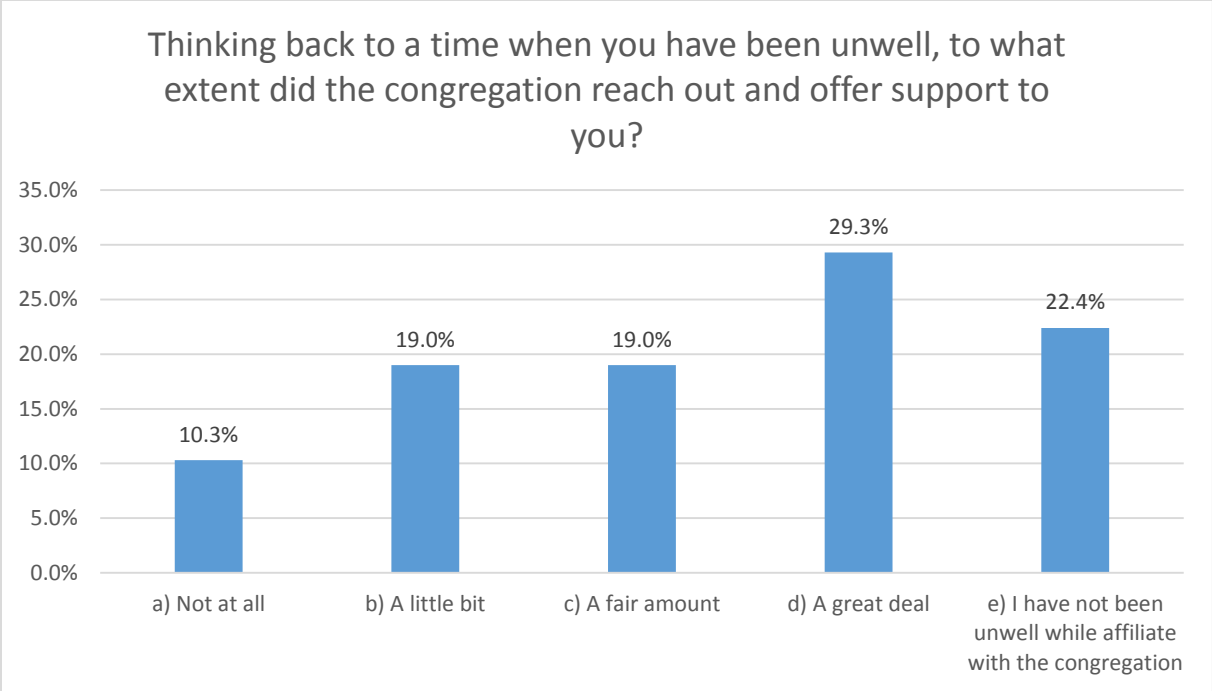
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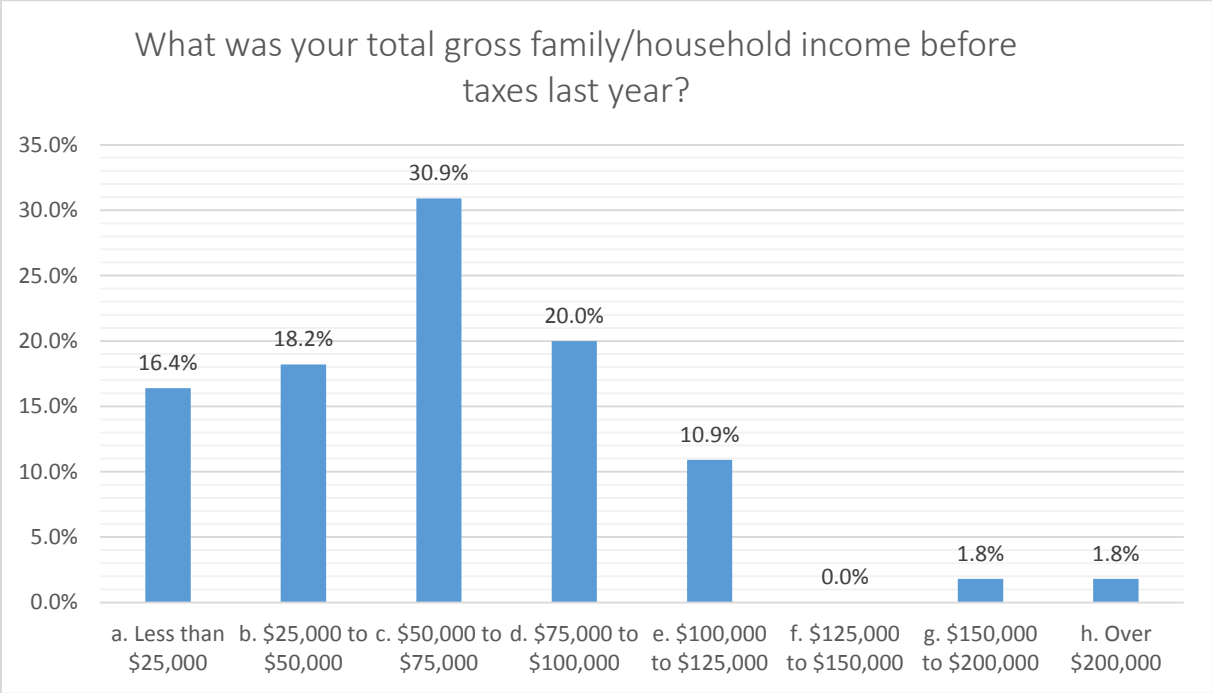
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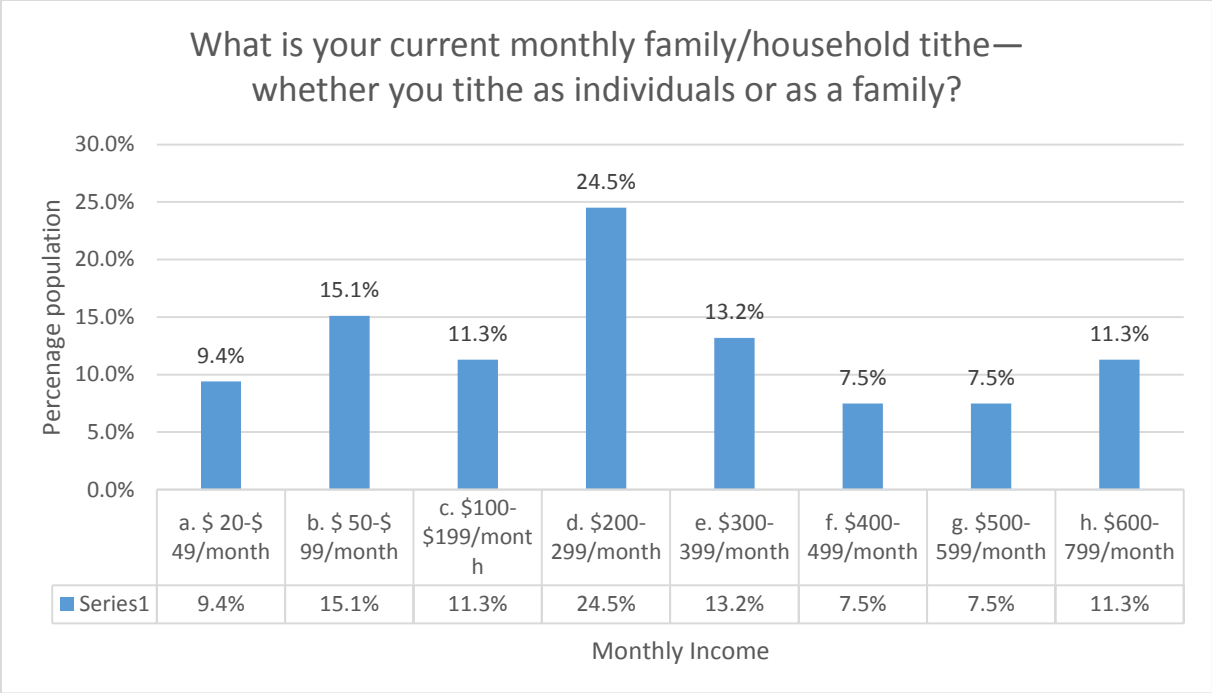
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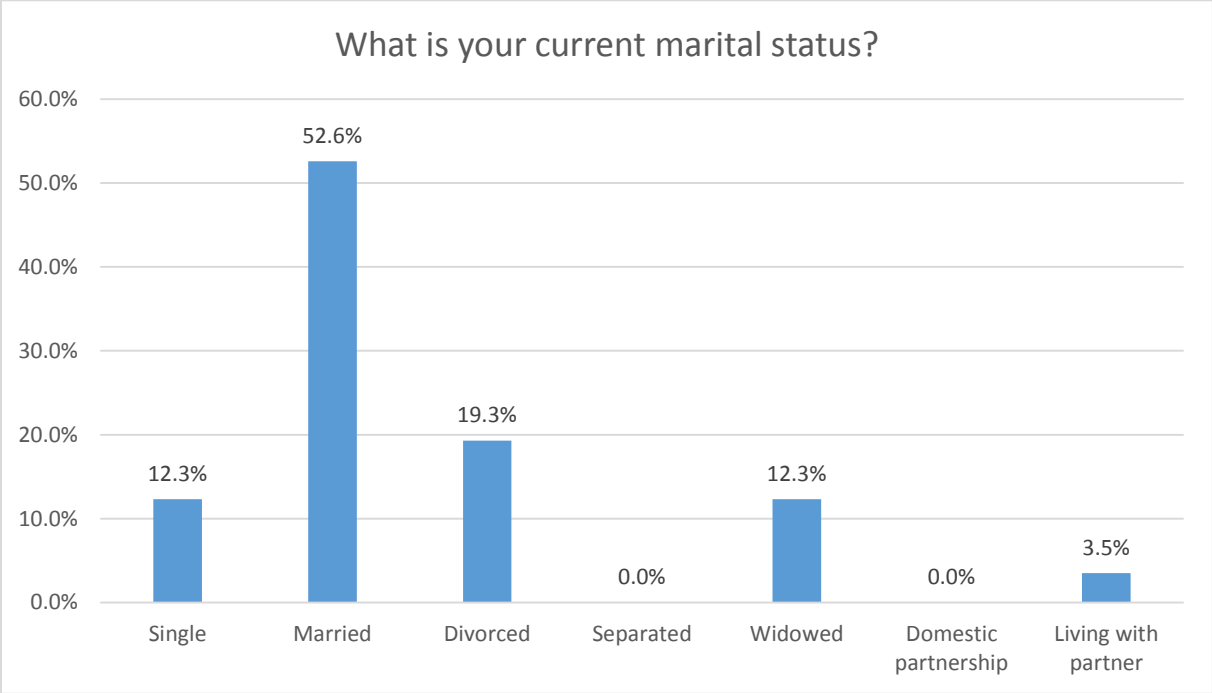
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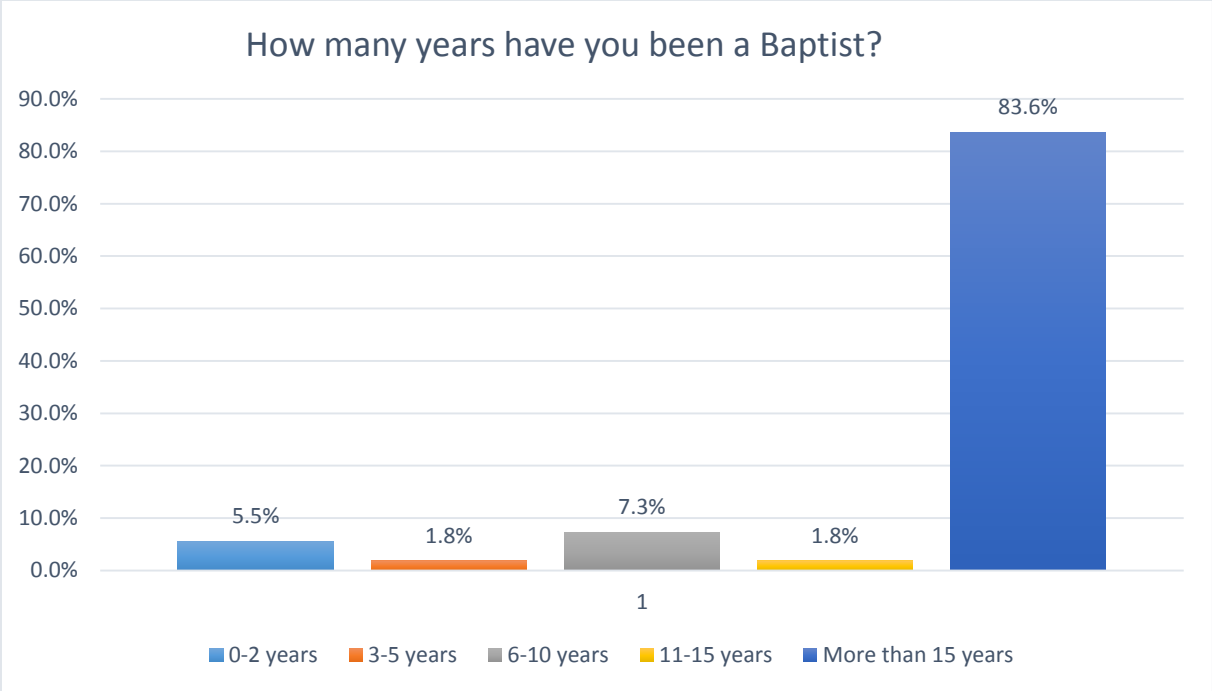
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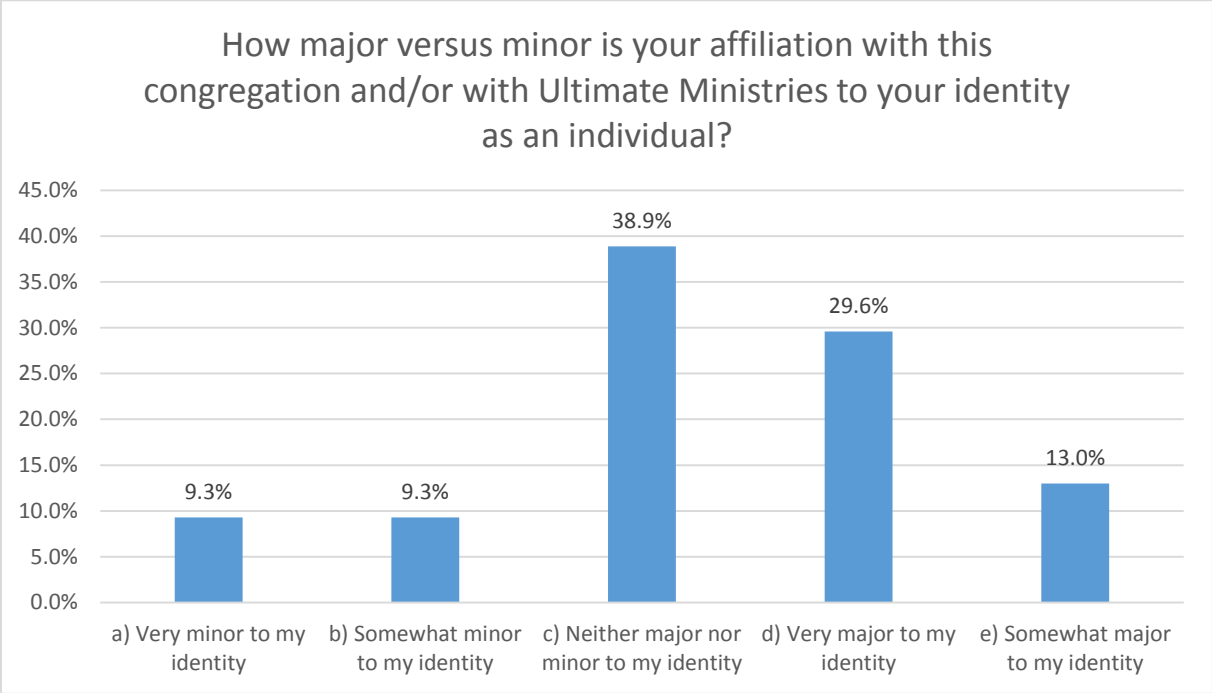
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Appendix 15



Appendix 16



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